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SANATAN DHARMA

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SHOOTING AT US COMMUNITY
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MONEY 10
POWER CONSUMPTION GROWS 8 PER
CENT IN FIRST HALF OF FY24 IN INDIA

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Israel declares War on Terror

AP ■ TEL AVIV
Israeli soldiers battled Hamas fighters in the streets of southern Israel on Sunday and launched retaliation strikes that leveled buildings in Gaza, while in northern Israel a brief exchange of strikes with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group raised fears of a broader conflict. There was still some fighting underway more than 24 hours after an unprecedented surprise attack from Gaza, in which Hamas militants, backed by a volley of thousands of rockets, broke through Israel's security barrier and rampaged through nearby communities. At least 600 people have reportedly been killed in Israel — a staggering toll on a scale the country has not experienced in decades — and more than 300 have been killed in Gaza. The militants also took captives back into the coastal Gaza enclave, including women, children and the elderly, whom they will likely try to trade for thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told CNN's "State of the Union" that the US is working to verify reports that "several" Americans were killed or are missing. The high death toll, multiple captives and slow response to the onslaught pointed to a major intelligence failure and undermined the long-held perception that Israel has eyes

and ears everywhere in the small, densely populated territory it has controlled for decades. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the country was at war and would exact a heavy price from its enemies. His Security Cabinet officially declared the country at war in an announcement on Sunday, saying the decision formally authorises "the taking of significant military steps." The implications of the announcement were not immediately clear. Israel has carried out major military campaigns over the past four decades in Lebanon and Gaza that it portrayed as wars, but without a formal declaration. Yohanan Plesner, the head of the Israel Democracy Institute, a local think tank, said the decision is largely symbolic, but "demonstrates that the government thinks we are entering a more lengthy, intense and significant period of war." A major question now was whether Israel will launch a ground assault into Gaza, a move that in the past has brought intensified casualties. Netanyahu vowed that Hamas "will pay an unprecedented price." But, he warned, "This war will take time. It will be difficult." Civilians paid a staggering cost for the violence on both sides. Several Israeli media outlets, citing rescue service officials, said at least 600 people were killed in Israel, including 44 soldiers, while officials in Gaza said 313 peo-

ple had died in the territory. Some 2,000 people have been wounded on each side. An Israeli official said security forces have killed 400 militants and captured dozens more. Israeli TV news aired a stream of accounts from the relatives of captive or missing Israelis, who wailed and begged for assistance amid a fog of uncertainty surrounding the fate of their loved ones. In Gaza, residents fled homes near the border to escape Israeli strikes, fleeing deeper into the territory after warnings in Arabic from the Israeli military. In neighboring Egypt, a policeman shot dead two Israeli tourists and an Egyptian at a tourist site in Alexandria, the Interior Ministry said. Egypt made peace with Israel decades ago, but anti-Israel sentiment runs high in the country, especially during bouts of Israeli-Palestinian violence. The flare-up on Israel's northern border also threatened to draw into the battle Hezbollah, a fierce enemy of Israel's which is backed by Iran and estimated to have tens of thousands of rockets at its disposal. Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets and shells on Sunday at three Israeli positions in a disputed area along the border and Israel's military fired back using armed drones. Two children were lightly wounded by broken glass on the Lebanese side, according to the nearby Marjayoun Hospital. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, an Israeli military official, told reporters the situation at the

northern border was calm after the exchange. But he said fighting was still underway in the south and that there were still hostage situations there. He said troops had moved into every community near the Gaza frontier, where they planned to evacuate all civilians and scour the area for militants. "We will go through every community until we kill every terrorist that is in Israeli territory," he said. In Gaza, "every terrorist located in a house, all the commanders in houses, will be hit by Israeli fire. That will continue escalating in the coming hours." Hamas said overnight it had continued to send forces and equipment into "a number of locations inside our occupied territories," referring to Israel. Hamas-linked media reported that the son of Nizar Awadallah, a senior political official, was killed. The Islamic militant group has not reported any senior members being captured, killed or wounded. The surprise attack Saturday was the deadliest on Israel in decades. In an assault of startling breadth, Hamas gunmen used explosives to break through the border fence enclosing Gaza, then crossed with motorcycles, pickup trucks, paragliders and speed boats on the coast. They rolled into as many as 22 locations outside the Gaza Strip early Saturday morning, including towns and other communities as far as 24 kilometres (15 miles) from the

Gaza border, while Hamas launched thousands of rockets at Israeli cities. "Israel is waking up this morning to a terrible morning," said Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, an Israeli military spokesman. "There are a lot of people killed... Children, grandmothers, families, bodies." Israeli media said at least 600 people were killed and 2,000 wounded in Saturday's attack. Hamas fighters took an unknown number of civilians and soldiers captive into Gaza, and a line of Israelis with missing relatives snaked outside a police station in central Israel to supply investigators with DNA samples and other means that could help identify their family members. Israel struck 426 targets in Gaza, its military said, flattening residential buildings in giant explosions. Among the 313 killed in Gaza were 20 children, and close to 2,000 people were wounded, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said more than 20,000 Palestinians left Gaza's border region to head further inside the territory and take refuge in UN schools. In a televised address Saturday night, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military will use all of its strength to destroy Hamas' capabilities. "Get out of there now," he told Gaza residents, who have no way to leave the tiny, overcrowded Mediterranean territory.

Afghanistan razed by Nature

AP ■ ISLAMABAD
Men dug through rubble with their bare hands and shovels in western Afghanistan on Sunday in desperate attempts to pull victims from the wreckage left by powerful earthquakes that killed at least 2,000 people. Entire villages were flattened, bodies were trapped under collapsed houses and locals waited for help without even shovels to dig out bodies. Living and dead, victims were trapped under rubble, their faces grey with dust. "Most people were shocked... Some couldn't even talk. But there were others who couldn't stop crying and shouting," photographer Omid Haqjoo, who visited four villages Sunday, told The Associated Press by phone from Afghanistan's fourth largest city, Herat. Saturday's magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit a densely populated area near Herat. It was followed by strong aftershocks. A Taliban Government spokesman on Sunday provided the toll that, if confirmed, would make it one of the deadliest earthquakes to strike the country in two decades. An earthquake that hit eastern Afghanistan in June 2022, striking a rugged, mountainous region, flattened stone and mud-brick homes and killed at least 1,000 people.

People in Herat freed a baby girl from a collapsed building after she was buried up to her neck in debris. A hand cradled the baby's torso as rescuers eased the child out of the ground. Rescuers said it was the baby's mother. It was not clear if the mother survived. The video was shared online and verified by The Associated Press. The US Geological Survey said the quake's epicentre was about 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of Herat. It was followed by three very strong aftershocks, measuring magnitude 6.3, 5.9 and 5.5, as well as lesser shocks. Abdul Wahid Rayan, a spokesman at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said Sunday the death toll is higher than originally reported. Villages have been destroyed, and hundreds of civilians are buried under the debris, he said while calling for urgent help. "Besides the 2,060 dead, 1,240 people are injured and 1,320 houses are completely destroyed," said Rayan. At least a dozen teams have been scrambled to help with rescue efforts, including from the military and nonprofit organisations like the Red Crescent. The United Nations migration agency deployed four ambulances with doctors and psychosocial support counselors to the regional hospital. At least three mobile health teams were on their way to the Zenda Jan

district, which is one of the worst-hit areas. Doctors Without Borders set up five medical tents at Herat Regional Hospital to accommodate up to 80 patients. Authorities have treated more than 300 patients, according to the agency. UNICEF dispatched thousands of supplies, including winter clothes, blankets and tarpaulins as temperatures dropped. Irfanullah Sharafzai, a spokesman for the Afghan Red Crescent Society, said seven teams were busy with rescue efforts while others were arriving from eight nearby provinces. They set up a temporary camp for the displaced, Sharafzai said. Some aid groups, like the World Food Program, were already on the scene with essential items. Later Sunday, people from surrounding villages brought equipment to support rescue efforts. The first quake was the strongest, causing the most damage and casualties, photographer Haqjoo said, quoting survivors. Save the Children said the scale of the damage was horrific. "The numbers affected by this tragedy are truly disturbing — and those numbers will rise as people are still trapped in the rubble of their homes in Herat," said the aid group's country director for Afghanistan, Arshad Malik.

INDIA BEATS AUSTRALIA

PTI ■ CHENNAI
India beats Australia by six wickets to begin their ICC World Cup campaign on a positive note here on Sunday. Half-centuries from Virat Kohli and KL Rahul powered India's chase of 200 after the home team lost three wickets with just two runs on the board. Thanks to Kohli and Rahul's 165-run partnership for the fourth wicket, India completed the task in 41.2 overs. Earlier, India bowled out Australia for 199 following a disciplined effort with the ball. Captain Pat Cummins opted to bat first after winning the toss but things didn't go as planned for the visitors, who were reeling at 119 for five in the 30th over. Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (3/38) did the bulk of the damage with his middle over blows. Steven Smith top-scored for the Aussies with 46 off 71 balls, while David Warner made 41 from 52 balls. Jadeja became the biggest nem-



sis among Indian spinners on a tacky Chepauk track. Jadeja, who knows the track like the back of his hand, courtesy his decade-plus association with Chennai Super Kings, took 3 for 28 in 10 overs as the slowness of the surface and subtle variations used by the all-rounder became Australia's undoing. Ravichandran Ashwin (2/34 in 10 overs) and Kuldeep Yadav

(2/42 in 10 overs) also played their parts to perfection. But it was Jadeja's show all the way as he tilted the scale in India's favour with quick dismissals of an under-pressure Steve Smith (46 off 71 balls) and an unusually subdued Marnus Labuschagne (27 off 41 balls). The Indian spin trio collectively bowled 101 dot balls to completely choke the run-flow. In all there were nearly 29 overs worth dot balls by Indian bowlers, phenomenal by any stretch of imagination.

Congress determined on Caste Census

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI
The Congress is likely to replicate the Bihar model of Caste census in all the four States governed by the party now and would also urge the Jharkhand Government to follow suit where the grand old party is in a coalition Government. The Congress has been pushing for a caste census across the country and is making it a poll issue. A nationwide caste census is a key agenda of the opposition INDIA Bloc, which believes it will help the alliance in the forthcoming elections in the Hindi heartland where caste politics plays a key role. Ahead of the Assembly polls next month, the Ashok Gehlot led Congress Government in Rajasthan has already issued an order for the conduct of a caste survey in the State. Rajasthan will be the second State in the country to conduct such a population count. The decision is on the table for discussion in the party's top

decision making body Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Monday convened to deliberate on the current political situation, caste census and further firm up the strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections in five States. Currently, the Congress enjoys a full majority in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, and holds a stake in the Governments of Bihar and Jharkhand. The CWC meet comes at a time when some Opposition leaders owing allegiance to INDIA Bloc are facing heat from Central agencies. The latest in the series of arrests is that of AAP leader Sanjay Singh in the Delhi excise policy case and the Congress top leadership will have to take a call on extending support to him and others being targeted by the Government. The meeting of the top decision making body of the Congress comes just over three weeks after the first meeting of

the reconstituted CWC was held in Hyderabad last month to evolve a strategy for the Assembly polls in five States and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The party is seeking to retain power in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, while hoping to wrest power from the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, BRS in Telangana and the Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram. In the last Assembly polls, the Congress emerged victorious in MP and had a stable Government led by Kamal Nath for one-and-a-half years until a faction break-away supported the BJP to form the Shivraj Singh Chouhan Government. The Congress on Sunday questioned the silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue of caste census and asked why the BJP ruled States were not conducting them to ensure social justice and rights. The party's remarks come a day after the Gehlot Government issued an order for the conduct of a caste survey in Rajasthan.

Congress chief spokesperson Jai Ram Ramesh said when the Bharat Jodo Yatra was in Rajasthan, Rahul Gandhi had met delegations of many communities and during that time OBC delegations had specifically raised the demand for a caste census. "The question is why such initiatives are not being taken in any BJP ruled State and why is the Prime Minister silent on the issue of caste census," Ramesh asked. According to the Rajasthan Government order, issued by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment after the State Cabinet's nod, the administration will conduct the survey with its own resources for collecting information and figures related to social, economic and educational level of all its citizens. "We will conduct a survey. The order for this will be released immediately. It will be a survey. Census is done by the Government of India. It cannot be done by the State Government. "This will be a survey of fam-

ilies to know their economic situation. This is our party's commitment that we are taking forward," Gehlot briefed the media. He also said conducting such a survey takes time. "It took one-and-a-half years in Bihar. We have taken a decision for a survey, which is a big thing. "AICC (All India Congress Committee) in its Raipur convention had made a decision and we are taking it forward. We want that the economic status of every family should be known so that they get the benefits of government schemes in the future," he said. Gehlot said Rajasthan will follow the model of Bihar. On October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Nitish Kumar Government in Bihar released the findings of its caste survey, which revealed that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) constituted a whopping 63 per cent of the State's total population.

Flood Fury in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA
About 50 years ago I lost a little cousin to a similar fury of Teesta when in an instant flood the entire Jalpaiguri town was submerged." Anaath Narjinari, a 70 years old fish vendor who witnessed the October 4 deluge up in the hills recalls a 50 years old story. It goes thus. Past midnight as the furious Karola, a branch of Teesta that meanders through Jalpaiguri town, entered the village the "Jeley" or fishermen dumped their families and effects in their boats and sculled out in the dark watery wilderness. "At that point... my Thakruda (grandfather) spotted a commotion in the water and charged his ballam (harpoon) at the animal, apparently a big fish..." The target pierced in its heart was not a big fish but

the tiniest toddler of the family that had tumbled into the water from the boat. Fifty years later Anaath was at Rangpo — the border town between Bengal and Sikkim to witness once again the same Teesta rush down with vengeance. "The river that normally flows about 50-70 feet below along the national highway till Teesta Bazaar before taking a curve towards Kalimpong while you turn towards Gangtok seemed suddenly to have gone violent... In the morning we saw only a 10th of the national highway hanging from the mountains. The rest had gone to the River," Anaath said. On October 4 Sikkim and Darjeeling-Kalimpong region of Bengal saw a rerun of the calamity with a violently gurgling Teesta, the largest river in the region apart from Mahananda, hurtling down the mountains sweeping away

whatever it encountered down-stream. Such was the burst of Teesta that the Rangit River that joins the former off Rangpo saw its waters pushed up stream by several furlongs, sources said. A flash flood in the wake of a cloudburst in the upper regions of Himalayas in the wee hours of Wednesday led to a flash flood that mainly affected Sikkim and also to some extent parts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts in Bengal. Villages, Army camps, roads, livestock and property including army vehicles were washed away in no time. Wednesday's flash flood resembled the one in 1968 which too triggered hundreds of landslides, leaving behind a trail of death. About 1,000 people died then on the same day of October. "I wonder whether it is the verdict of the Providence that

the violent weather had to return on the same day," said a professor in the Department of Geography in North Bengal University wondering whether too many dams and high rises along the Teesta had added to the ferocity of the flash floods. "There are about 7-9 big and small dams which have dammed us... these are fragile territories and if you construct dams at that rate then you are in for trouble... thank God that Coronation Bridge at Sevoke off Siliguri, the only link between the rest of India and the North East is still safe," he says, ruling how "politics takes bigger tolls than natural calamities." About 65 people have been rescued safely and several scores have been recorded dead with bodies still being fished out from the lower Teesta regions of Jalpaiguri and even Bangladesh, sources in the district administration

said. A missing army man was literally dug out from a heap of mud as late as on Saturday and he was still breathing, sources said adding he had been sent to a hospital. While authorities in the flood-hit State of Sikkim confirmed a total of 77 deaths on Sunday, the Jalpaiguri district police informed that they had discovered 48 more bodies. Official records indicate that over 100 people remain unaccounted for. "Officials from ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police) and NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) have also been sent to the affected areas." Union Home Minister Amit Shah has released funds for SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) and has promised to provide all possible assistance to NDRF as well," Minister of State Ajay Mishra said.

Kargil gives its verdict

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU
People of Kargil on Sunday delivered a clear verdict in favour of the National Conference Congress alliance in the first ever local elections held after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh into two Union Territories. The National Conference emerged as the single largest party in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil. Till the time of filing the report, the results of 25 seats were declared. The last round of counting for the remaining one seat was going on. Out of these 25 seats, the National Conference won 12 seats. The Congress, which had fielded a maximum number of 22 candidates, managed to win nine seats while the BJP could win only two seats out

of the 17 seats it contested. Out of 25 independent candidates in the fray, only two among them secured majority votes and emerged victorious. Reacting to the verdict Omar Abdullah posted on X (earlier Twitter), "Thank you, Kargil." A large number of supporters of the National Conference and the Congress party had gathered outside the counting centre and celebrated the victory of the party candidates. In terms of total vote share, the Congress party garnered the highest share of 28 per cent of total votes polled followed by 24 per cent by the National Conference. Independent candidates garnered roughly 17 per cent of votes, and a little over 10 per cent of votes were secured by the BJP. The council has a total of 30 seats out of which elections were held on 26 seats. Four councillors are nominated by the administration.

According to the election authorities in Kargil, "Out of 95388 total voters, 74026 voters exercised their right to franchise on October 4, recording 77.61 per cent voter turnout. A total number of 85 candidates were in the fray. In the outgoing council, National Conference had won 10 seats followed by Congress 8 seats, PDP 2 seats, BJP 1, and 5 Independents. In 2013, no party had managed to get a clear majority with Congress emerging as the single largest party winning 10 seats followed by the National Conference and Independents eight each. During the aggressive poll campaign, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah had urged voters to send a "clear message to reject or accept" the NDA government's August 5, 2019 decision.

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Singapore's High Commissioner points out spelling error in signboard

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Sunday found itself in a bit of a soup after Singapore's High Commissioner to India, Simon Wong, pointed out a significant spelling error in the name of his country on a signboard installed near the high commission.

A sign board installed by the MCD at the High Commission premises read "Singapore High Commission" instead of the correct "Singapore High Commission". However, the NDMC quickly fixed the "Singapore" issue by using some white tape.

Earlier in the morning, the

diplomat took to X and shared a picture of the signage which read 'Singapur High Commission' instead of 'Singapore High Commission'. Wong also shared a picture of himself where he can be seen donning a tee with 'SINGAPORE' (the correct spelling) inscribed on it. "It is always good to spell check first," sharing the photos he wrote.

Wong, who discovered the gaffe while on his morning walk and asked the MCD to do a 'spell check' before installing the signage. The post featured a picture of signage and Mr Wong. The Singapore In India Twitter handle also tagged the MCD and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)

Official in the post on X. The board also contains the name of Embassy of Vietnam. The said Commission is located at Chandragupta Marg, Chanakypuri in New Delhi, 110021 (pincode).

The post has amassed more than 212000 views on X within just four hours. The post received a barrage of comments on social media with many users sharing their thoughts in the comments section. Some users chimed in with their own stories of similar experiences with signage errors.

A user wrote, "A big oops moment hope @MCD_Delhi fixes it ASAP"

Another user wrote on X,



"Good advice...but then where will our smiles come from?"

"It is what happens when people translate from Hindi word to English... Common mistakes in all regional languages," the third user commented. The fourth user wrote, "This is nothing. Most of the Punjabi translations of signages in Delhi are outright wrong. Have complained multiple times, but nothing changes."

Another user wrote, "But we in India always wonder how it became... 'PORE' in the first place from the original 'PUR'?"

"Kampur, Nagpur, Singapur, right?!" another user commented.

However, the NDMC

quickly fixed the 'Singapur' issue by using some white tape. Following this, Wong expressed his gratitude to the municipal bodies. "I appreciate the rapid fix. HC Wong @tweetndmc @MCD_Delhi," Wong posted on X. Reacting to Wong's second post, a social media user wrote, "Not a good pasting job India. I'm sure we can do better." This post also viewed over 1534000 on X (formerly twitter).

Meanwhile, another user wrote, "High Commissioner, while one must admire the MCD for its quick response - on Sunday no less - the fact is that the matter has not been fixed. If the photo is a genuine representation of the road sig-

nage, it reads with a 0 (zero), not O!!"

Another user wrote, "That was the fastest grievance redressal ever Wish every government department responds with such alacrity."

"Good they changed. But the O in Singapore seems very different from the O s in Commission, isn't it? Seems that the numeric 0 has been inserted there. It was always thought that if it is anything connected with Singapore - ita high quality & high precision with effort," wrote another user.

Earlier, High Commissioner of Singapore in India Simon Wong danced with folk artists at a G20 meeting in West Bengal's Darjeeling.

Deaths at hospitals: Shiv Sena (UBT), Cong demand resignation of Maharashtra Cabinet

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress on Sunday said the Maharashtra cabinet should resign based on the "confession" by state health minister Tanaji Sawant on the responsibility regarding the death of patients at two state-run hospitals.

The Congress also demanded a white paper on the public health system in the state to identify the cause of deaths at government hospitals in Nanded and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

"If the health minister feels the entire cabinet is responsible, it should resign. Our state is going backwards because of such dirty politics," Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said on X and tagged a video clip of Tanaji Sawant.

The comment of the minister is the height of shamelessness, he alleged.

As many as 31 patients, including infants, died at the Dr Shankarrao Chavan



Government Medical College and Hospital in Nanded in 48 hours since September 30, while the death of 18 patients was recorded at the Government Medical College and Hospital at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar between October 2 and 3. Last month, 18 patients died in 24 hours in a public hospital in Thane.

Demanding a white paper on the state health system, Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Balasaheb Thorat also referred to the remarks

purportedly made by Sawant and demanded his resignation.

Mumbai Congress president denoted Varsha Gaikwad said based on Sawant's "confession", the cabinet should tender resignation.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Thorat said, "white paper on the public health system and machinery should be published so that people will know the truth."

"The health minister

says his department is not responsible but the collective responsibility lies with the state cabinet. The minister should resign," Thorat added.

The former minister said government hospitals in Maharashtra have done good work in the treatment of poor people.

"The same health machinery worked day and night to save patients during the COVID-19 pandemic because the intentions of the previous government were genuine. What has happened in the last year that the health system has failed?" he asked. Thorat further said the government should make state-run hospitals financially viable.

"The enquiry committee constituted by the government has made some inferences which are not agreeable and the high court has to intervene," the Congress leader said referring to the Bombay HC taking suo motu cognisance of the deaths at two hospitals in Nanded and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Meanwhile, Gaikwad said shirking the responsibility and passing on the blame among themselves is the characteristic of the state (Shiv Sena-BJP-Ajit Pawar faction) government.

"Finally, after lying for over a year, someone managed to tell the truth. Mumbai Congress was seeking the resignations of two ministers, but their own Health Minister is confessing the entire cabinet of ministers is responsible. Congress demands that the whole cabinet should tender the resignation," Gaikwad said in a statement.

She stated that if the health minister is not taking any blame on himself, the chief minister (Eknath Shinde) and both deputy chief ministers (Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar) should take the lead and dissolve the cabinet.

"Even after over 50 deaths, if the health minister is blaming the entire cabinet, then they should come forward and resign on their own," Gaikwad added.

BJP demands Rajasthan Home Minister resignation

PTI ■ JAIPUR

BJP leaders on Sunday submitted a memorandum to Governor Kalraj Mishra alleging a rise in crimes against women in Rajasthan and demanded the resignation of the State's Home Minister.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is also in charge of the home department.

"Law and order in the state have completely collapsed and the common man of Rajasthan is feeling unsafe," alleged Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore after submitting the memorandum.

He claimed that in the last 48 hours, incidents of crime against women, including rape, have occurred at 13 places in Rajasthan. "A case of women's harassment is reported every 48 hours," the BJP leader alleged.

"A terrible incident has happened in Peepalkhant of Pratapgarh district. Two minor girls were tortured by some people and they ended their lives after police took no action despite repeated com-



plaints," he claimed.

"We have given a memorandum to Governor Kalraj Mishra demanding the resignation of the state's home minister," Rathore said while alleging that in the last six months, police have filed charge sheets in just 33 per cent of the cases. He said that the Governor has assured the BJP delegation that top officials of the state's law department will seek a factual report in this regard from the police

commissioner and the director general of police.

Besides Rathore, BJP leaders, including Rajya Sabha MP Ghanshyam Tiwari, Kirori Lal Meena, BJP MP and the party's state general secretary Diya Kumari, its national spokesperson and p a r l i a m e n t a r i a n Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, national secretary Alka Singh Gurjar were among the who submitted the memorandum to Governor Kalraj Mishra.

Bengal Governor to meet those deprived of MGNREGA work

PTI ■ DARJEELING/KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Sunday said he will meet those deprived of MGNREGA work as the Centre has stopped funds under the scheme to the state, and take up their grievances with New Delhi.

Reacting to the TMC's comments on the ongoing agitation outside Raj Bhavan, the governor also related an allegorical tale to reporters in Darjeeling about a 'Lion Prince' who was punished by an elephant in the forest for asking who was the king of the jungle.

Bose, who will return to Kolkata from Darjeeling, where he has gone to visit the flood situation in north Bengal, also wrote to Chief Secretary HK Dwivedi, inquiring whether permission was granted for the TMC's ongoing sit-in demonstration outside Raj Bhavan, a source at the governor house said. "I will speak with the deprived. I will hear complaints directly from them. After that, I will talk not only to the Centre but also all parties involved," Bose told reporters at Kalimpong.

Incidentally, a three-member TMC delegation on Saturday called on Bose in



Darjeeling, where they presented demands regarding the clearance of the state's financial dues under the scheme.

Soon after meeting them, Bose said that he would be taking up the matter of MGNREGA dues of the state with the Centre.

The West Bengal governor on Sunday morning went to Teesta Bazaar area in Kalimpong to take stock of the flood situation, and he will be returning to Kolkata by Sunday evening, the Raj Bhavan source said. There was, however, no confirmation on whether he would be meeting TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee after returning to the city.

"The governor wrote to the chief secretary wanting to know whether proper permission was given to the TMC to hold the sit-in demonstration outside the Raj Bhavan. He also

asked the chief secretary where there was any breach of the law in giving permission to the ruling party in the state to hold the protest outside his residence where Section 144 of CrPC is supposed to be imposed till 150 metres from the Raj Bhavan's boundary," the source told PTI.

The indefinite sit-in demonstration outside Raj Bhavan by TMC activists led by senior leader Abhishek Banerjee entered the fourth day on Sunday with agitators asserting their stir will continue till Bose meets them at the protest site.

The Ministry of Rural Development stated on October 5 that the release of funds for West Bengal was stopped from March 9, 2022, in accordance with Section 27 of MGNREGA because of the state's non-compliance with directives of the central government.

Flood Fury in West Bengal

From Page 1

From Siliguri local MLA Gautam Deb said, "You have bigger things to do after the initial rescue work... but there is always a lack of resources." The low-lying areas of Jalpaiguri have been evacuated, sources said adding even the people living on the banks of Karola have been shifted out to safer areas. Referring to "politics" being played, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said how the Centre was ignoring her State "despite the gravity of the situation being the same."

Bengal was not a "beggar" she said before announcing a relief of Rs 24 crore for flood hit areas of Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Siliguri MLA and

Siliguri Mayor Gautam Deb said how the "Centre has sanctioned funds for Sikkim but has given not a single farthing to Bengal for Kalimpong."

Bengal Minister Arup Biswas said how "the Centre is allergic to Bengal ... they have given relief funds to other States but nothing to Bengal." He made the statements after reports of Centre releasing Rs 45 crore for Sikkim.

Even Anit Thapa the Chairman of Gokhaland Territorial Authority expressed his anger too. "The Centre is giving step-motherly treatment to GTA when we too have been affected by the flash floods," he said.

"How will we carry out the rescue work

... how will we rebuild our sides of the flooded region when we have received no money from the Centre ... and consider that these are peak tourism seasons with Durga Puja approaching."

From Teesta cut to Damodar. Large parts of Hooghly, West Midnapore and Howrah districts. With the Damodar Valley Corporation releasing about one lakh cusecs of water flood-like situations prevailed in these districts. Ghatil in West Midnapore remained the most affected area.

So much so that local Arambagh MP Aparupa Poddar was gheraoed by the villagers a couple of days ago when she went to take stock of the situation. Poddar was forced by the villagers to

walk down the inundated areas to "see our houses ... and how we live daily ... they come in AC cars and make some promises and go, whereas year after year we have to live like animals," a villager said.

According to sources in the Irrigation Department "In south Bengal, water level in most rivers in East and West Burdwan, Birbhum, West Midnapore, Bankura, Hooghly and Howrah districts have risen," adding about 10,000 people have been kept in 120 camps.

"For the past couple of days there has been no rain ... but if it rains again then we are ready for the situation," a senior Irrigation Department official said.

Kargil gives its verdict

From Page 1

The two prestigious seats of Kargil town and Rambirpora (Drass) were won by the National Conference and Congress party respectively. BJP candidate Padma Dorje won the Stakchay Khangral Constituency with a voting margin of 177 votes, he received 1007 votes, followed by Syed Hassan (INC) 830 votes and Ghulam Hussain (JKNC) 479 votes. A total of 2656 votes were cast in the constituency.

Another BJP candidate Stanzin Lakpa won Cha Constituency with a voting margin of 234 votes. He received 798 votes, followed by Tenzin Sonam (INC) with 564 votes A total of 1371 votes were cast.

JKNC candidate Mohammad Sajjad won the Saliskut Constituency with a margin of 200 votes. Over 90 percent of voters had exercised their right to vote in the constituency on October 4.

He bagged 1144 votes, followed by Syed Hassan (INC) with 944 votes and Ahmad Hussain (BJP) with 66 votes. A total of 2164 votes were cast. Independent Candidate Ghulam Mohammad won Barsoo Constituency with a voting margin of 228 votes. He received 1411 votes, followed by Ghulam Abass Wazir (INC) 1183 votes and Abdul Hani (BJP) 51 votes. A total of 2653 votes were cast in the constituency. JKNC Candidate

Constituency with a voting margin of 575 votes. He received 1949 votes, followed by Mubarak Shah Naqvi (JKNC) 1374 and Faiyaz Ahmad Qari (BJP) 545 votes. A total of 3896 votes were cast in the constituency.

INC candidate Abdul Hadi won Tai- Suru Constituency with a voting margin of 261 votes. He received 1717 votes, followed by Syed Abbass (JKNC) 1456 votes. A total of 3185 votes were cast in the constituency.

INC candidate Agha Aynul Huda won Parkachik Constituency with a voting margin of 1128 votes. He received 2165 votes, followed by Ghulam Mohammad (Independent) 1037 votes. A total of 3215 votes were cast.

INC candidate Liyaqat Ali Khan won Chiktan Constituency with a voting margin of 361 votes. He received 850 votes, followed by Mohsin Ali (BJP) 489 votes and Niyaz Hussain (Independent) 433 votes.

A total of 2377 votes were cast in the constituency. JKNC candidate Manzoor Ul Husain won Yaurbaltak Constituency with a voting margin of 90 votes. He received 1452 votes, followed by Kacho Ahmed Ali Khan (Ind.) 1362 votes and Mohammad Hassan Pasha (BJP) 439 votes. A total of 3276 votes were cast in the constituency.

INC candidate Nasir Hussain Munshi won Choskore Constituency with a

voting margin of 434 votes. He received 1447 votes, followed by Mohammad Raza (JKNC) 1013 and Bashir Ahmad (BJP) 174 votes. A total of 2655 votes were cast in the constituency. JKNC candidate Feroz Ahmad Khan won the Silmoo Constituency with a voting margin of 973 votes. He bagged 1638 votes, followed by Mohammad Ali Khan (INC) with 665 votes and Regzen Gutmath (BJP) with 553 votes. A total of 2878 votes were cast. JKNC candidate Mohd Jaffar Akhooon won Thasgaam Constituency with a voting margin of 94 votes. He bagged 1405 votes, followed by Sheikh Mohammad Hussain (INC) with 1311 votes and Independent Candidate Akhund Safder Ali with 195 votes. A total of 2973 votes were cast.

JKNC Candidate Mohammad Abass Adulpa won Kargil Town Constituency with a voting margin of 1285 votes. He bagged 1953 votes, followed by Mohammad Hussain (INC) with 668 votes and Independent Candidate Mohammad Raza with 188 votes. A total of 2814 votes were cast. Independent Candidate Syed Ali won the Gung Mangalpur Constituency with a margin of 335 votes. He bagged 1313 votes, followed by Mohammad Abass (INC) with 978 votes, Syed Mehdi (Independent) with 418 votes

and Nasir Hussain (BJP) with 67 votes.

The BJP was dealt a resounding defeat at the hands of the NC-Congress alliance in Kargil on Sunday.

In celebration of our strong alliance with the Congress party, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference is delighted to announce its victory in the LAHDC Kargil elections. This result sends a message to all forces and parties that have, undemocratically and unconstitutionally, divided the state of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh without the consent of its people. This victory belongs to the people of Zanskar, Kargil, and Drass, who have decisively endorsed the National Conference-Congress alliance. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the elected councillors, recognizing their dedication to serving the people. We also extend our gratitude to the leadership of the Congress party for their unwavering support.

These election results should serve as a wake-up call for the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is time to cease hiding behind the Raj Bhawan and unselected representatives and, instead, acknowledge the people's rightful desire for a democratically elected government in Jammu and Kashmir. Democracy demands the voices of the people be heard and respected.

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| कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद् शिवपुरी (म.प्र.) | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| क्रमांक/न.पा.प./निविदा/23/5338 | | | शिवपुरी दिनांक :- 06.10.2023 | | | |
| Email cmoshivpurii@mpurban.gov.in | | | | | | |
| // निविदा सूचना // | | | | | | |
| निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु केन्द्रीयकृत प्रणाली में पंजीकृत टेकेदारों से ऑनलाईन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाईट https://mptenders.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। टेण्डर परचेज ऑनलाईन कर सकते हैं। | | | | | | |
| क्र. | टेण्डर क्रमांक | निविदा जारी दिनांक | कार्य का नाम/आमंत्रित दर | 1. कार्य की लागत | निविदा प्रपत्र खरीदने की अंतिम तिथि | कार्य की समाप्ति |
| 1 | 2023_UAD_315818_1 | 06.10.2023 | ROAD CONSTRUCTION WORK UNDER MUKHYA MANTRI ADHOSANRACHNA YOJANA PHASE 4 | 1 रु. 5,06,19,000.00 2 रु. 2,53,095.00 3 रु. 20,000.00 | 16.10.2023 | 4 माह |
| 2 | 2023_UAD_315881_1 | 06.10.2023 | CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENTS ROAD (BT RENEWAL AND CC STRENGTHING) UNDER KAYAKALP ABHIYAN 2 | 1 रु. 1,94,14,000.00 2 रु. 97,070.00 3 रु. 15,000.00 | 16.10.2023 | 3 माह |
| 3 | 2023_UAD_315891_1 | 06.10.2023 | WATER BODY REJUUVENATION WORK AT TALAB IN MANIYAR | 1 रु. 4,23,72,881.00 2 रु. 2,11,864.00 3 रु. 20,000.00 | 16.10.2023 | 6 माह |
| 4 | 2023_UAD_316060_1 | 06.10.2023 | Engagement of Agency for Construction of Gantry Gate UNIPOLE Display board Public Toilet With Unipole on Built Finance AND Transfer Basis | 1 रु. 00.00 2 रु. 300000.00 3 रु. 5,000.00 | 20.10.2023 | 120 माह |

मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी
नगर पालिका परिषद् शिवपुरी

Nanogence tech pivots Noida airport sustainable infrastructure

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

The upcoming Noida International Airport, billed to be India's largest upon completion, aims to be a net zero carbon emissions facility, setting a new standard for sustainable airport operations.

Construction work is currently underway in full swing at the greenfield site, some 75 km off Delhi, for the first phase of the airport, expected to be completed by the end of next year, officials said, adding that their key focus lies in keeping the mega project environmentally sustainable.

The developers of the airport said they are using a breakthrough technology from Nanogence Catalysts, which are patented smart activators that enhance the binding efficiency of cementitious material, providing high material performance while incorpo-

rating eco-friendly substitutes and reducing production costs.

"A state-of-the-art tailor-made catalyst is being used in construction work for the Noida airport. This technology allows for direct reduction or replacement of up to 20 per cent of cement requirement," a project official said.

"This has led to a significant drop in carbon emissions at the airport site as well as improved the project's cost efficiency, since one of the biggest capex in building large infrastructure projects is the usage of high amounts of concrete, contributed by the cement demand. Moreover, cement is one of the largest contributors to the embodied carbon footprint of infrastructure projects," the official added.

Noida International Airport's CEO Christoph Schnellmann said there is

excitement around the potential of this technology which would help them meet their sustainability goals.

"This technology dovetails our ambitions very well to keep our focus squarely on the environmental impact due to the airport's construction and its operations. Literally from day one, we have set the bar high for ourselves and fixed a goal to operate the airport with net zero emissions," Schnellmann told PTI.

With the help of partners who are renowned for their experience in the field, sustainability elements have been incorporated into the airport's design, infrastructure and utilities to meet the net zero emission goal, he added.

Senior employees of Tata Projects, the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) partner for the airport, said the airport management's



resolve to check carbon footprint has encouraged them to implement the Nanogence technology in this project.

"Control trials have been conducted to understand the materials performance through regular tests to examine compressive strength and slump retention. Concrete packing at nano level helps in the long-term weather resistance and

corrosion resistance of the concrete structure," Ravishankar Chandrasekaran, executive vice president at Tata Projects, told PTI.

"Implementation of Nanogence will help in weather-proofing and corrosion resistance. Due to the use of nanoparticles, the binding of concrete is superior and the structure will have a longer life.

The admixture has helped in reducing the consumption of OPC (ordinary portland cement), therefore controlling the carbon footprint due to concrete usage," he explained.

Asked about the initial investment in the technology, long-term cost savings and benefits at the airport, Chandrasekaran said Tata Projects has only started with the trials on Nanogence.

Abhishek Kumar, the CEO and founder of Nanogence, said the catalyst allows "optimization of the cementitious content in the concrete" by either reducing its demand or replacement with eco-friendly materials in the concrete while preserving the strength and quality of the concrete.

"Cement's contribution to the carbon footprint of infrastructure projects and its cost in concrete is the highest; the Nanogence catalyst reduces

both - carbon emissions and cost," Kumar told PTI.

On estimates of reduction in emissions through the catalyst, Kumar said in the Indian market, builders are looking for ways to 20 per cent less cement directly or replace it with other materials. Additionally, the use of certain additives can be eliminated in the admixture, therefore saving cost and resources while maintaining the quality of the construction.

The carbon emission was reduced up to 30-60 per cent when compared to only OPC mix design concrete and 20-40 per cent on blended cement mix design, he said.

Kumar added that compared to traditional construction techniques, Nanogence engages in a novel method for enhancing the binding strength of concrete products thus lowering the requirement of carbon-heavy cement in concrete

production. "This concept is entirely new compared to traditional products for concrete. However, we do not change the traditional construction method for making concrete in any way. All existing methods are still applicable," he said.

The Nanogence founder noted that the vast availability of eco-friendly materials such as waste products like fly ash and slag which end up in water streams or landfills but can now be integrated for construction work, allowing greater replacement of such materials in the concrete with high performance.

For the Noida International Airport, he said using Nanogence catalyst, Tata Projects can reduce operational costs coming from cement usage while a further reduction is achieved through lower logistics and energy demand.

Construction, demolition waste recycling plant opens in Jahangirpuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated the country's largest construction and demolition waste recycling plant here on Sunday and said such facilities will be crucial in making the national Capital beautiful.

Spread over approximately seven acres, this plant in Jahangirpuri can recycle 2,000 tonnes of construction and demolition waste daily, a statement from the chief minister's office said.

According to officials, waste collected from all over Delhi will be brought to the plant for processing and recycling those into tiles, bricks and other such items.

At the inauguration event, Kejriwal said, "After the demolition of a building, debris is kept either on the roads or vacant plots. This leads to debris getting piled up at



unusual places."

"We aim to make Delhi neat and clean and the most beautiful city. As of now, we cannot say that Delhi is beautiful since there are piles of litter in Delhi. To make the city beautiful, we need construction and demolition plants like this. All the debris resulting from construction and demolition activities will be brought to

such plants," he said.

The Chief Minister said that such a plant will play a crucial role in making Delhi beautiful.

"Delhi produces 6,500 tonnes of debris daily. The construction and demolition waste recycling plant at Jahangirpuri is the fourth of its kind. Rest three plants are at Ranikhera, Shastri Park and

Bakkarwala.

"These four plants have a recycling capacity of 5,000 tonnes, which doesn't meet the requirements of 6,500 tonnes of debris produced daily. We have a plan to construct a new construction and demolition plant at Okhla with a recycling capacity of 1000 tonnes, while the capacity of the four existing plants will be increased slightly," Kejriwal said.

He said that the plant in Jahangirpuri is based on the latest European technology. "It makes absolutely no noise. Moreover, no dust or dirt flies around," the chief minister said. Kejriwal claimed that ever since the Aam Aadmi Party came into power in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), many positive changes have taken place.

"A year ago, MCD was infamous for corruption. All employees were on strike for

their salaries. Many employees were not paid for several months. It was a terrible situation. I won't say that everything is perfect after the AAP came into power in the MCD. It will take some time for everything to be set right," he said.

It will take some time to fix the "mess that has happened in the last 75 years", Kejriwal said, adding corruption is decreasing in the MCD and employees are now receiving their salaries on time.

"The construction and demolition plants are now being built because there is an honest administration in the MCD," he added.

Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi said efforts are being made to make the city free of garbage and debris. "Locations have been designated for the disposal of debris. It will also help in preventing pollution," she said.

1 held for stealing car by brandishing pistol: Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 35-year-old man for allegedly stealing a car along with his associate by brandishing a pistol from West Delhi's Janakpuri.

According to the Delhi Police, the complainant, a taxi driver, stated on October 6 that he was waiting for a passenger near B-Block at about 4:15 am, when a Hyundai i10 car with two men stopped near him.

"One of them threatened him by brandishing a pistol and made off with his car and mobile phone," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said.

The complainant called up the Janakpuri police station and informed that his car had a GPS system installed and could be traced using its live location, police said.



"A team was formed. It tracked down the car and arrested the accused, Sikander. He got involved in crime as he wanted to lead a luxurious life," the DCP said. The accused said he, along with his friend Parvesh,

had committed the crime. Police said Parvesh will be arrested soon.

"We have found the stolen car, mobile phone and a toy pistol from the accused. Further investigation is underway," the DCP said.

SC to hear Amanatullah plea against police decision to declare him bad character

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan challenging the Delhi Police's decision to declare him as a "bad character".

A bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice Dipankar Datta will hear Khan's petition challenging the Delhi High Court's order dismissing his plea against the police's decision. The top court had on July 3 sought the response of the Delhi Police on Khan's plea.

The high court on January 19 had dismissed a plea of Khan against the decision of the city police to declare him as a "bad character". It had, however, granted him liberty to make a representation before the authorities concerned to remove the bad character tag.

The Delhi Police had declared Khan, the Aam Aadmi Party MLA from Okhla, a bad character last year. Khan's



lawyer had contended before the high court that the authorities had "acted in absolutely mala fide manner" and claimed the replica of the history sheet, which is a confidential document, was shared on social media by a spokesperson for a rival political party to "malign" his image.

The Delhi Police had argued that due procedure was followed by the competent authorities to arrive at the decision. The police said applicable rules were duly followed by the authorities and the decision was arrived at in

view of the material on record and after application of mind.

The proposal for declaring Khan as a bad character was sent on March 28, last year by the Jamia Nagar police station in the Southeast district and approved on March 30, 2022. The document had stated that a total of 18 FIRs have been registered against Khan.

According to the police, a person who is involved in multiple criminal cases, including murder and attempt to murder, and can disturb peace in an area, can be designated a bad character.

SC to hear bail plea of Jain in money laundering case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a bail plea of former Delhi minister Satyendar Kumar Jain in a money laundering case lodged against him.

A bench of Justice A S Bopanna and Justice Bela M Trivedi will continue hearing the petition of Satyendar Jain and co-accused Ankush Jain.

On September 25, the top court, while extending the interim bail of Jain till October 9, asked him to not make the pendency of the proceedings before the apex court a ruse to delay the trial in the case.

The Enforcement Directorate has claimed that the AAP leader was seeking repeated adjournments in the trial court on the ground that his bail plea was pending before the apex court. The



probe agency has alleged that Jain has taken as many as 16 dates from the trial court.

The Supreme Court had on May 26 granted interim bail to Jain for six weeks for spinal surgery, saying a citizen has a right to receive treatment of his choice in a private hospital at his own expense. On September 12, it extended till September 25 the interim bail of Jain in the case.

The ED had arrested the AAP leader on May 30 last year on the charge of money laundering through four companies allegedly linked to him.

It had arrested Jain based on a CBI FIR registered against him in 2017 under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

He was granted regular bail by the trial court on September 6, 2019, in the case registered by the CBI.

Decomposed body of man found from abandoned structure



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The decomposed body of a 23-year-old man was recovered from an abandoned structure in west Delhi's Indrapuri area, police said on Sunday.

Initial inquiry suggested that a portion of the structure collapsed on the man, who was later identified as Chandan, they said.

"We got a PCR call on Saturday, regarding foul smell from an abandoned structure.

Police teams reached the spot. And found a body in the debris," a senior police officer said.

"Initial inquiry suggested that some part of old abandoned structure might have fallen down while the man was inside, which resulted in his death. However, no PCR call regarding collapse of any structure of missing report had been filed by the family members of the victim," police said.

Further inquest proceedings are in progress, they said.

City records minimum temperature of 23.1 degrees Celsius



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Sunday recorded a minimum temperature of 23.1 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The relative humidity stood at 60 per cent at 8:30 am. Delhi is likely to witness clear skies during the day, the IMD said.

The weather office has forecast partly cloudy skies with a light drizzle on October 9 and October 10.

Mayor to take part in Asia Pacific Cities Summit in Australia



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi will take part in an urban summit in Australia and present the work done by the Arvind Kejriwal Government in the national Capital, officials said on Sunday.

The 'Asia Pacific Cities Summit' is scheduled to take place in Brisbane from October 11-13.

While the theme of the summit is 'Shaping Cities for

Our Future', there are three sub-themes: technology, data, development, and people's well-being, according to a statement issued by the mayor's office.

Oberoi will depart for Brisbane on Monday, it said. She will present the 'model of the Kejriwal governance' to a global audience.

This model showcases the work done in Delhi, Punjab, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal, the statement said.

She will talk about education, health, and cleanliness.

The summit will facilitate the exchange of ideas and achievements among mayors, policymakers, business leaders, and more. In the 2019 edition of the Summit, mayors from around the world had represented over 99 million people. Therefore, the agreements and insights from this summit can have a direct impact on people's lives.

Air quality improves to 'moderate' category

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality showed a slight improvement and was recorded in the 'moderate' category on Sunday, two days after it had plunged into the 'poor' zone.

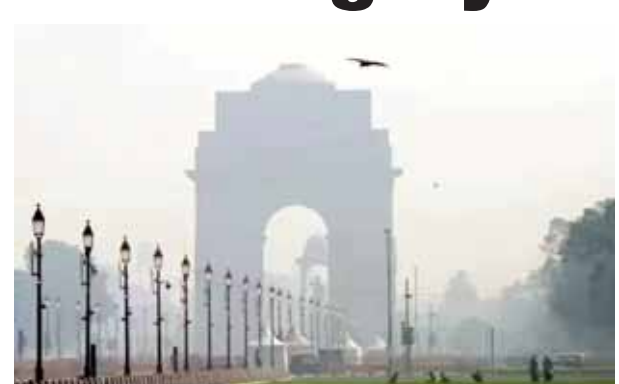
The maximum temperature was recorded at 36.5 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average, the weather department said, adding that the minimum settled at 23.1 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal.

The humidity level oscillated between 44 per cent and 90 per cent, it said.

The 24-hour Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi was recorded at 164 (moderate).

An AQI between 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor', and 401-500 'severe'.

The weatherman forecast



partly cloudy skies on Monday and said the maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle at 36 degrees Celsius and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

The AQI was recorded at 214 at 7 pm on Saturday. On Friday, the Centre's air quality panel directed authorities in the National Capital Region to enforce a ban on coal usage in hotels and restaurants and take

punitive measures against polluting industries and thermal power plants as the air quality in Delhi plunged into the "poor" category.

This action came as part of the government's pollution control plan known as the 'Graded Response Action Plan' (GRAP) which is implemented in the Delhi-NCR to combat air pollution during the winter season.

Congress, JD(U) condemn attacks on Israeli people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties the Congress and the JD (U) on Sunday condemned the attacks on the people of Israel, saying violence of any type never provides any solution and it must stop.

A full-fledged war broke out between the ruling Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip and Israel, killing hundreds of people from both sides. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said his party has always believed that the legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine must be fulfilled through dialogue while ensuring the national security concerns of Israelis.

"The Indian National Congress condemns the brutal attacks on the people of Israel," he said on X, adding the party has always believed that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a life of self-respect, equality and dignity must be fulfilled only through a process of dialogue and negotiations while ensuring the legitimate national security interests of the Israeli people.

"Violence of any type never provides a solution and must stop," the Congress leader said.

Militants from Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, fired more than 3,000 rockets



from the Gaza Strip into Israel on Saturday morning, according to the Israeli military, while Hamas fighters entered southern Israel by land, sea and air, using paragliders and even captured several Israeli soldiers near the border.

At least 350 Israelis, including soldiers, have been killed and more than 1,900 injured in Israel - the deadliest day for the country in at least 50 years. On the Gaza Strip side, there are nearly 300 deaths and about 1,500 wounded in Israel's counter-attack, media reports said on Sunday.

The Janata Dal (United) also condemned all kinds of violence and sought the UN's intervention to restore peace as Israel launched retaliatory attacks in Gaza after Islamist group Hamas' militants infiltrated into the country and killed hundreds of people.

JD (U) spokesperson K C

Tyagi said his party stands with the "oppressed" people of Palestine and said Israel must respect the United Nations' earlier resolutions and vacate the occupied territory of Palestine.

"This is not just the fight of Palestinian people. This is a struggle for humanity, for justice, and for the future of a world governed by law and not brute force. We stand with the oppressed people of Palestine," he said in a statement.

Israeli soldiers battled Hamas fighters in the streets of southern Israel on Sunday and launched retaliation strikes that levelled buildings in Gaza. In northern Israel, a brief exchange of strikes with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group raised fears of a broader conflict.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared that Israel is at war.

CBI searches residences of Bengal Minister, TMC MLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday conducted searches at 12 locations, including at the residences of senior West Bengal minister Firdah Hakim and TMC MLA Madan Mitra, in different parts of the State in connection with its probe into alleged irregularities in recruitments made by civic bodies.

Hakim, the Minister of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs, is also the Mayor of Kolkata. He is a senior leader of the Trinamool Congress and has considerable sway in the party's organisation.

A team of CBI officers reached his residence in south Kolkata's Chetla area along with a large contingent of Central forces in the morning and two CBI officers are questioning him, officials said.

A CBI team also searched the residence of Mitra, a former Minister and the MLA of Kamarhati in North 24 Parganas district, in Bhawanipore area, around 3 km from Hakim's residence in Chetla.

"The investigations have revealed that Mitra had a specific role in the recruitments made in Kamarhati Municipality," an official said.

Among the other places that the CBI searched were the houses of former chairman of Kancharpara Municipality



Sudama Roy, former chairman of Halisahar Municipality Angshuman Roy and Krishnanagar Municipality's former chief Ashim Ghosh, officials said.

"CBI today conducted searches around 12 places, including at Kolkata, Kancharpara, Barrackpore, Halisahar, Dum Dum, North Dum Dum, Krishnanagar, Taki, Kamarhati, Chetla, Bhawanipore etc. At the premises of certain persons, including public servants in an ongoing investigation of a case," the CBI said in a statement.

Two premises each of Hakim and Mitra are being searched in the operation, officials said.

Both Hakim and Mitra were arrested by the CBI in 2021 in the Narada sting operation case. Mitra was also arrested by the CBI in 2014 in the Saradha chit fund scam.

On Thursday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED)

searched multiple locations, including the residence of Food and Supplies Minister Rathin Ghosh, in connection with the recruitment case.

It is alleged by the central investigating agencies that around 1,500 people were illegally recruited by different civic bodies in the State between 2014 and 2018 against monetary considerations.

The agency had taken over the case on the orders of Calcutta High Court.

"It was alleged that all contracts pertaining to various municipalities, district primary school councils etc. For the recruitment of Group C and Group D employees were given to the said (single) company. It was further alleged that the said company was entrusted with all the tasks like setting up of question papers, printing and scanning of OMR sheets and preparation of final merit list etc," the CBI said.

It was also alleged that the director of said private company and others, including public servants, hatched conspiracy among themselves and in pursuant to that conspiracy, the accused (being responsible for the printing, designing and evaluation of OMR sheets) allegedly facilitated the illegal appointments of several unmeritorious candidates in several municipalities in lieu of money, the agency said.

Support of India to Israel significant: Ambassador Gilon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India knows terrorism and its support to Israel is significant, Israel ambassador to New Delhi Naor Gilon said here on Sunday. He also said India is a very important player in the world and it is a country that knows terrorism, Israel's ambassador said explaining why India's support matters much.

His comments came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour. Modi condemned it as "terrorist attacks" and said "Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour."

Israel's ambassador said India's support is significant to Israel for two reasons and the first one of them is India's importance in the world. The second one, Naor explained, is linked to India's long fight against terrorism. "India comes from a position of a country who knows terrorism. So it comes from a point of knowledge and not of ignorance."

And for that, we are very much thankful. And again,



Israel needs only moral and political support. Work on the ground we know how to do it, but we need to have the ability to execute the plan in order to make sure that Hamas will not threaten anyone else again," Naor said.

After Modi's social media post on Saturday expressing solidarity with Israel, many Indian ministers, civil servants, and businessmen reached out to the ambassador, Naor confirmed.

Several Indians are stuck in Israel, but there is no news of any Indian among the casualties. "We don't know of Indian foreign nationals so far, we didn't get any information of such," the ambassador said.

Israel needs India's strong support because Hamas will now present themselves as the victim, Naor said. "Now they have also Israeli hostages to hide behind and to present themselves as the victim. This is always the issue."

Rajnath to visit Italy, France from October 9

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit Italy and France from October 9 to 12 to discuss ways to further enhance ties with the two nations and explore possibilities to jointly produce weapon systems.

Giving details of his schedule, defence ministry officials said here on Sunday, during the first leg of his two-nation visit, Rajnath is scheduled to meet Italian Defence Minister Guido Crisotto in Rome. The relationship between India and Italy was elevated to Strategic Partnership in March 2023 during the visit of the Italian Prime Minister to India.

During the second and final leg, Rajnath will conduct the 5th Annual Defence Dialogue with his counterpart, French Minister of Armed Forces Sebastian Lecornu in Paris. India and France recently celebrated 25 years of Strategic Partnership. Both countries enjoy a deep and wide-ranging bilateral defence relationship, including significant industrial cooperation.

In both Rome and Paris, the defence minister will also



interact with the defence industry CEOs and senior representatives to discuss potential opportunities for industrial cooperation. Officials said the potential for joint development of military platforms will be part of Rajnath's discussions both in Rome and Paris.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Paris in July during which the two sides announced a raft of groundbreaking defence cooperation projects, including the joint development of jet and helicopter engines and construction of three Scorpene submarines for the Indian Navy.

The two strategic partners also expressed commitment to cooperate in the co-development and co-production of advanced defence technologies, including for the benefit of third countries.

Congress to begin campaign for Rajasthan Assembly elections from October 16

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

The Congress will begin its election campaign for the upcoming Assembly election in Rajasthan from October 16 with "Kaam kiya dil se, Congress fir se" as its slogan.

Keeping the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) on its priority list, the party will begin from Baran district and cover 13 districts of eastern Rajasthan where the canal is proposed for drinking and irrigation water for the people.

Jhalawar, Baran, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Tonk, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur will be part of Congress' poll campaign in eastern Rajasthan.

"Today we had a meeting with our leaders of eastern Rajasthan. As the chief minister said that we will start our election campaign from eastern Rajasthan against the BJP's betrayal on the formation of ERCP," Congress state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa told reporters after a meeting.

"This is the misfortune of Rajasthan that despite Shekhawat sahab (Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh



Shekhawat) being the minister, the state could not get the project. Before talking about the entire country, they should have looked into their home state," Randhawa said.

Randhawa said the party is upbeat about the upcoming assembly elections. He added that under his tenure as the Congress' state in-charge, all party leaders have come together.

Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasra the party will cover two districts everyday and hold a big public meeting in one of the districts. Before commencement of the campaign, people will be sensitised at block level till October 15.

He said that the Congress government has fulfilled 98 per cent of the promises made in its manifesto and the next mani-

festo will be prepared on the basis of the 'Vision 2030' document. The schemes of the Congress government have had a positive impact on the people, and there is no anti-incumbency, he said.

Dotasra said there was factionalism within the BJP, and added that the party has no answer to the schemes of the Gehlot government.

At the Congress Working Meeting (CWC) meeting, which is scheduled to be held in Delhi on Monday, state election committee will present the names of potential poll candidates to the screening committee for consideration, Dotasra said.

The final list of candidates contesting the polls will only be released when the high command decides on the central election committee meeting.

Limit number of vehicles, experts urge Government

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rise in air pollution is linked to growing respiratory ailments in India, experts have said and urged the Government to bring a policy limiting the number of cars per family and restricting the number of vehicles plying on roads at a time.

On the sidelines of the 25th National Conference on Pulmonary Diseases (NAPCON-2023), organised by the Indian Chest Society here, Dr Rakesh K Chawla, the chairman of Pulmonology and Critical Care at Jaipur Golden Hospital, said air pollution has short-term as well as long-term effects on health.

"The immediate effects are in the form of irritation in the eyes and throat. Also, there is an increase in the severity of asthma attacks," said Dr Chawla, who is also the organising chairman of NAPCON-2023.

The conference was organised to discuss air pollution and diseases caused by it as well as the advancements in the field of pulmonology. Dr Chawla said the long-term effects of air pollution include respiratory diseases and lung cancer, and the worst part is that in a city like Delhi "our children are growing up with poor lung conditions which will result in severity of



lung disorders and make India an unhealthy nation"

"Our governments are not doing enough to combat the growing air pollution levels. It should bring a policy to limit the number of vehicles a family should have and also restrict the number of vehicles plying on roads at a time. Also, carpooling should be promoted," he said.

On October 5, about 18 hospitals came together to train 1,800 such medical students and nurses on the latest pulmonology and interventional techniques, making it the largest one-day training programme, he said.

NAPCON's emphasis on fostering interdisciplinary collaboration is one of its hallmarks, making it a melting pot of ideas where professionals exchange experiences and collaborate on advancements with the potential to revolutionize patient care.

Dr D J Roy, Immediate Past-President of the Indian Chest Society, commented, "Lung diseases are a significant public health concern in India, with a high prevalence of respiratory infections, COPD and lung cancer. NAPCON plays a crucial role in addressing these issues by showcasing cutting-edge research findings and innovative treatment approaches."

Dr Raja Dhar, an expert on the chronic lung condition Bronchiectasis, highlighted the importance of awareness and early detection in combating this common lung disorder in India. "Post-Covid there is a great need felt by the pulmonologist society to make nurses and technicians an integral part of all training programmes and continuing nursing education to keep them up to mark on the latest advancements in respiratory medicine," the doctor said.

Territorial Army recruits Mandarin language experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's Territorial Army (TA) which has served the nation in times of war and peace, has entered into the 75th year of its existence, and recruited a batch of Mandarin language experts. The batch of five experts will also play a role as interpreters between India and China sides during Border Personnel Meetings, sources said.

Besides, the Territorial Army (TA) is also engaged in "advanced stages" of discussion and has "identified criteria" for hiring some cyber security experts, they said. "The TA was raised on October 9, 1949, and now we have just entered into our 75th year of existence, and have served the nation in times of war, and in humanitarian and environment protection works through its eventful journey over these decades," a source said.

It was raised on the concept of being a 'citizen soldier's army'. Besides augmenting the organisational requirements, the TA also provides an opportunity to able-bodied volunteer citizens of India, especially those who are over age for enrollment in the regular army, to



serve the nation in uniform.

Keeping pace with changing times, the TA units (currently about 60 units) are also evolving and undertaking various steps to transform to "remain current and responsive to the emerging environment," the sources said.

One such step is the recruitment of five "Chinese (Mandarin) language experts this year," the source said.

"The process to hire these experts in the first phase began in January and the

process was completed a few months ago.

"The process was rigorous and entailed both a written and oral examination of various candidates who have expertise in Mandarin language," the source added.

And, the "best in the country" in this field of language have been hired. The average age of these hired experts is 30 years.

They will play a role as interpreters between Indian and Chinese armies during

Border Personnel Meetings. But, they can be deployed in jobs other than at BPMs too, another source said.

The move comes nearly three years after the eastern Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Lake areas.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

The two sides hold Border Personnel Meetings at five points — Daulat Beg Oldie in northern Ladakh, Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh, Chusul in Ladakh, Bum-La near Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Nathu-La in Sikkim. Usually, both sides resolve various operational issues at the BPMs.

In addition to security-related duties, TA units are actively involved in "perception management" towards winning the hearts and minds of the local populace, including in the Jammu and Kashmir region, the sources said.

TA units have also played an important role in provid-

ing essential services and establishing rehabilitation campuses in strife-torn Manipur this year, they said.

Besides their operational role, the TA has also contributed to the protection and preservation of the environment. The first Ecological Task Force (ETF) was raised in 1982, to address the severely degraded hills of Mussoorie (Uttarakhand) due to intensive and incessant limestone quarrying and deforestation. Today, the TA has ecological battalions deployed along the length and breadth of the country, they said.

Various Ecological Task Forces of the TA deployed across India have jointly planted approximately 9.38 crore saplings in approximately 88,400 hectares of land across the country.

The units have constructed 29 new water bodies, besides rejuvenating many existing ones, the sources said.

On the 'Nari Shakti' front, the TA had commenced commissioning of Women Officers in TA since 2019.

NGT directs UP Chief Secy to take action against dumping of sewage into Yamuna



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary to file an action-taken report within six weeks in a matter regarding discharge of untreated sewage into the Yamuna at Mathura-Vrindavan.

The tribunal was hearing a petition, which claims that there are 36 drains in Mathura-Vrindavan, of which six are untapped, and those are discharging sewage into the Yamuna, rendering the water quality of the river "unfit to sustain any life".

A bench of Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said the tribunal, in an order dated April 11, directed the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary to take remedial action, including identifying the untapped drains and diverting those to sewage treatment plants (STPs), besides filing an action-taken report within four months.

The bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel, said the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) submitted

a report dated August 10, according to which an environmental compensation (EC) of ₹3.25 crore was imposed upon the city commissioner of Mathura-Vrindavan. The EC was levied with respect to five drains discharging sewage into the river at the rate of Rs 5 lakh each for 13 months, it said, noting the UPPCB's report. The bench also took note of a report dated October 4 by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), according to which a high level of faecal coliform was found at the outlets of the STPs, rendering the treated sewage unfit for discharge into the river and "other human contact purpose".

The tribunal said no action-taken report was filed on behalf of the Chief Secretary and some of its other directions were also not fully complied with.

"In the background of the aforesaid fact, we direct the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh to file the action-taken report in pursuance of the directions of the order dated April 11, 2023 within six weeks," the tribunal said.

The matter has been posted to November 30 for further proceedings.



Air Force personnel during the 91st Air Force Day celebrations, at Bamrauli headquarters of Central Air Command in Prayagraj on Sunday PTI Photo

IAF should be one of the best by 2032: Air chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari while addressing the Air Force Day parade organised at Bamrauli here on Sunday, said that India wants to see itself as a developed country in 2047. In such a situation, it becomes most important that by the time the Indian Air Force (IAF) celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2032, it should develop into one of the best air forces in the world.

He said the modern IAF is not only an air force, but it is also emerging in front of the world as a space super power. In such a situation, it becomes necessary that in view of the global competition, the IAF and airmen make themselves technically more efficient and capable.

Air Chief Marshal said the theme of this year's Air Force Day is - Air Power Beyond Boundaries. This theme shows the inherent global reach of air power. Air Force operations span the globe, providing rapid mobility and global reach. This reach allows a nation to project air power beyond borders in the form of rapid deployment, HADR and peacekeeping missions. We need to understand the nuances of developing air power, setting the pace for maintaining peace and fighting and winning wars if necessary.

The Air Chief Marshal said the IAF has continuously evolved in the last nine decades. Today it is one of the best air forces in the world. But, is this enough? If India is on track to become a developed nation by 2047, then by the



Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari addressing at the 91st anniversary day celebrations of Indian Air Force in Prayagraj on Sunday PTI Photo

time we complete 100 years in 2032, the IAF should be one of the best.

Group Captain Shalija Dhami took charge of the IAF Day parade. She is the first woman Air Force officer to receive a command appointment in a combat unit. She has more than 2,800 hours of flying experience.

The Air Force celebrated its 91st Foundation Day. There was an air show of 120 aircraft on Sunday.

Showcasing a spectacular stunt, Air Force personnel jumped from a height of 8,000 feet. As many as 10 paratroopers performed their feat by jumping from AN-32 aircraft. The personnel untied and tied the Maruti Gypsy in five minutes. Three commandos hung from the helicopter in the sky and saluted the Air Chief

Marshal.

A Kumbh-like crowd gathered at the Sangam. To control the crowd, the administration also installed barricades at many places. Showing a feat of indomitable courage and bravery, the air show started at Sangam in the afternoon. Vintage aircraft of the Navy and Army also took part. Helicopters like Chinook, Surya Kiran surprised everyone with their amazing feats.

Earlier, the new flag of the Air Force was unveiled. The emblem of the Air Force has been included in this. The Air Force was established in 1932. At that time it was the flag of the Royal Air Force. After the independence of the country, the tricolour and the Air Force goal sign were included for the first time in 1952. Since then this

flag has been the identity of the Air Force. For the first time in the history of the Air Force, the flag has been changed on the occasion of the 91st Foundation Day.

Parade and fly past has been taking place in Delhi on the occasion of the Foundation Day of the Air Force. But, last year it was organised in Chandigarh and this time in Prayagraj. This was the second time that the air show was held outside Delhi.

On October 6, the sky of Prayagraj became a witness to indomitable bravery when Air Force fighter planes rehearsed before the air show.

Planes like Rafale, Sukhoi, MiG and Jaguar were seen performing acrobatics in the sky. Lakhs of people had come to see them at the Sangam on Sunday. Jaguars suddenly came roaring from among the clouds, then disappear within a few seconds. Tejas and MiG planes were seen performing acrobatics in 360 degrees. Apache aircraft were seen coming from the other side releasing fire balls into the sky, giving the audience a sense of his prowess.

The completely indigenous C-295 aircraft, manufactured by India and in Indian service, flew for the first time at Sangam.

At the same time, MiG-21 BISON left its historical legacy and flew its last flight. Two planes in the air gave it last salute in the sky itself. In the evening, when the sun started setting, the MiG-21 BISON disappeared in the sky forever.

Mahakumbh: ₹ 55.20 crore released for 26 projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In order to expedite the projects proposed for Mahakumbh 2025, the state government has released an amount of ₹ 55.20 crore for 26 projects of the mega religious event. The government released the entire budget for all these projects in a single instalment. Among the projects for which the budget has been released include an amount of ₹ 10.02 crore for four roads of the Municipal Corporation, ₹ 28.86 crore for 18 projects of the Health department, ₹ 7.97 crore for three projects of the Forest department and ₹ 4.51 crore for one project of the mela authority. The work and funds that have been given to the Health department include construction of two new toilets of a block and renovation of toilets in all the wards of Beli Hospital. An amount of ₹ 1.62

crore has been released for the same. Besides, ₹ 73 lakh will be spent for renovation of a 40 bedded ward and parking near gate number two of Beli hospital and ₹ 2.46 crore have been released for a 30 bed night shelter on the Beli hospital's first floor and for 20 new private wards near OT ₹ 4.62 crore has been released. Besides ₹ 1.94 crore for road construction and shed, ₹ 1.04 crore for kitchen, ₹ 2.41 crore for STP and sewer line and an amount of ₹ 74.77 lakhs have been released for expanding the blood bank. An amount of ₹ 1.66 crore has been released for STP at Dufferin, ₹ 4.63 crore for parking, OPD room and night shelter, ₹ 41.34 lakh for laundry building and ₹ 24.43 for repair of night shelter and gateway for ambulance personnel has been released by the government. Whereas in Colvin Hospital, ₹ 94.72 lakh

were released for emergency expansion, ₹ 2.94 crore for construction of 14 new private wards, ₹ 57.23 lakh for road construction and ₹ 51.89 lakh for sewer line. Funds have been released for UP State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) wherein ₹ 64.89 lakh has been released for construction of balance yard, RCC camp and for an overhead tank at Jhansi. ₹ 80.85 lakh for construction of Muratganj bus station, ₹ 62.44 lakh for development of balance yard at GM Camp Rajapur and dormitory have also been released. Funds have also been released for constructions that will be undertaken by the PMC. Besides ₹ 4.65 crore for road and footpath from Balson crossing to Colonelganj Inter College and from Kundan Guest House to Matiraya and Alop Shankari temple, ₹ 1.90 crore for improvement of Kakraha Ghat

road and Banyan Ghat road in Meerapur. Besides ₹ 1.58 crore for the road from the old toll to workshop located in Naini, Jahangirabad, ₹ 1.88 crore has been released for the improvement of road, footpath and drain from Rasulabad Ghat in Zone-3 to Sangam Vatika via Jwala Devi School, Mehdauri Gaon. For the funds released for the Forest department, ₹ 3.62 crore for tree guards and plantation on the bank along Ganga river in Jhansi, Phaphamau, Naini, ₹ 1.15 crore for putting iron tree guards and plantation in the urban area, plantation in 20 hectares along the roads of Saraswati Hi-Tech City will be used. In addition to this, an amount of ₹ 4.51 crore has been released for the guest house of Prayagraj Mela Authority in Georgetown. Four rooms and a seating area for officers will be developed here.

Meghnad Saha Memorial Lecture organised

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): Commemorating 100 years of its establishment, the Physics department of Allahabad University (AU), organised Meghnad Saha Memorial Lecture. The department felicitated eminent professor of Physics at IISER Pune and a Padma Bhushan awardee, Prof Deepak Dhar, who was also the chief guest, on the occasion. Prof NKS Gaur and Prof Gautam Gangopadhyay graced the occasion as guest of honour while AU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Sangita Srivastava

presided over the function. Prof Deepak Dhar was felicitated by the V-C and was conferred with the Meghnad Saha Centenary award. AU also conferred him with the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) and Prof VK Tiwari, Head of the department, read the citation for Prof Dhar. In a brief address, Prof Dhar expressed how special this honour given by AU is to him. He said, "I feel grateful and honoured for the recognition just as a child would feel proud to have their parents applaud

their achievements. Parents nurture children and imbibe values in them. One day when children grow up, they look back and feel gratitude to them. For me, the university has been that parent and I owe all I have achieved to my early years in the university." The guest of honour Prof Gautam Gangopadhyay, who has done exhaustive research on the life of Meghnad Saha, was a guest of honour on the occasion. He said that Meghnad Saha had created a community of Physics that binds AU to the science

community of Kolkata and probably across the country. AU V-C Prof Sangita Srivastava mentioned about the alumni of AU who are working at top positions in the diverse areas of academia, judiciary, bureaucracy etc. "The achievements of alumni are because of the virtues and habits imbibed in them from their teachers in the university. It has been an honour for me to sign the honorary DSc degree to be bestowed upon the renowned Physicist Prof Dhar," she said.

Modi govt committed for quality mental health: Sitharaman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the central government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed for quality mental healthcare. She was addressing the students at the inauguration of Readers' Circle and 'Mental Wellness Week' organised by Student Counselling Services of Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University) at Swatantrata Bhawan here on Sunday afternoon.

"We've also improved budgetary provisions for the same," she said, adding that allocation for mental health increased from Rs 713 crore in the Union Budget 2020-21 to Rs 1,200 crore in 2023-24, which is almost 70 per cent jump in three years. The Union Finance Minister said that mental stress or any kind of stress comes largely from two factors, manic competition and public opinion or expectations of people around us. "That's why one should never feel lonely," she said, adding that that's where the role of 'Sakha' comes into play just like Draupadi recognised a Sakha in Shri Krishna. "Everyone of us can benefit from a Sakha, a friend," she said. During her interaction with the students, she said how to deal with self-doubt. "India is the best place in the world right now because it's blooming with many different activities," she said.

"It can be anybody in a position where they feel left out, not wanted or maybe feel that they don't belong to the position where they've reached," she said, appealing to the students to never give up as it is a trial for them and they should have to navigate it. "No one can help you, as such. It's



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addressing students of IIT (BHU) in Varanasi on Sunday.

you who has to crack it yourself," she advised the students.

Sitharaman further said that now the people in India are not just job-doers but they are also job creators. "They are now applying their skills and setting their own paths," she said, encouraging the students. According to her, the people from the corporate sector tell her that having women on the Board of Directors brings in newer perspectives. "Gender diversity in any organisation brings in quality," she said, and added that what is required of the women is to be there.

She suggested the students have to be sure that they are not abrasive but are forceful enough to be there. "Push yourself wherever there is an opportunity," she said while interacting with the students. The IIT (BHU) Director Prof

Pramod Kumar Jain and several senior faculty members of IIT (BHU) and BHU were also present. Earlier, when Nirmala Sitharaman landed at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, she was given a warm welcome by the senior IIT (BHU) faculty members, local officials and students.

In the beginning, the programme began with deep prajwalan and malyarpan by the FM and other dignitaries. Dr Sukhada welcomed the gathering. Rishabh introduced the Wellness Council followed by the address by IIT (BHU) Director. Prof Jain outlined the history of the student counselling services reminding the inauguration by Sri Sri Ravishankar on April 2, 2019 and how it has expanded over a period of time into various councils. He stressed the

important measures the institute has taken to address the mental wellness of our students. He mentioned that the institute takes aspects of mental wellness of the students very seriously and an evidence is this week-long celebration of mental wellness whose inaugural session is today.

The vote of thanks was given by Dr V Ramanathan, faculty in-charge of SCS who said how Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya has re-iterated the age old Indian wisdom of 'ahimsa satyam akrodhah...' and how these are vital ingredients for maintaining mental wellness. He thanked the Union Minister who is an epitome of the dictum 'ekam satram adhiyano na vidya Shastra nishchayam' meaning how she is an example of a well-read person from wide domains.

Rare endoscopic surgery performed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Sir Sunderlal Hospital in Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU) performed the first successful endoscopic surgery on a one-year old boy diagnosed with bilateral renal stones. According to BHU's urologist Dr Lalit Kumar Agarwal, a resident of Kuwar Patti village in Meja area of Prayagraj district had brought his one-year-old son to SSH BHU.

"The child, weighing 7.5 kg, was diagnosed to have bilateral renal stones (left side-1.6cm, right side- multiple-1.6cm, 1cm, 9.5mm)," informed Dr Lalit. The child was admitted to the Urology ward, SSH BHU, a few days back under Dr Lalit. After evaluation, the left side Mini-PCNL was completed and the



SSH BHU doctors performing a rare endoscopic surgery in Varanasi recently.

stone was cleared completely with the help of thulium fibre laser.

Dr Lalit said that the surgery remained eventful and

after three days on Saturday, the child was discharged in stable condition.

"Parents of the child are quite happy after surgery as

many hospitals denied this complex surgery of renal stones in such a small kid," Dr Lalit claimed, adding that this surgery was performed for the first time in Purvanchal (eastern UP) in such a small child of one year by endoscopic means at a minimal rate of less than Rs 10,000.

The surgical team consisted of Dr Lalit Kumar Agarwal (urologist), Dr Badri Das consultant anaesthesia, Dr Shridhar, Dr Nitin, Jitender and Shrawan (nursing officers), Vivek Kumar Tiwari and Sanjeev Kumar (OT technicians).

There was also guidance by Prof Sameer Trivedi and support from Dr Yashasvi and Dr Ujwal. Dr Lalit further said that next surgery for right side renal stones are planned after a month.

Make life better by gaining knowledge: Shankaracharya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Shankaracharya of Jyotish Speeth Swami Avimukteshwara and Saraswati, popularly known as Swamishri, called upon the people to make their life better by gaining knowledge. "Do not try to avoid death, but try to beautify death," he said while narrating the meaning of the life at a programme organised for the peace of the souls of those who met untimely deaths during the corona pandemic period at Srividya Math, Shankaracharya Ghat near Kedar Ghat here on Sunday.

Delivering his discourse on the second day, the Shankaracharya said that the people are seen taking measures to avoid death but we should understand that whoever is born will definitely die. "Therefore no person can escape death. We should try to embrace death. If we control death, we will attain liberation," he said, adding that just as a vessel is required to store a liquid, similarly the living being also resides in some body or the other. He said that when birth ends, death will also end. "We need to end our birth. Knowledge is the way to end birth. All types of karmas are destroyed by the fire of knowledge and when karmas are

destroyed then destiny does not materialise. When there is no enjoyment of fruits, there is no birth," he said, adding that we never live and die but our body only keeps living and dying. Earlier, Acharya Veereshwar Datar performed the Kalash puja and other religious rituals. The live telecast of the event is being done daily from 8 am to 11 am on 56 OTT and 1008.guru channels. On the first day, Swamishri said that Kashi is called the birthplace of liberation and knowledge so the event is being organised here during the Pitr Paksha. His media in-charge Sanjay Pandey and others were also present.

NATIONAL POSTAL WEEK FROM TODAY: The Department of Posts, one of the oldest departments, plays an important role in the socio-economic development of the country. 'World Post Day' is celebrated all over the world on October 9. This year its theme is 'Together for Trust'. While giving this information, Krishna Kumar Yadav, Postmaster General (PMG), Varanasi Region said that in the journey from 'dakiya daak laya' to 'dakiya bank laya', India Post has created many new dimensions. "The postal services have been witness to many historical and important events. It also

helps us to reach other countries beyond the borders," the PMG said, adding that the National Postal Week will be celebrated from October 9 to 13 and every day will be focused on a particular product or service like October 9 as World Post Day; October 10 Vittiya Sashaktikaran Diwas; October 11 Philately Day' October 12 Mails and Parcels Day and October 13 as Antyodaya Diwas. "The purpose of World Post Day is to create awareness about the post's role in the everyday life of people and businesses, as well as its contribution to global, social and economical development. To realise the concept of 'One World - One Postal System', the Universal Postal Union was established on October 9, 1874 in Bern (Switzerland), so that uniform postal system could be implemented across the world," said Yadav, adding that India was the first Asian nation, which became its member on July 1, 1876 and later in 1969, at the Universal Postal Union Congress held in Tokyo, Japan, this foundation day was declared to be celebrated as 'World Post Day'. According to him, Varanasi has a long history of postal services. "It has influenced the socio-economic environment even before

independence. Varanasi, Chandauli, Bhadohi, Ghazipur, Jaunpur and Ballia districts are established under Varanasi Postal Region under PMG, Varanasi Region. There are a total 1,728 Post Offices in Varanasi Region, out of which there are six head post offices, 269 sub post offices and 1,453 branch post offices under six districts. There are a total 252 post offices in Varanasi district alone. Even today, the Varanasi Head Post Office (built in 1920) and the Varanasi City Post Office (built in 1898) operate in British-era buildings," he said, adding that Varanasi City Post Office is functioning as Sampurna Mahila Post Office which is a fine example of women empowerment. "As a heritage, the pre-independence letter box is installed at Varanasi Head Post Office at Visheshwarganj, while the spears (with ghungroo) used by the postmen during delivery of mails have also been kept safe. The Philatelic Bureau located in the Head Post Office promotes philately, where many stamps are displayed. Many eminent personalities have also had a relationship with the postal services. Munshi Premchand's father worked in the Postal department here," Yadav informed.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Powder keg

The Israel-Palestine conflict desperately calls for world powers to bring about an early truce

Palestine, the perpetual tinder box of the world, is spewing fire once again. In just two days of flared-up armed activity by the Hamas against the Israeli army and civilians, more than 500 people have lost their lives, several hundred have been rendered shelterless or taken captive. As Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu put it plainly: "We are at war." And it really is nothing short of a full-blown war. Early on Saturday, the Hamas, a Palestinian armed group, initiated a major escalation against Israel. It launched what it called 'Operation Al-Aqsa Flood', marking the most serious barrage of rocket and missile offensive since their 11-day conflict in 2021. The Hamas has sought to justify the operation in response to "decades of Palestinian suffering", calling on the world to address the atrocities in Gaza and against Palestinian people and holy sites like Al-Aqsa. It claimed to have fired 5,000 rockets, and Israel confirmed that its fighters had entered the latter's territory. The rocket attacks extended as far north as Tel Aviv, and Hamas sent fighters into southern Israel. The attacks were launched from land, sea and air, and the Israeli army retaliated with 'Operation Iron Swords' in the Gaza Strip. Fierce gun battles were ongoing in towns and military bases near the Gaza border. Both sides may have equally convincing arguments, but the impact on ground is loss of precious and innocent lives on both sides.



The conflict, characterised by decades of violence, territorial disputes and political tensions, continues to pose a significant threat to regional stability and global peace. The latest cycle of bloodshed again

highlights the urgency of addressing the underlying issues. The United Nations has historically played a crucial role in mediating conflicts and promoting peace worldwide, and there is no reason it should not immediately step in. Besides facilitating direct negotiations between the sides, it can act as a neutral mediator to bridge the trust deficit and other prickly issues, including borders, refugees and the status of Jerusalem. The UN must continue efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict, especially in Gaza, where the situation is dire. Given the ferocity of attacks and intensity of impending threats, it seems like one of the biggest human crises in recent times. Of course, India has a role to play as it enjoys good relations with both sides and can be instrumental in brokering at least a ceasefire. As an important constituent of G20, it can garner support through various Governments to exert diplomatic pressure on the two sides and effect a truce. Only through concerted efforts can we hope to achieve just and lasting peace in the region. It is not the time to decide who is right or wrong but to put an immediate stop to the unfolding human misery caused by the war frenzy. War throws up no solution. War does not decide who is right, only who is left!

PICTALK



Devotees carry an idol of Goddess Durga to a puja pandal ahead of the Navratri festival, in Mumbai.

PTI

Same language subtitling boosts children's literacy

Applying Same language subtitling (SLS) in audio visual content, bolsters reading skills, and promotes reading practice, leading to functional literacy

Babies effortlessly acquire spoken language through exposure, but reading doesn't come naturally. Reading, intricately linked with speaking and listening skills, is a learned ability. This interplay between orality (verbal and non-verbal communication) forms the foundation of literacy. For example, for many Indian children, the absence of English orality in their homes poses a challenge when they encounter English reading in school. This raises questions about the factors influencing reading difficulties, whether it's solely due to teaching methods. In this context, Same Language Subtitling (SLS) emerges as a compelling avenue for potential transformation.



promotes automatic reading practice, paving the path to functional literacy. This synchronised approach offers several distinct advantages:

Phonemic Awareness: Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognise and work with individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. SLS strengthens the connection between spoken and written language by prompting children to read along with the displayed text, a fundamental skill for reading and word decoding. For instance, when a child hears "cat" and sees "c-a-t" on the screen, this synchronised experience enhances their phonemic awareness.

Vocabulary Expansion: Research underscores the profound impact of early reading. Reading a single children's book to your toddler daily amounts to "reading" 1825 books by age 5. SLS harnesses this potential by visually connecting spoken words with their written counterparts, becoming a potent tool for expanding children's vocabulary and reinforcing word recognition. For instance, when children watch their favourite SLS-enhanced show, they hear and see words simultaneously, transforming word learning into an enjoyable experience.

Comprehension: As children actively engage with SLS, they decode pronunciation, intonation, and context, heightening their comprehension of the storyline. This engagement accelerates reading speed while preserving comprehension, fluency, and rhythm. With consistent practice and interest, their reading speed can reach 500 words per minute compared to an average person reading 200 words per minute.

Multisensory Learning: SLS taps into the power of multisensory learning, simultaneously engaging visual and auditory senses. This dual sensory experience enhances memory retention and recall, making learning more effective and enjoyable, similar to how we remember songs better when we both hear and see the lyrics.

Independence: SLS empowers children to follow the text while listening, fostering a sense of autonomy and confidence in their reading abilities. It also encourages independent reading practices.

Language Reinforcement: Learning a new language becomes easier when you hear and see the words in context. For example, a kid whose native language is Marathi will find it easier to learn Hindi when exposed to SLS-enhanced content. Thus, SLS serves as a valuable tool by reinforcing pronunciation and syntax through context.

In a world where digital content reigns supreme, Language Subtitling emerges as a transformative force in nurturing young readers. It seamlessly integrates the joys of storytelling with the art of reading. As we embrace this innovative approach, we not only unlock the potential of our children's literacy but also empower them to embark on a lifelong journey of learning and discovery, one word at a time.

(The writer is CEO and founder of Jumbaya; views are personal)



SHAILESH PRITHANI

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The politics of Sanatan Dharma

It is better to spiritualise politics rather than politicise religion, which has its side effects and can go against the very spirit of nation building

Essha Dharma Sanatan meaning "this is sanatan dharma" or "this is eternal righteousness" defines the righteous actions in Vedic, Pauranic and other ancient Sanskrit texts including Manusmriti. I am translating Dharma as righteousness and not religion because the word 'Dharma' has a far wider connotation than religion. The right action in all walks of life has been referred to as Dharma in Indian culture. Be it Raj Dharma (to do and not to do by a Ruler), Praja Dharma (to do and not to do by subjects), Putra Dharma (to do and not to do by a son), Shishya Dharma (to do and not to do by a pupil) and so on. Sanatan Dharma, which we commonly refer to as Hinduism, sets out principles of eternal righteousness in all walks of life, which are absolute and objective.

That is the reason why Sanatan Dharm, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, gave itself no name, because it set itself no sectarian limits; it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuously enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit. An immense many-sided and many staged provisions for spiritual self-building and self-finding.

Sanatan Dharm or Hinduism is distinct in its character from all other religions of the World as it has no creed, cult, or code. This very nature of Sanatan Dharm makes it indomitable and eternal, as there are no defined characteristics or boundaries of it. The extinction or the destruction of Sanatan Dharm would mean the extinction of righteousness and the destruction of Godward endeavour. The recent uproar after Udaymidhi's statement followed by the panic alerts about the destruction of Sanatan Dharm was more political than religious. Godward Endeavor and righteousness cannot even slightly be impaired much less destroyed by any outside force.

Sanatan Dharm does not set out any path in the exclusivity of others for Godward endeavour. Even an atheist is a Hindu or a Sanatani, who does not believe in



the existence of God but follows the path of Dharm. Maharishi Charvak had been revered as a saint and the propagator of the materialistic system and atheistic school of Hinduism by the Sanatan Dharm. Its unique inclusiveness includes all the seekers of Truth within its ambit, irrespective of the religious practices he or she follows and all the activities of human life, individual and collective. Similarly, Raj Dharma is a functionary branch of Sanatan Dharm, defining the dharma of the Ruler, which in modern times should be the charm of the government.

Dharm's real business is to prepare man for spiritual consciousness. The religious institutions which include the place of worship, scriptures, guru and guides, and essential practices are aids to practice dharma and to thus attain spiritual consciousness. These religious institutions comprising temples and their architecture, mantric sounds, rituals, practices and even exercises i.e., Pranayam and Yoga have been carefully developed with the high scientific acumen of Rishis. It is not the external attack, which has put Sanatan Dharm at risk. It is rather the politicisation of the religious sentiment of people through



SANATAN DHARM OR HINDUISM IS DISTINCT IN ITS CHARACTER FROM ALL OTHER RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD AS IT HAS NO CREED, CULT, OR CODE

self-proclaimed flag bearers of Hindutva who are not interested in the scriptures and philosophy of Sanatan Dharm but in exploiting the politicised religious sentiment to achieve political ends, which is posing a real threat to the Sanatan Dharm.

They are creating a cult among Hindus that is philosophically opposed to Hinduism and are propagating the characteristics rather than virtues, which Sanatan Dharm and Hinduism seek to conquer. Such pseudo-religious leaders, who are politicians, had been trying to confine

Sanatan Dharm to their Hindutva identity with narrowness and shallowness in understanding and the practice of Dharma. The lack of intellectual activity among the majority has kept most of the Indian population away from the study of dharma. What has done further harm to the Sanatan is the incorrect and humanised audio-visual depiction of scriptures and Puranic texts. The rise of religious gurus through meticulously crafted PR strategies and social media marketing is the real threat to Sanatan Dharm. Individually, one qualification for a Hindu or a Sanatani is the seeker ship of higher con-

sciousness through his path. That path can even be atheistic or materialistic, as propounded by Maharishi Charvak. Raj-Dharma calls for the rule by Dharm i.e., righteousness and not otherwise. The present philosophy of "Rule of Law" keeps much pace with it. Indian Religion always adhered to the rule of Dharma therefore the King or the Ruler was guided by a Rishi, who was spiritually evolved and illuminated with true dharma. The right remedy, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not to belittle still farther the age-long ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale strongly advocated for the spiritualisation of politics. His concept of spiritualisation of politics was to reorient politics away from power dynamics and towards higher principles of governance i.e., justice, compassion, and peace. If we want to protect Sanatan Dharm, we need first to come out from the pseudo-Hinduism driven by politics and follow the real path of Sanatan Dharm, by depoliticising Sanatan Dharm and spiritualising the politics.

(The writer is an advocate in the Supreme Court of India, views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STUDENTS UNDER PRESSURE

Sir—In India, a pressing issue persists: students grappling with immense pressure, often leading to tragic outcomes like suicide. This problem arises from a complex interplay of familial expectations and an intense, competitive education system. Regrettably, mental health remains a rarely discussed topic, exacerbating the issue. While government initiatives, such as installing safety measures, are well-intentioned, they may not be the ultimate solution.

A more effective approach lies in open conversations between parents and children, emphasizing that grades are not the sole measure of success. Parents must understand their child's unique struggles. Moreover, reforming the Indian education system is imperative, shifting the focus from grades to nurturing individual skills and potential. This shift can create a healthier and more supportive learning environment.

S. Kritika/Bengaluru

INDIAN ATHLETES SHINE

Sir—The headline "India Scripts Golden History" hardly does justice to India's monumental achievement at the Asian Games. Their record-breaking performance, securing 107 medals, surpasses their previous best by a staggering 37 medals. This accomplishment fills every Indian with immense pride.

Credit must be attributed to the athletes, their families, sports federations, coaches, and support staff for their dedication and hard work. Special mention goes to our Shooting and Track and Field athletes, who brought home 22 and 29 medals, respectively. While every medal winner has made us proud, some have truly shone, such as the Dressage team's gold-winning effort in equestrian, Roshibina Devi's silver in Wushu, and the gold and silver won by Ojas Deotale and Abhishek Verma in Compound men's individual archery. Similarly, Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Jena's gold and silver medals, along with a historic gold in

Palestine-Israel conflict



The conflict between Hamas and Israel persists in Gaza. Israel, despite its small size, stands as a self-sufficient global leader in industry, trade, agriculture, science, technology, weaponry, and even nuclear capabilities. It also exports weapons, grain, and modern machinery to larger countries. The primary cause of this conflict traces back to 1946, when Israel was established. At that time, the entire region was known as Palestine. A small portion of Palestine was allocated as Israel by Western powers. Since then, Israel has continued to occupy most of the territory, confining Palestinians to a minuscule part. What's even more disheartening is that this small

piece has been divided into two parts: the West Bank and Gaza, with no connecting borders; it's entirely surrounded by Israeli territories. Gaza is sealed off by walls and barbed wire, while Israeli checkpoints control access for humanitarian needs. Gaza today resembles the world's largest prison. Furthermore, Israel has extended its occupation into areas of Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, with ambitions to expand even further.

On one hand, Palestinians endure oppression, with homes demolished and forced evictions. On the other hand, Israel actively encourages Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories, providing various incentives and security guarantees. This has led to a demographic shift, with the balance between Muslims and Jews tipping. What once was a Muslim-majority area in 1946 has now become more balanced. In light of these challenges, it's imperative for influential world leaders to step forward and play a significant role in resolving this longstanding conflict.

Afazuddin Kazi Qasmi/Mumbai

Badminton's Men's doubles by Satwiksairaj & Chirag Shetty, have left us all inspired. We should not be surprised if the Indian contingent continues to win medals in double digits in Paris next year. From mere participation to a substantial medal haul, we have come a long way. It is high time that non-cricket sports receive their due recognition in our country.

Bal Govind/Noida

FOOD SEGREGATION

Sir—Through the esteemed pages of your newspaper, I wish to highlight a concerning issue at IIT-Bombay—food segregation. This practice threatens the unity among the institution's students. Academic institutions should be places where students have the freedom to pursue their passions without being restricted by factors like communities, food preferences, or gender. IIT-Bombay, renowned for its diversity,

encourages students to live with others of varying ideologies, fostering cooperation and respect for different choices.

However, food segregation goes against the principles and ideals of such a prestigious institution. If IIT-Bombay accommodates such demands, it might lead to requests for celebrating different festivals and special holidays, potentially creating divisions among students of different genders and disrupting institutional unity.

The need of the hour is to appoint counselors to sensitize students about the importance of coexisting, despite differences in lifestyles. They should be taught to celebrate diversity and find common ground. All higher educational institutions, including IITs, should set an example for "Unity in Diversity."

Aarav Garg | New Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

DISPOSABLE CUPS:
A HEALTH HAZARD

The fancy disposable cups could lead to cancer



SAKSHI SETHI

Are you planning to flaunt your favourite iced latte or frappe or your hot tea or coffee in the fancy cup... then it's time to get a little serious. In our fast-paced world, every one of us wants our drinks on the go, wherever and whenever we go. But do we all even realise that these beverages when poured into the so-called fancy paper cups and covered lids are increasing the risk of cancer?

It is often believed that these plastic cups or bottles were never been a choice at large as they contain BPA (a chemical linked to cancer and other diseases) and keeping that in mind many paper cups replaced plastic cups (once referred to as nature's gift) on the market and started selling their produce in the market as "eco-friendly". There is no denying the fact that paper cups may be healthier for the planet Earth than plastic but the big question that puts everyone in trouble is whether they are safe for the INDIVIDUAL at large.

As per various types of research conducted in and out, it has been found that over thirty billion sub-micron-sized plastic particles present in the top layer of these so-called eco-friendly paper cups showed the presence of heavy metals such as lead, chromium and cadmium in the liners, which can be the major cause for the increase of risk of cancer. The plastic coating, when exposed to hot liquids starts to break down and releases trillions of nanoparticles of microplastics per litre and when they are ingested regularly over time, the health implications could be serious. Studies have even shown that the chemicals present in them can have adverse effects on human health, particularly in the context of reproductive health. These chemicals have also been linked to interference in sperm production, genital malformation and even hormonal disturbances.



So next time when you hit a coffee shop or a kiosk for your favourite iced frappe or hot tea/coffee remember, that these cups and the covering lid are a harm to living organisms when they end up in nature. One of many solutions is to make and enjoy your tea/coffee at home or to bring your reusable travel mug when you get to your favourite coffee shop. Today, many start-ups are offering edible, biodegradable, plastic-free alternatives to the standard polyethylene-lined paper cups that are used for tea or coffee which largely end up in landfills.

These takeaway cups come with an inner lining that helps the cup stay waterproof and the lining also makes it difficult to recycle these cups. The concept of edible cups is a lot in which these cups are made with oats and grains and last for almost eight to ten hours without even affecting the taste of the drink. Alternatively, the use of earthen cups, often referred to as kulhad is a hygienic and environmentally friendly alternative to plastic and paper cups. The simple yet earthy texture and the aroma allow one to truly appreciate the drink in a completely different and rustic way. Also, such cups are non-reusable and when disposed of or broken can get merged with the soil and be used again.

So, if you love your tea or coffee, think twice or thrice about how to grab yours in a healthy and eco-friendly way and say a big NO to the disposables as aptly said "You can't control everything in your life but, you can control what you put in your body."

(The writer is educator; views are personal)

Globalisation of Indian financial markets



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

In sync with India's rising stock in the global economy and geopolitics, Indian financial market is about to be truly globalised



The Government of India Bond (G-Sec) is a marker for the economy. The yield of the 10-year G-sec is often reckoned as a benchmark for the interest rate in the economy - the RBI therefore tries hard to prevent any wild fluctuation in its yield. Yield is inversely related to price, and when the price soars due to high demand, the yield naturally falls. This is precisely what happened on 21st September, when the yield of the 10-year G-Sec dropped by 7 basis points (0.07 per cent) to a two-month low of 7.08 per cent, before rising to 7.12 per cent eventually. Simultaneously, the rupee appreciated by 0.3 per cent to Rs 82.25 a dollar.

The trigger was an announcement, through a note dated 21st September, by the American bank JP Morgan Chase that the G-Secs would be included in its globally tracked "Government Bond Index for Emerging Markets Global Diversified (GBI-EMGD)" Index suite. Twenty emerging market economies are presently part of the GBI-EM Global index suite: Brazil, Czech Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and Uruguay; now India will be included from June 2024. The decision marks a key positive development for India to boost its standing in international financial markets.

The inclusion followed intense negotiations of the government of India with investors and banks since 2019 and preparing the ground for inclusion. First, the RBI introduced a Fully Accessible Route (FAR) for investments in G-Secs giving non-resident investors complete access to specified G-Secs in 2020. 23 G-Secs with a combined nominal value of \$330 billion are presently index-eligible under the FAR - the criteria being a minimum of 2.5 years of remaining maturity (i.e., maturity falling after December 31, 2026) and a notional \$1Bn outstanding against the eligible G-Secs.

Other requirements include adequate trading frequency, easy availability and the absence of capital controls in local markets. India is already present in JP Morgan's GBI-



A GOLDMAN SACHS REPORT ESTIMATES THAT "INDIA'S FIXED INCOME MARKETS COULD SEE INFLOWS UPWARDS OF \$40 BILLION"

(The author, a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India, is currently a Professor at the Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management; views are personal)

EM Broad and GBI-EM Broad Diversified Indices. But the GBI-EMGD index is closely followed by most global funds and has a huge \$236 billion in assets benchmarked against it. Global managers use the index as a benchmark for investment and inclusion automatically opens the door to foreign capital - this applies to all such indices, major among these are Bloomberg, FTSE Russell and JP Morgan.

Their influence in the financial money market is so overwhelming that no country can ignore them. JP Morgan's index was launched in the 1990s; it dominates the market for dedicated emerging-market-debt investors, with some \$780 billion of potential investments tracking its benchmarks. Foreign investors make allocations of their assets depending on the portfolio weights. India's inclusion in the Index will be spread over 10 months from June 28, 2024, till March 31, 2025, with an addition of 1 per cent weightage every month up to the maximum threshold of 10 per cent, which is a significant presence in the index. This is expected to attract about \$25 billion in investments into India at the rate of 1 per cent of assets every month over 10 months, as investors who track the index rebalance their portfolios. A Goldman Sachs report estimates that "India's fixed income markets could see inflows upwards of \$40 billion" over the inclusion horizon till March 2025. The Indian Rupee will appreciate as a result of the increased inflow, mirroring what happened between 2003 and 2008 due to the surge of capital inflows into India. Apart from giving the index provider - JP Morgan Chase - a scope to diversify their index, especially after Russia's ejection in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine and also given the slowing economy in China, the inclusion will also give exposure to the world's fifth largest and the fastest growing

major economy to all foreign investors. However it means that the globalised investment rules will now apply to the Indian bond market, and Indian tax policies and macroeconomic stability will need to be carefully managed, as any slip may affect the capital inflow. As the Chief Economic Adviser has said, our fiscal and monetary policies must take cognisance of global expectations. As of now, external borrowing is only a small part of our overall loan portfolio, this may increase over time.

Apart from attracting funds, it would also lower the country's interest rate, or borrowing cost of capital, making it even more attractive for investments. This is because the investments in G-Secs will ease borrowing pressures on the money market by freeing up capital for borrowing by the private borrowers - government borrowing will no longer crowd out private borrowing. This will bring down the cost of capital. Financial institutions today are the biggest buyers of the G-Secs, once foreign investors start buying G0secs, they can lend to the private sector for capital creation to boost income generation and growth. Demand for G-Secs by foreign investors will hike up their prices causing the yield to fall. This will help the government reduce its interest costs, bringing down fiscal deficits and helping the government control inflation as well, as interest, fiscal deficit, inflation and exchange price of the rupee are all interrelated.

JP Morgan is the first major emerging market benchmark provider to include India in its indices for emerging markets. The inclusion of India in the GBI-EMGI will open the door for India's inclusion in the other two major indices as well - Bloomberg and FTSE Russell - shortly. No major index can ignore India's rising eco-

nomical power, as demonstrated by the fact that 73 per cent of the benchmarked investors were in favour of India's inclusion in JP Morgan's GBI-EM GD index. India fulfils the criteria for inclusion in the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index of an investment grade (Baa3/BBB) and is already on the watchlist for inclusion in the UK-based FTSE Russell's Index for Emerging Markets. Inclusion in Bloomberg's Aggregate index is expected to generate forex inflow of \$15-20 billion, with India's weight ranging from 0.6 per cent to 0.8 per cent. Hopefully, inclusion in JP Morgan's index will ultimately nudge the credit rating agencies - S&P, Fitch and Moody's - also to upgrade their assessment of India; currently, they all give India their lowest investment-grade rating. In any case, the Indian economy has outperformed most emerging market economies - the Sensex also has outperformed the stock markets of all its peer countries. A rating upgrade is now overdue.

India is also expected to enter other JPMorgan bond indices—the JADE Global Diversified Index, the JESG GBI-EM Index, and other aggregate suites of local currency indices. Its weightage in the GBI-EMGD index is expected to rise to 8.7 per cent. Experts estimate that FPI holdings of outstanding G-secs could double by May 2025 to 3.4 per cent compared to September 2023. India's inclusion will trigger outflows elsewhere, leading to shrinkage of weights for government bonds issued by other countries - JP Morgan estimates that Thailand will be the biggest loser with a 1.65 percentage points loss, followed by South Africa, Poland, Czech Republic and Brazil. The Indian financial market, about to be truly globalised, is at last coming of age, in sync with India's rising heft in global economy and geopolitics.

Holistic healing: Untapped potential of music therapy

Music therapy has the potential to become a powerful therapeutic intervention that can give holistic care to individuals who face distress and depression

The World Health Organisation has provided the statistics on global mental health. In 2019, about a billion individuals worldwide were suffering from mental illnesses. This shocking proportion included 14% of the world's teenagers (WHO Report, 2018). In recent years, the importance of mental health has gained international recognition. This is demonstrated by the fact that it was included in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations in September 2015. (Votruba & Thornicroft, 2016). With that, the most popular form of therapy in the twenty-first century is cognitive behavioural therapy, also referred to as talk therapy. With the aid of a qualified psychologist, they are intended to



GARIMA RAJAN



SUHANI VORA

(Garima Rajan is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Suhani Vora is an Undergraduate at FLAME University, Pune; views are personal)

substitute negative ideas and behaviours with positive ones. They are effective in treating a range of disorders, such as anxiety and depression. A less-discussed form of treatment is creative arts therapy. By giving patients a platform for creative expression, this approach promotes healing.

Healing Power of Sound

A universal language exists in music. Since ancient times, it has been used to unite people, especially in times of difficulty. The concerts and live performances that singers and artists gave to their audiences during the pandemic serve as an example of this. Similarly, music therapy becomes comforting for individuals with mental disorders as the therapeutic nature of music is amplified. In addition to serv-

ing as a tool for processing emotions, trauma, and sorrow, music may also be used to control or ease anxiety or other forms of dysregulation.

Music Therapy

According to professor and neuropsychologist Dr. Daniel Levitin, "Music therapy is the evidence-based use of music in clinical situations that help people achieve desired health outcomes". Different vibrations and sound waves can produce music. The effectiveness of music therapy depends on the brain's openness to these Waves. One can reorient and integrate with the present reality and environment by using music as a sensory input. In addition, playing and listening to music can stimulate the body's produc-

tion of natural killer cells and antibody immunoglobulin A, which are cells that fight viruses in our bodies (Novotney, 2013). This strengthens the body's defences. Music therapy can also be an effective tool for overall well-being and work as a preventive or anticipatory healing modality for vulnerable patients by working on reducing the levels of cortisol (stress hormone).

Music Therapy and Mental Health Disorders

Depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety (just to name a few) are some of the most debilitating mental disorders that can cause severe distress in an individual's life. Its treatment includes psychotherapy, commonly known as talk therapy as well as medication.

However, sometimes depression and post-traumatic stress disorders can lead to psychomotor regression. There are four major ways music therapy can be used for regulating emotions combined with psychotherapy and medication. Firstly, lyric analysis is a new and less intimidating method of processing feelings, thoughts, and experiences. It provides the individual with an opportunity to express their feelings through music lyrics. Secondly, improvisation is a technique where playing instruments encourages individuals to express emotions through therapeutic themes. Then comes active music listening where music's rhythmic and repetitive aspect is used to regulate feelings. Lastly, songwriting is a creative

and positive way to express emotions. It can also be gratifying to listen to one's creation building up their self-esteem.

Palliative Care

People with terminal diseases may find comfort in music therapy's calming influence. For patients receiving palliative care, it can calm them, lessen their worry, and foster a serene atmosphere.

Music Therapy in India

In India, music therapy is still in its infancy. Since a few years ago, hospitals, clinics, counselling services, and rehabilitation facilities in India have used music as a therapeutic intervention. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Kinjalk Diabetes and Heart Care Centre, CK Birla Hospital for Women and Niramaya

Wellness Clinic are some institutes where music therapy is practised. For over three decades, Dr. Nishindra Kinjalk has contributed significantly to the study and use of music therapy in India. The Kinjalk Mode of Music Application, sometimes known as "KIMMA", was developed by Dr. Kinjalk in 1987. The KIMMA is used to determine the best music for patients based on their medical history, mood, and condition. KIMMA is one of the techniques created in India, along with other music application methods including Nada Chikitsa, and Nada Yoga.

We may spread the healing that music therapy offers which is a peaceful route to greater physical and psychological well-being.

'Colossal intelligence failure' as Israel caught unprepared

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

The surprise and unprecedented multifront attack – by air, land and sea – by the Hamas militant group in southern Israel from the Gaza Strip is a result of a “colossal failure” of the country’s intelligence agencies, according to media reports and experts.

Militants from Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, fired more than 3,000 rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel on Saturday morning, according to the Israeli military, while Hamas fighters entered southern Israel by land, sea and air, using paragliders and even captured several Israeli soldiers near the border.

At least 350 Israelis, including soldiers, have been killed and more than 1,900 injured in Israel – the deadliest day for the country in at least 50 years. On the Gaza Strip side, there are nearly 300 deaths and about 1,500 wounded in Israel’s counterattack, media reports said on Sunday.

Israel has always prided itself on its intelligence agencies, Shin Bet, the domestic unit, and especially on Mossad, its external spy agency. However, more than 5,000 rockets were fired as dozens of Hamas fighters infiltrated the heavily fortified border in several locations by air, land and sea, catching the country off guard on Sukkot, a major Jewish holiday.

All this happened despite Israel having one of the strongest militaries in the region, security cameras at the fortified border, personnel from both Shin Bet and Mossad in the field, state-of-the-art thermal imaging/motion sensors and even sophisticated border fencing.

Some experts feel that Israel got so totally engrossed in countering Iran and in efforts to foil the Islamic Republic’s nuclear programme that it has neglected its own backyard.

Israeli ministers said the military must provide answers about the failure of its intelligence, in a security cabinet meeting held late on Saturday, YNetNews, a leading portal, said.

Ministers criticised Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi claiming



People look at the damage from a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip in Tel Aviv, Israel

AP/PTI

he did not find the time to brief them on Saturday. “Some wondered if he had wanted to avoid their difficult questions about the failure of the military intelligence to detect the Hamas plan,” the news portal said.

“Every Israeli citizen wants to know how this failure was possible?” Science and Technology Minister Ofir Akunis said. “Why are the Chief of Staff and Intelligence chief not here now? We need more information.”

He suggested briefings be provided to the ministers three times a day.

A report in Jerusalem Post, a leading newspaper, said, “Gaza was on the back burner in terms of a sense of security threats because Iran-backed proxies have been increasing threats elsewhere” and gave details of the events unfolded over the last three-four years in the region which, it said, led to “Hamas in Gaza appeared isolated, unable to even get more funds from the usual sources, such as Qatar.”

“With Israeli normalisation agreements growing in the region, Hamas seemed to present an outdated ideology of living in the past. This seems to have lulled people into a false sense of security,” it pointed out.

Against the repeated warnings following every escalation that a truce would only help Hamas and other Islamic organisations to rebuild their strength for the next round,

Israel had agreed to a ceasefire with Hamas recently, which, some experts said, warnings ignored because of domestic constraints of politics.

“Even as Israel’s political chiefs began to convene in emergency consultations, with the full extent of the infiltration and its consequences still unfolding, Hebrew media began quoting unnamed officials castigating the political and military echelons for the fact that Israel, preoccupied with internal argument, had again been taken by surprise,” said a report in Times of Israel.

“The IDF’s assumption, in recent years, was that Hamas was deterred from carrying out major attacks in Israel – fearing the potency of Israel’s response, and wary of plunging Gaza into renewed devastation,” it said, pointing: “All too evidently, that assumption was unfounded.”

Eli Maron, the former head of the Israeli Navy told a new channel anchor, “All of Israel is asking itself: Where is the IDF, where is the police, where is the security? It’s a colossal failure; the hierarchies have simply failed, with vast consequences.”

The Times of Israel also quoted Amos Yadlin, a former IDF intelligence chief, as saying, (the attack) invoked echoes of the Yom Kippur War – another attack marked by “intelligence failure,” with the enemy initiating conflict.

For scores of Israelis, Saturday’s deadly infiltration immediately revived painful

memories of the October 1973 war practically 50 years to the day, in which Israel’s enemies had launched a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism.

“It cannot be understated or put in less severe terms: The IDF, the strongest military in the Middle East and one of the most respected worldwide, was caught completely by surprise in the Hamas attack on Israel on Saturday,” YNetNews reported.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), in an analysis, pointed out: “With the combined efforts of Shin Bet, Israeli domestic intelligence, Mossad, its external spy agency and all the assets of the Israel Defence Forces, it is frankly astounding that nobody saw this coming.”

“Or if they did, they failed to act on it,” it said, listing Israel’s capabilities ranging from informants’ network, drone attack strikes, and precision assassinations among others, and then added, “To prepare for and carry out such a coordinated, complex attack involving the stockpiling and firing of thousands of rockets, right under the noses of the Israelis, must have taken extraordinary levels of operational security by Hamas.”

Some experts are also blaming it on the internal divide within Israel in view of the judicial overhaul plan initiated by the government that has led to massive calls for boycott, depleting strength in posi-

China calls on Palestine, Israel to end hostilities

Beijing (PTI): China on Sunday called on Palestine and Israel to immediately end the hostilities, exercise restraint, and remain calm to protect civilians to avoid further deterioration of the situation. China is deeply concerned over the current escalation of tensions and violence between Palestine and Israel, and calls on relevant parties to remain calm, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in response to questions on the fierce conflicts between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip resulting in massive casualties on both sides.

Hamas launched a wave of rocket attacks on Saturday, killing over 200 people in Israel in the biggest escalation in decades. Israel has responded with a wave of air strikes on Gaza, killing more than 230 people, according to media reports.

The spokesperson said the recurrence of the conflict

shows once again that the protracted standstill of the peace process cannot last. The fundamental way out of the conflict lies in implementing the two-state solution and establishing an independent State of Palestine.

The international community needs to act with greater urgency, step up input into the Palestine question, facilitate the early resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel, and find a way to bring about enduring peace, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted the spokesperson as saying.

China will continue to work relentlessly with the international community towards that end, the spokesperson added.

China this year has stepped up its diplomacy in the Middle East and brokered a surprise deal between arch-rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran in March to end their hostilities and restore diplomatic ties.

China’s intelligence and counter-terrorism analyst Kimberly Dozier weighed in on Hamas strategy and how Israeli intelligence apparently missed the signals of an attack as she said, “How did such a large group of people plan such a large operation without detection by the Israeli side when Israeli defence officials practically bragged about how they infiltrated all Palestini communications in Gaza and the West Bank even if they were using encrypted Apps.”

“This is an incredible message on the part of the Palestinians and Hamas that they were able to gather all these weapons and (carry out) multiple massive attacks,” she said.

The Israeli government authorities did seem concerned about Israeli preparedness in a war-like situation and went around checking shelter houses across the country, but it is not clear if that was directed towards a possible fight with Iran or a probable Palestinian attack.

UK police increase patrols amid incidents in London related to Israel conflict

London (PTI): Scotland Yard said it has increased patrols across London after a number of incidents, including messages and images shared on social media, in relation to the ongoing conflict in Israel. The Metropolitan Police statement on Saturday night came as UK Home Office minister Robert Jenrick condemned anyone “glorifying” the terrorist activities of Hamas, a banned outfit, and London Mayor Sadiq Khan warned that hate crimes will not be tolerated. It follows one of the biggest escalations of conflict in the Middle East in decades. “We are aware of a number of incidents, including those that have been shared on social media, in relation to the ongoing conflict in Israel and the border with Gaza,” the Met Police said in a statement on Saturday evening. “The Met has increased policing patrols across parts of London in order to provide a visible

presence and reassurance to our communities. We remain in contact with partners and community leaders to listen to any concerns,” it said. Anyone who experiences threatening behaviour or is worried about their safety is being urged to contact the police.

“We are aware that the ongoing conflict may lead to protests over the coming days. We will ensure that an appropriate policing plan is in place in order to balance the right to protest against any disruption to Londoners,” the statement added. The Home Office minister’s tweet followed a television personality’s post on X, formerly Twitter, warning that it was a terrifying time for Jews. “These disgusting people are glorifying the terrorist activities of Hamas, a proscribed organisation. There is no place for this in the UK. I trust the Met Police will be taking this seriously,” said Robert Jenrick.

Cop in Egypt kills 2 Israelis at tourist site in Alexandria

AP ■ CAIRO

An Egyptian policeman opened fire on Sunday on Israeli tourists in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, killing at least two Israelis and one Egyptian, Israeli and Egyptian authorities said. A statement from Egypt’s Interior Ministry said that another person was wounded in the attack at the Pompey’s Pillar site in Alexandria. It provided no further details.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry identified the wounded person as an Israeli who suffered moderate injuries. The ministry said in a statement that Israeli authorities were working with the Egyptian government to bring the Israelis home.

Extra News television channel, which has close ties to

Egyptian security agencies, reported that the suspected assailant was detained. The dead Egyptian was a tour guide, according to media outlets. Security forces quickly cordoned off the site of the attack. Graphic footage posted on social media showed two people lying motionless on the ground. Another was seen being helped by a group of men. One woman was heard shouting for an ambulance.

The attack triggered mixed reactions from social media users. Some lauded the attack in Alexandria while others condemned the killing of civilians visiting Egypt.

Writing on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, renowned Egyptian writer and TV host Ibrahim Issa called the attack a “terror-

ist crime,” adding that, “any attempt to justify it is a crime against humanity and the nation.” Amr Magdi, researcher with Human Rights Watch, condemned the attack, saying on X: “No justification whatsoever for intentionally targeting Israeli civilians in #Egypt, Gaza or anywhere else.”

In a message to Americans in Egypt, the US embassy in Cairo urged them to take precautions as the attack could be related to the clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants. Egypt was the first Arab country to make peace with Israel in the 1970s and has long served as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But anti-Israeli sentiment runs high in the country, especially during bouts of violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

4 Nepalese students injured, 11 missing

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Four Nepalese students studying in Israel have been injured and 11 are still missing after Hamas militants attacked a farm, Foreign Minister NP Saud said on Sunday.

The minister said that casualties are feared among the missing students studying in the southern part of Israel. Israel witnessed a surprise and unprecedented attack by the Hamas group, which rules the Gaza Strip, in its southern parts on Saturday morning.

At least 600 people, including soldiers, have been killed and more than 1,900 injured in Israel – the deadliest day for the country in at least 50 years.

In the Gaza Strip, there are nearly 300 deaths and about 1,500 wounded in Israel’s counterattack, media reports said on Sunday. “Contact could not be established with 11 Nepalese students and heavy casualties among them are feared,” Foreign Minister

Saud told PTI.

“We are trying to ascertain the exact number of casualties,” he added. There were 17 Nepalese students in Kibbutz Alumim in southern Israel, under the learn and earn programme. Out of 17, two managed to escape safely and four of them sustained injuries, according to Foreign Ministry sources.

The injured Nepalese students are undergoing treatment in a hospital, the sources added. There are currently 4,500 Nepalese working as caregivers and 265 Nepalese students currently working in various agricultural firms under the learn and earn scheme. The Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the attack in Israel by the Hamas group. The Nepal government has taken the incident seriously, the ministry said in a statement.

The Government of Nepal has formed a mechanism headed by Saud aimed at rescuing Nepali citizens currently in Israel, according to the ministry.

Hamas attack on Israel thrusts Biden into Mideast crisis

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The deadly Hamas militant attack on Israel and the massive retaliation it provoked from Jerusalem have thrust President Joe Biden into a Middle East crisis that risks expanding into a broader conflict and has left him fending off criticism from GOP presidential rivals that his administration’s policies led to this moment.

The potential for prolonged and expanding violence could test Biden’s leadership on both the world stage and at home as he tries to navigate between demonstrating unflinching support for Israel and fostering a broader peace in the combustible Mideast, where sympathetic militants were quick to loudly praise the action by Hamas.

Lebanon’s Hezbollah group welcomed the attack as a response to “Israeli crimes.” The group, which holds similar goals as Hamas for the destruction of the Israeli state, said its command was in contact with Hamas about the operation.

A senior adviser to Iran’s

supreme leader also lauded the deadly attack. And Hamas said it was ready for a potentially long fight.

Israeli media, citing rescue service officials, said at least 300 people were killed, including 26 soldiers, while in Gaza officials said 313 people had died.

An Israeli military official said hundreds of militants had been killed and dozens captured.

Rear Adm Daniel Hagari, an Israeli military official, said the military had killed 400 militants since the start of the war and captured dozens more.

Among the 313 killed in Gaza were 20 children, and close to 2,000 wounded, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. Several 2024 Republican presidential contenders immediately tried to pin a portion of the blame on Biden.

They sought to tie his recent decision to release USD 6 billion in blocked Iranian funds in exchange for freeing five Americans who had been detained in Iran to Saturday’s complex attack by air, land and sea. The White House pushed back fiercely against the GOP criticism, noting that the



money unfrozen last month in the prisoner swap has yet to be spent by Iran and can only be used for humanitarian needs.

Iran has historically maintained strong ties with both Palestinian Hamas and Hezbollah. A senior Biden administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity said it was “too early to say whether the state of Iran was directly involved in planning or supporting” the complex attack but noted Iran’s deep ties to Hamas.

Biden and top aides spent

Saturday consulting with European and Middle East leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In remarks before reporters at the White House, Biden called the attacks “unconscionable” and pledged his administration would ensure Israel has “what it needs to defend itself.”

“Let me say this as clearly as I can: This is not a moment for any party hostile to Israel to exploit these attacks to seek advantage,” Biden said. The attack only adds new compli-

cations as the Biden administration and Iran are locked in disputes over Tehran’s nuclear program.

Iran says the program is peaceful, but it now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. Still, the administration hasn’t given up hope on reviving a deal brokered during the Obama administration – and scrapped during the Trump White House – that eased sanctions on Iran in return for curbs to its nuclear program.

Biden administration officials have also been working on brokering a normalisation of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the most powerful and wealthy Arab state.

Such a deal has the potential to reshape the region and boost Israel’s standing in historic ways.

But brokering such a deal was already seen as a heavy lift as the kingdom has said it won’t officially recognise Israel before a resolution to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The new conflict adds an enormous new roadblock to Biden’s ambitions, although

the administration official said the White House did not see the Hamas attack derailing the effort.

Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry in a statement did not condemn the Hamas attack, but noted the kingdom’s “repeated warnings of the dangers ... of the situation as a result of the continued occupation, the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights, and the repetition of systematic provocations against its sanctities.”

Netanyahu vowed in his own national address to avenge the startling attacks, pledging to “bring the fight to them with a might and scale that the enemy has not yet known.”

Hamas fighters have taken an unknown number of civilians and soldiers captive into Gaza, in harrowing scenes posted on social media.

Those images – and the mounting death toll – come 50 years and a day after invading forces from Egypt and Syria caught Israel by surprise with the launch of an attack on Israel that set off the 19-day conflict that became known as the Yom Kippur War.

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION



(From left) Palestinians walk by the rubble of a building after it was struck by an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza City, on Sunday; Palestinian kids take religious books out of a mosque destroyed in an Israeli air strike in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Sunday; a digger removes the rubble from the police station that was overrun by Hamas

AP/PTI

Calif gov vetoes anti-caste discrimination bill

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

California Governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed a landmark anti-caste discrimination bill recently passed by the state assembly, terming it "unnecessary" and underlining that laws to ban caste-based discrimination already exist in the US state. The governor's move has been welcomed by a large segment of the Indian-American community who were opposing the bill based on the same argument.

"In California, we believe everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter who they are, where they come from, who they love, or where they live," Newsom said in a statement on Saturday.

"That is why California already prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, colour, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics, and state law specifies that these civil rights protections shall be liberally construed. Because discrimination based on caste is already prohibited under these existing



Hunger striker Thenmozhi Soundararajan, center, and others rally in Sacramento last month for a bill to ban caste discrimination.

categories, this bill is unnecessary," he said.

For this reason, Newsom asserted that he "cannot sign" the bill, known as SB403, which was recently passed by a large majority by both the House of Representatives and Senate of the California State Assembly. California would have been the

first US state to formally ban discrimination on the basis of caste if the Governor had signed the bill.

The bill was introduced in March by Democratic state Senator Aisha Wahab, the first Muslim and Afghan American elected to the California Legislature.

The bill defines "ancestry" for purposes of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Unruh Act, and the Education Code to include "caste" and other dimensions of ancestry. The opponents of the bill described it as historic and said that such a move by the Governor has prevented the

efforts of many to target the South Asian community and the Hindus in the state.

Reacting to the development, Castefiles, an educational platform which challenges false caste and race narratives in media, described the move as a historic decision.

"Governor Newsom has taken a stance to veto SB403 - an attempt to sully the Civil Rights Act by adding discriminatory notes to it with the highly contentious term 'CASTE'. Newsom has recognised the pain and fight of the South Asian micro minority. Democracy wins today in America - the Vox populi that fought to be heard amidst the deafening roar of fake caste narratives," it said. Samir Kalra, managing director of the Hindu American Foundation, said, "With the stroke of his pen, Governor Newsom has averted a civil rights and constitutional disaster that would have put a target on hundreds of thousands of Californians simply because of their ethnicity or their religious identity, as well as create a slippery slope of facially discriminatory laws."

Hindu parents, Dalit group celebrate

Washington (PTI): An organisation representing Hindu parents in California, eminent Indian-Americans and a Dalit advocacy group on Saturday welcomed the decision of California Governor Gavin Newsom to veto the anti-caste discrimination bill, saying it was brought with the sole intention of "stereotyping the community".

The governor vetoed the bill, which was recently passed by the state assembly, and said that laws to ban caste-based discrimination already exist in the state.

"In California, we believe everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter who they are, where they come from, who they love, or where they live," Newsom said in a statement issued Saturday.

"That is why California already prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, colour, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics, and state law specifies that these civil rights protections shall be liberally construed. Because discrimination based on caste is already prohibited under these existing categories, this bill is unnecessary," he explained.

For this reason, Newsom asserted that he "cannot sign" the bill known as SB403, which was passed by a large majority by both the House of Representatives and Senate of the California State Assembly. "With the stroke of his pen, Governor Newsom has averted a civil rights and constitutional disaster that would have put a target on hundreds of thousands of Californians simply because of their ethnicity or their religious identity, as well as create a slippery slope of facially discriminatory laws," said Samir Kalra, managing director of Hindu American Foundation. Leading Democrat Ajay Bhutoria, in a statement, expressed his gratitude to Governor Newsom for vetoing the bill and described it as a "momentous development".

Toronto university seeks to reassure int'l students

PTI ■ TORONTO

Amid the current India-Canada diplomatic standoff, a leading university here has sought to reassure the student community and underscored its commitment to supporting its wellbeing, while noting that India's suspension of visa processing will hinder face-to-face connection.

"We know that many members of the University of Toronto community are watching relations between the governments of Canada and India with concern. The situation is evolving rapidly, causing uncertainty and stress, and we do not yet have answers to many of the pressing questions it raises," Vice-President International, University of Toronto, Professor Joseph Wong told PTI in a statement here.

Wong said that the University of Toronto is "proud to be home to more than 2,400 international students from India who enrich our classrooms and campus life", and many more students, faculty, staff, librarians and alumni with ties to India. "We want to assure all impacted members of our community - and in particular international students - that you are welcome here and we are deeply committed to supporting your wellbeing," he said.

Wong added that the

University is committed to its "longstanding partnerships" in India that support academic collaborations in a wide range of areas and provide invaluable global learning opportunities for its students.

"We look forward to continuing and deepening these relationships, aligned with our mutual goal of making a difference locally and globally. In the short term, the suspension of visa processing for travellers from Canada will hinder face-to-face connection, but we will continue to build these relationships through online interactions."

Wong said the university will monitor the impacts of the developing situation between India and Canada on the University of Toronto community and "provide updates as we learn more."

India and Canada are embroiled in a diplomatic standoff following allegations by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the Canadian Parliament last month that "Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India and the killing" of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil on June 18 in British Columbia, a charge angrily rejected by New Delhi as "absurd" and "motivated".



Former President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally, Saturday, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. AP/PTI

Britain's Labour Party senses it's on verge of regaining power

PTI ■ LONDON

After years in opposition, London (AP) Members of Britain's opposition Labour Party gather in Liverpool on Sunday for their annual conference with an unfamiliar feeling: optimism. The party has been out of power for 13 years, and in the last national election in 2019, voters handed Labour its worst drubbing since 1935. But with an election due next year, polls put Labour as much as 20 points ahead of the governing Conservative Party, and Labour scored a morale-boosting special election victory in Scotland last week.

Power is within the party's grasp - as long as it doesn't mess things up. "It was a big step in the right direction, an important one," Labour leader Keir Starmer said Friday after the special election result. "But we accept this humbly. This is a step on the journey." Labour's landslide 1997

election victory under Tony Blair - the peak of its popularity - was a quarter-century ago, and the party has suffered four straight election defeats.

The Conservatives have been in power nationally since 2010, years that saw austerity following the world banking crisis, Britain's divisive decision to leave the European Union, a global pandemic and a European war that has triggered the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades.

Those upheavals left both Britain's main parties in turmoil - and both responded by picking populist leaders. Labour members elected the veteran left-wing lawmaker Jeremy Corbyn in 2015. The Conservatives, after years of division and wrangling over the country's EU exit, chose brass Brexit-booster Boris Johnson and won a thumping election victory over Corbyn in 2019. Corbyn quit after that

defeat, and amid criticism that he'd allowed antisemitism to fester in a party that sees itself as proudly antiracist.

Starmer won a party leadership contest in 2020, vowing to restore relations between the party and the Jewish community. He also has steered the social democratic party back toward the political middle-ground after the divisive tenure of Corbyn, a staunch socialist who advocated nationalisation of key industries and infrastructure. Starmer's actions angered some grassroots Labour members who want a bolder agenda, but it has revived the party's poll ratings.

In a sign that corporate Britain is preparing for a change of government, Labour says companies have been queuing up to buy stands in the conference exhibition hall and to attend a business forum with Starmer and other senior party leaders.

HK cancels flights as Tropical Storm Koinu draws nearer

AP ■ HONG KONG

Scores of flights in Hong Kong were cancelled Sunday as Tropical Storm Koinu neared the southern Chinese city after leaving one dead and over 300 injured in Taiwan.

Koinu was expected to skirt about 70 kilometers (43 miles) from Hong Kong on Sunday night, dumping heavy showers, the Hong Kong Observatory said. The storm is forecast to move across the coastal waters of neighbouring Guangdong province on Sunday and Monday.

Koinu was packing maximum winds of 90 kph (55 mph) and gusts of up to 122 kph (76 mph), according to the observatory.

Hong Kong on Sunday raised its No. 8 storm signal,

effectively shutting the city down with shops and schools closing and reducing frequencies of public transport.

Scores of flights to and from Hong Kong were cancelled and the main Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge closed temporarily, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Koinu had earlier battered Taiwan with heavy winds and strong rain but later the typhoon had weakened into a tropical storm on its way to southern China. It comes a month after southern China and Hong Kong were lashed by Typhoon Saola, which triggered Hong Kong's highest storm signal on a scale of 11. A week later, Guangdong province and Hong Kong were hit with the heaviest torrential rains in almost 140 years.

Two German state elections expected to bring wins for conservative national opp

AP ■ BERLIN

Two German states hold elections on Sunday at the halfway mark of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's unpopular national government, with polls showing the center-right opposition well ahead and Germany's interior minister facing an uphill struggle in a bid to become governor of her home region.

About 9.4 million people are eligible to vote for the new state legislature in Bavaria and around 4.3 million in neighbouring Hesse, a region that includes Germany's financial capital, Frankfurt.

Both states are led by the country's main opposition Union bloc, made up of the Christian Democratic Union and the Bavaria-only Christian Social Union.

The outcome could increase tensions in Scholz's three-party coalition, which has become notorious for infighting, and offer pointers to who might challenge Scholz in the 2025 national election.

Polls point to the CSU, which has led Bavaria since



1957, extending that run - albeit with lackluster support, by its historical standards, of less than 40 per cent.

In Hesse, they give the CDU a double-digit lead in a three-way contest for the governor's office among the conservative party, Scholz's center-left Social Democrats and the environmentalist Greens.

The far-right Alternative for Germany party, which has risen to second place in national polls behind the Union, won't be a factor in determining the new governments of Bavaria or Hesse, as other parties refuse to work with it. But they will be watching whether it improves significantly on double-digit showings five years ago.

The three national governing parties - the Social Democrats, the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats - won't do well on Sunday because people "aren't confident in their being able to solve the problems in the country," prominent political scientist Karl-Rudolf Korte told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper.

"That has to do with the variety of crises, but also with the communication," he said. "The situation would be different if the (coalition) partners would explain better what they are doing and why, if they would act more closely together."

Voters have been turned off by repeated public squabbling, notably on a plan to replace fossil-fuel heating systems with greener alternatives. Polls suggest that the Free Democrats could struggle Sunday to win the 5 per cent support needed to keep their place in the two state legislatures; previous election flops for the party have fueled tensions in the national government.

Scholz's government also faces intense pressure to reduce

the number of migrants arriving, a major issue in the run-up to the elections.

Scholz would have to find someone new to lead his government's response on that issue if Interior Minister Nancy Faeser becomes governor of Hesse, but she doesn't appear likely to end the CDU's 24-year hold on the job. Green challenger Tarek Al-Wazir, currently the deputy governor to conservative incumbent Boris Rhein, also faces an uphill struggle.

In Bavaria, governor Markus Soeder is calling for voters to back "continuity and stability."

He has bet on continuing his current coalition with the Free Voters, a conservative party that is strong locally but isn't represented in the national parliament. Soeder decided last month to keep that party's leader, Hubert Aiwanger, as his deputy governor despite a furor that started with allegations - denied by Aiwanger - that he was responsible for an antisemitic flyer when he was a high school student 35 years ago.

Shooting at US community centre kills 1, injures five

White Township (US): One person was killed and five were wounded in a shooting during a private party at a Pennsylvania community centre early Sunday, police said.

Police and emergency services responded at 12:35 am to a reported shooting at the Chevy Chase Community Centre in White Township, the Pennsylvania State Police said in a statement.

Police said six people were shot and one was pronounced dead at the scene in White Township, which is located about 57 miles (91.7 km) northeast of Pittsburgh in Indiana County. Surviving victims were transported to Indiana Regional Medical Centre in Indiana and UPMC Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh with at least two of the victims believed to be in serious condition, police said. AP

Baltic Sea gas pipeline between Finland, Estonia shut over suspected leak

Helsinki (AP): Finland and Estonia said Sunday that the undersea Balticconnector gas pipeline running between the two countries across the Baltic Sea was temporarily taken out of service due to a suspected leak.

Gasgrid Finland and Elering, the Finnish and Estonian gas system operators, said they noted an unusual drop in pressure in the pipeline shortly before 2 am Sunday, after which they shut down the gas flow.

"Based on observations, it was suspected that the offshore pipeline between Finland and Estonia was leaking," Gasgrid Finland said in a statement.

"The valves in the offshore pipeline are now closed and the leak is thus stopped."

The Finnish operator gave no reason for the suspected leak and said it was investigating together with Elering.

by explosions in an incident deemed to be a sabotage.

A total of four gas leaks were discovered on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines. The cause remains unsolved.

Gasgrid Finland said the Finnish gas system is stable and the supply of gas has been secured through the Inkoo floating LNG terminal, referring to the offshore support vessel Exempler - a floating liquefied natural gas terminal at the southern Finnish port of Inkoo. Elering said the accident did not affect the gas supply to Estonian consumers. After the shutdown of Balticconnector, gas for Estonian consumers was coming from Latvia, it said.

The pipeline is bi-directional, transferring natural gas between Finland and Estonia depending on demand and supply.

Most of the gas that was flowing in the pipeline early Sunday before closure was going from Finland to Estonia from where it was forwarded to Latvia, Elering said.

2 die, 2 others missing after avalanches hit Tibetan mountain

Beijing (AP): American mountaineer Anna Gutu and a Nepalese guide Mingmar Sherpa were confirmed dead on Sunday after avalanches struck the slopes of a Tibetan mountain, while two others remained missing, according to Chinese media reports.

The avalanches struck Tibet's Mount Shishapangma on Saturday afternoon at 7,600 (24,934 ft) and 8,000 metres (26,246 ft) in altitude, according to state-owned Xinhua News Agency. Two others, American climber Gina Marie Rzuicidlo and a Nepalese mountain guide Tenjen Sherpa went missing, the news agency said. The avalanches also seriously injured Nepalese mountain guide Karma Geljen Sherpa, who was escorted down the mountain by rescuers and is currently in stable condition. A total of 52 climbers from various countries including the US, Britain, Japan, and Italy were attempting to summit the mountain when the avalanches hit, Xinhua said.

Drought in Amazon is sharpening fears for future

AP ■ MANAUS

Communities dependent on the Amazon rainforest's waterways are stranded without supply of fuel, food or filtered water. Dozens of river dolphins perished and washed up on shore. And thousands of lifeless fish float on the water's surface.

These are just the first grim visions of extreme drought sweeping across Brazil's Amazon. The historically low water levels have affected hundreds of thousands of people and wildlife and, with experts predicting the drought could last until early 2024, the problems stand to intensify.

Raimundo Silva do Carmo, 67, makes his living as a fisherman, but these days has been struggling to simply find water.



Like most rural residents in Brazil's Amazon, do Carmo typically retrieves water untreated from the biome's abundant waterways.

On Thursday morning, he was making his fourth trip of the day to fill a plastic bucket from a well dug into the cracked bed of Lake Puraquequara, just east of Amazonas state's capital

Manaus.

"It's dreadful work, even more so when the sun is hot," do Carmo told The Associated Press. "We use the water to drink, to bathe, to cook. Without water, there is no life." Joaquim Mendes da Silva, a 73-year-old ship carpenter who has lived by the same lake for 43 years, said this drought is the

worst he can recall. Area children stopped going to school a month ago because getting there by river became impossible.

Eight Brazilian states recorded the lowest rainfall in the period from July to September in over 40 years, according to CEMADEN, Brazil's disaster warning centre.

The drought has affected most of the main rivers in the Amazon, the world's largest basin, which accounts for 20 per cent of the planet's fresh water. And as of Friday, 42 of 62 municipalities in Amazonas had declared a state of emergency. Some 250,000 people have been affected by the drought so far, and that number may double by year's end, according to the state's civil defence authority. In the Auati-

Parana Extractive Reserve, about 450 miles west of Lake Puraquequara, over 300 riverine families are struggling to get food and other supplies. Only small canoes with reduced cargo can manage the trip to the closest city, and picking a route through shallow water has pushed travel time from nine hours to 14. Moreover, canals to the lakes where they fish for pirarucu, the Amazon's largest fish and their primary source of income, have dried up, and carrying fish that weigh as much as 200 kilograms (about 440 pounds) along trails would be extremely burdensome. "We run the risk of catching fish in the lake, and it arrives spoiled. So there is no way for us to fish," said Edvaldo de Lira, the local association president.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby notified that I, Dr. Indu Bhushan (UID-8362 8561 1370) S/o Late Duni Chand R/o 189-A, Dua Nursing Home Maternity Home Kabir Mandir Road, Preetam Nagar, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh-211011, am intend to purchase a Freehold Built-up Residential Flat Bearing No. B-3/425, (flat No.425 in Block No.B-3), On Fourth Floor, Situated In The Layout Plan Of Ekta Vihar Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd., Known As Ekta Gardens, Built On Plot No.9, Patparganj, I.P. Extension, Delhi-110092 From Shri Avnish Kumar Lugani S/o Late Anant Ram Shastri R/o Heerstrasse 7, 14052 Berlin Germany. It is therefore notified that anybody claiming any rights, share, claim, title, interest or lien over the aforesaid flat may file such claim or objection to the undersigned within a period of 7 days from the date of Publication of this Notice, otherwise it will be presumed that the said flat is free from all encumbrances, charges and/or lien etc. and I am free to purchase the said flat from the above named seller.

DR. INDU BHUSHAN

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)

Letter No.: 2656/Nivida-Anubandhi/Ranikhet/236 Date : 06-10-2023

E-Tender Notice

- Name of the work:-** Construction Of Mini Stadium At Government Polytechnic, Dwarahat District Almora.
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 197.93 Lakh (without G.S.T.)
- Period of Completion:-** 12 Months
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:** 09-10-2023 (10.00 hrs)
- Online Bid submission; End date :-** 23-10-2023 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 26-10-2023 (11.00 hrs)
- Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
- Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place :-** 13-10-2023 (11:00 hrs) Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet (Almora).
- For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

GENERAL MANAGER

Next round of India-UK FTA talks to begin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 30-member official delegation from the UK will start the next round of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Indian team here from Monday to close remaining issues so that the two countries conclude the talks soon, an official has said.

Both countries have recently concluded the 13th round of negotiations. A team led by Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal was in London last week to give an impetus to the talks.

The UK team dealing with investment-related matters is already here, and the talks for the proposed bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with finance ministry officials are progressing at a faster pace.

"The 30-member team will be here tomorrow, and both sides are attempting to close the remaining issues, such as rules of origin. Everything is at the closure level," the official said.

The 'rules of origin' provision prescribes that minimal

processing should happen in the FTA country so that the final manufactured product may be referred to as goods originating in that country.

Under this provision, a country that has inked an FTA with India cannot dump goods from some third country in the Indian market by just putting a label on it. It has to undertake a prescribed value addition in that product to export to India. Rules of origin norms help contain the dumping of goods.

The investment treaty is being negotiated as a separate agreement between India and the UK.

These investment treaties help in promoting and protecting investments in each other's country. The main point of contention involved in this pact is about the mechanism for the settlement of disputes. The BITs help in promoting and protecting investments in each other's countries.

India has proposed to first utilise all local judicial remedies for settlement of disputes before initiating an international arbitration.



To provide duty concessions in the automobile sector, several rounds of consultations have been held with the domestic players in India.

According to an expert, UK-based automakers like JLR, Bentley, Rolls-Royce, and Aston Martin cater to the luxury segment, while Indian

manufacturers are mostly in the mass segment and are mainly dominated by small and mid-size passenger cars and two-wheelers.

The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT, and healthcare in the UK market, besides

market access for several goods at nil customs duties.

On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, automobiles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items.

Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK

services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance). Alcoholic beverage industry body Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) director-general Vinod Giri said that for Scotland Whiskey (bottled), India can consider reducing the import duties to 100 per cent immediately from 150 per cent and then 50 per cent in 10 years.

Similarly, for bulk imports, the duties can be cut down to 100 per cent immediately and then 50 per cent in 10 years as the bulk imports are treated as intermediate goods in the domestic market. The Indian alcoholic beverage market is worth USD 52 billion.

Replacing France, India became the top buyer of Scotch whisky by volume in 2022, according to the Scotch Whisky Association.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23 from USD 17.5 billion in 2021-22.

Govt clears appointments of 12 executive directors for various State owned banks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has approved the appointments of 12 general managers as executive directors (EDs) of various public sector banks (PSBs).

According to sources, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Saturday approved the appointments of 12 EDs.

As per the government order, Sanjay Rudra, general manager, Bank of Maharashtra, has been appointed ED, Union Bank of India. Another GM from the same bank, Vijaykumar N Kamble will take over as ED of UCO Bank.

Besides, sources said, Bhavendra Kumar, currently Chief General Manager with Canara Bank, has been elevated to become ED of the same bank.

Bibhu Prasad Mahapatra, Chief General

Manager of Punjab National Bank, has been elevated as ED of the bank, while Ravi Mehra, general manager, has been promoted to become ED of Punjab & Sind Bank.

Rajiv Mishra, Chief General Manager with Union Bank of India, will take over as ED of Bank of India, and Brajesh Kumar Singh, Chief General Manager of Bank of Baroda, will join Indian Bank as ED in March.

At the same time, Rohit Rishi, Chief General Manager in Indian Bank, will take over as ED of Bank of Maharashtra next month.

In addition, the government has approved the appointment of Lal Singh as ED, Bank of Baroda; Shiv Bajrang Singh as ED, Indian Bank; Mahendra Dohare as ED, Central Bank of India; and Dhanaraj T as ED, Indian Overseas Bank.

Government to computerise 1,851 agricultural & rural development banks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Sunday announced it will computerise state cooperative registrars and 1,851 offices of Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) under a scheme with a budget of Rs 225.09 crore.

Currently, the government is computerising all Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) in the country.

"On the lines of the computerisation scheme of all PACS in the country, a centrally sponsored scheme has been approved for computerisation of 1,851 units of ARDBs of 13 states through a national unified software," the cooperation ministry said in a statement.

The government has also decided to computerise the offices of Registrar of Cooperatives of all states and Union Territories, it said.

A Central Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) will be established, which will work towards the successful implementation of the scheme. "The



total estimated expenditure for this scheme will be Rs 225.09 crore," the statement said.

The implementation of this scheme will not only enable people to quickly access services provided by the cooperative departments of the states and the offices of ARDBs but will also bring transparency and uniformity in the functioning of these offices, which will make them more efficient and save time, it added.

The central government has taken several steps to strengthen all the cooperative societies across the country.

India's power consumption grows 8 per cent in first half of FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's electricity consumption grew nearly eight per cent to about 847 billion units (BU) in the first half of this fiscal year from April to September, showing uptick in economic activities in the country.

According to the official data, electricity consumption rose to about 847 BU during April-September 2023 from 786 BU in the same period of the previous fiscal.

The industry experts opined that the widespread

unseasonal rain in April, May and June has affected the power consumption as it could have grown in double digits in the country.

They stated that there was strong recovery of power demand as well as consumption in August onwards due to unusually high humidity level which increased the use of cooling appliances like fans, coolers and air conditioners.

They also said power consumption grew in August and September, mainly due to humid weather conditions and also perked up industrial activ-

ities ahead of the festive season.

The data also shows that peak power demand touched a record high of 241 GW during April-September 2023 compared to 215.88 GW in the first half of fiscal 2022-23.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.

The peak power demand, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. The



peak power demand touched 238.19 GW in August and reached a record high of about 240 GW in September this year.

Anticipating high peak power demand of 229 GW in the country during the summer season in 2023, the ministry had taken many steps to avoid outages. The ministry had invoked Section 11 of the Electricity Act 2003 to mandate all plants powered by imported coal to run at full capacity to ensure adequate supply of power in the country.

Besides, the ministry also mandated domestic coal based

power plants to import the coal for blending to avoid any shortage of dry fuel.

The experts said that these measures may have increased import of coal in the country but it was necessary to ensure round-the-clock power supply in the country.

As per the latest report of Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for August, 2023, India has installed power generation capacity of 424 GW, which includes 206 GW coal based, 47 GW of large hydro, and about 132 GW renewables (solar, wind energy etc).

India's first large private gold mine to begin full-scale production by next year: DGML MD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The full-scale production of the country's first large private gold mine in Andhra Pradesh will begin by the end of next year, said Deccan Gold Mines Ltd Managing Director Hanuma Prasad.

The Jonnagiri gold project, in which the pilot scale operation has already started, will

produce about 750 kilograms of gold per annum once it begins its full-scale production, Prasad told PTI in an interview.

Deccan Gold Mines Ltd (DGML), the first and only gold exploration company listed on BSE, has a significant stake of 40 per cent in Geomysore Services India Limited which is developing

the first private sector gold mine at Jonnagiri.

The mine, in which a total investment of about Rs 200 crore has been made so far, is producing about one kg of gold per month at present.

"In the Indian mine (Jonnagiri project) the construction is going on.

By next year, around October-November, that will

come into production," Prasad said.

The gold mine is located near Jonnagiri, Erragudi and Pagadirayi villages within the Tuggali Mandalam in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

"The mine was granted... In 2013. It took about 8-10 years to complete exploration (of the project)," Prasad

explained.

The managing director further said that production from its another gold mining project in Kyrgyzstan, in which DGML has 60 per cent stake, is likely to begin in either October or November of 2024.

"The Altyn Tor Gold project will be producing around 400 kg gold per annum," he added.

28 IPOs worth ₹38,000 cr to hit street in second half of FY24

PTI ■ MUMBAI

After a record 31 initial public offerings in the first half of this fiscal, the IPO pipeline looks strong with 28 firms eyeing to raise Rs 38,000 crore in the second half and another 41 awaiting Sebi's nod to launch initial public offerings worth Rs 44,000 crore, a report said.

Fund raising through initial public offerings or IPOs fell 26 per cent to Rs 26,300 crore in the first half of the current fiscal, despite the number of issues more than doubling to 31, from 14 issues with the total mop-up of Rs 35,456 crore in the year-ago period, according to Primedatabase.

According to Pranav Haldea, managing director of Prime Database which is a leading database on the primary capital markets, of these 69 companies, three new-age technology firms are collectively planning to mop up Rs 12,000 crore.

According to marketmen, the pack is led by OYO which is said to be looking to mop up over Rs 8,300 crore and Go Digit Insurance. As against this, the first half saw only one tech issue by Yatra which had raised Rs 775 crore in late September. The bumper issues in the previous fiscal were Paytm, Zomato and Nykaa.

According to Haldea, notwithstanding the present volatility in the secondary market, the next half is likely to see several IPOs being launched before a pause on account of the general elections.

According to the leading brokerage Angel One, the major upcoming IPOs include OYO, Tata Technologies, JNK India, Dom Industries, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels, Épack Durables, BLS E-Services, India Shelter Finance Corporation, Cello World, RK Swamy, Flair Writing Industries, Go Digit Insurance, and Credo Brands Marketing, among others.

The proposed Tata Technologies issue will be the first IPO from the Tata stable after 19 years -- the last Bombay House company to go public was TCS in 2004.

Tata Technologies is an operating subsidiary of Tata Motors and offers high end technology solutions. Tata Motors is expected to have off over 811 lakh shares in the IPO as part of the offer for sale.

Fundraising through QIPs surges; 20 firms raise ₹18,400 crore in first half of FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fundraising through the issuance of shares to qualified institutional investors has seen hectic activity in the first half of the current fiscal year (FY24), with 20 companies mobilising over Rs 18,400 crore, more than four-fold from the year-ago period, on positive investors' sentiments.

Moreover, the robust trend of Qualified Institutional Placements (QIPs) in the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24 is expected to persist through-out the second half of the year too, Sanjay Moorjani, Research

Analyst at SAMCO Securities, told PTI.

Prashant Rao, Director and Head of Equity Capital Markets, Anand Rathi Investment Banking, said that market and investor sentiments play an important role for these issuances. Till the time market sentiments are positive and investors are earning returns, listed companies would prefer to raise funds through QIP which allows them to have faster access to funds.

"We believe the second half of this year also to be positive for QIP issuances," he



added. According to prime database.Com, 20 companies collected Rs 18,443 crore through QIPs in the first half of 2023-24, which was higher than Rs 4,022 crore raised in the same period last year. QIP issuance was dominated by financial services and power generation companies as

they accounted for 70 per cent or Rs 12,890 crore of the overall amount.

The largest QIP was from state-owned Union Bank which mopped up Rs 5,000 crore, accounting for 27 per cent of the total QIP amount. The bank raised the amount to augment its capital base.

In addition, there was one QIP of a REIT of Brookfield India Real Estate Trust that garnered Rs 2,305 crore during the period under review. "The resurgence in fundraising activity through QIPs signifies a growing confidence among investors and businesses alike.

Mobile phone exports from India double to \$5.5 billion till August this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mobile phone exports from India almost doubled to USD 5.5 billion, about Rs 45,700 crore, till August this financial year, according to industry body ICEA's estimates.

ICEA said, mobile phone exports from India between April-August 2023 was around USD 3 billion, about Rs 24,850 crore. A source, who did not wish to be named, said, with Apple exported mobile phones worth more than Rs 23,000 crore, thereby accounting for a little over half of the total

export.

An email query sent to Apple did not elicit any reply.

Commenting on the overall mobile phone export, ICEA Chairman Pantaj Mohindroo told PTI that mobile phone exports from India continue to buck the overall trend of muted global trade by registering a massive growth of more than 80 per cent.

"India continues to strive hard to be a preferred location for GVCs. It is work in progress but the trend is positive," Mohindroo said.

According to ICEA estimates, mobile phone exports

from India have doubled to surpass Rs 90,000 crore, about USD 11.12 billion, in the financial year (FY) 2022-23, from Rs 45,000 crore in FY22.

The government expects mobile phone players to export devices worth Rs 1 lakh crore this year.

The government has set the target of achieving USD 300 billion worth of electronics manufacturing by 2025-26, with USD 120 billion expected to come from exports.

Mobile phones are anticipated to contribute more than USD 50 billion worth of exports by 2025-26.

FPIs sell-off continues; take out ₹8,000 car from equities in October

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign Portfolio investors (FPIs) have dumped Indian equities worth Rs 8,000 crore in the first week of October on the back of dollar appreciation and the steady rise in the US bond yields. This came after FPIs turned net sellers in September and pulled out Rs 14,767 crore. Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months from March to August and brought in Rs 1.74 lakh crore during the period.

Going ahead, FPIs are unlikely to turn buyers in the market soon in the context of the elevated dollar and US bond yields, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign



Portfolio Investors (FPIs) sold shares to the tune of Rs 8,000 crore in this month (till October 6). India continues to be on top of emerging economies in attracting FPI this year, but September witnessed selling and October has begun with the same trend.

"The dominant factor impacting capital flows to markets in recent weeks has been the steadily rising US bond yields. The early days of October witnessed a rout in the

US bond market, which took the 30-year bond yield to 5 per cent briefly. The benchmark 10-year yield is consistently over 4.7 per cent forcing the FPIs to sell in emerging markets," Vijayakumar said.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, attributed the outflow to economic uncertainties in the US and Eurozone regions, as well as growing concerns about global economic growth. This scenario led foreign investors to turn risk-averse.

Additionally, higher crude prices, sticky inflation numbers and the expectation that the interest rate may continue to remain at elevated levels longer than expected would have prompted foreign investors to adopt a wait-and-watch approach, he said.

FMCG firms see subdued growth in Q2; rising food prices, rain deficit hamper rural demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The FMCG industry expects a subdued low to mid-single-digit volume growth in the July-September quarter as weak macroeconomic conditions amid rising food prices and below-normal rainfall in some regions are impeding the recovery in rural demand.

Companies such as Marico, Dabur and Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) in their quarterly updates said that though there was an improvement in consumption in the second quarter, the recovery has been gradual. Moreover, the festive season this year has entirely shifted to the third quarter, due to which offtake related to festivals is delayed and will carry forward to the next quarter, the companies said.



Over their gross margins, the companies said they expect it to be better sequentially, helped by moderating inflation and easing price pressures. This also helped them to go for higher A&P (Advertisements and Promotions) spending.

Updating its business performance for the September quarter, GCPL said: "In India, we witnessed weak macros

and adverse weather conditions during the quarter."

The Godrej Group's FMCG arm faced a "tough operating environment" and despite that its organic business delivered "mid-single digit volume growth."

Marico, which owns brands such as Parachute, Saffola, and Hair & Care, said demand trends in the second

quarter of FY24 largely mirrored the trends observed in the preceding quarter.

"Instances of rising food prices and below-normal rainfall distribution in some regions seemed to impede the anticipated recovery in rural demand," the company said, adding, "in the given context, domestic volumes grew in low-single digits on a year-on-year basis."

It continued to witness "healthy trends" in offtakes, market share and penetration across key franchises. The newer portfolios, foods and premium personal care remained on course to achieve full-year aspirations.

Dabur India said FMCG consumption is showing improvement year-on-year, however, the recovery has been gradual.

Verstappen says 3rd F1 title is his best

Shetty ends campaign with bronze

AP ■ DOHA
Max Verstappen said his third consecutive drivers' world title triumph, achieved in Saturday's sprint race at the Qatar Grand Prix, was "the one I am most proud of - the best."

The 26-year-old Dutchman, who was champion in 2021 and 2022, finished second behind McLaren's Oscar Piastri after his Red Bull team-mate and only remaining title rival Sergio Perez crashed out of the race and the championship reckoning. "This one is the best," he said, "I think the first one was the most emotional because that is when your dreams are fulfilled, but this is definitely my best year for consecutive wins and stuff like that and the car itself has been probably in the best shape as well."

"So, for me, this is the one I am most proud of because of the consistency."

Verstappen has won 13 of this year's 16 Grands Prix to date, seizing the title with six races to go - a rare measure of supremacy not achieved since seven-time Michael Schumacher won for Ferrari in 2002.

He is the 11th driver overall to win three drivers' titles and one of only five to win three in succession along with Juan-Manuel Fangio, Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton.

"It's something, of course, that I never even really dreamt



of doing," he said. "It's a very proud moment for myself, for my family, my close family. I think everyone within the team I'm working with to be able to experience all of this together... it's amazing."

Verstappen said his experience with Toro Rosso, with whom he made his F1 debut aged only 17 in 2016, and Red Bull had been important to his life and his development.

"I keep trying to improve and of course I don't necessarily think I've become a faster driver, but you have a lot more experience in the car, you grow as a driver and you grow also I think as a person in life."

"I think all these kind of things, when I compare to my first season in Formula One, they help a lot in terms of just dealing with every kind of pressure situation throughout the weekend."

"Everything that might be thrown at you in difficult

conditions, for example. At the end, it's all about trying to deliver every single weekend, which is, I think, very hard in F1."

He said that joining a list of great names from Formula One's roll call of champions who have won three in a row was a great feeling.

"It's fantastic," he said. "A fantastic feeling. To be a three-time champion is incredible. It's been an incredible year with a lot of great races and I am super proud of the job done by the team. It has been so enjoyable to be a part of that group of people."

Verstappen explained that he felt he had reached a new level of consistency this year.

"Sometimes, I'm not happy with the performance or how the weekend was going, but I always try to be perfect... I always try to be better every race weekend I go to," he said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ayush Shetty's stellar run at the BWF World Junior Championships in Spokane, USA came to an end on Sunday as he finished his campaign with a bronze medal.

Ayush became the 10th Indian to win a medal at the BWF World Junior Championships and the eighth men's singles shuttler to do so.

India have won 11 medals in the competition with Saina Nehwal contributing a silver and gold in 2006 and 2008 respectively.

In a closely contested match, Ayush faced the tournament fourth seed, Alwi Farhan of Indonesia.

The first game saw Ayush and his opponent locked in a tight battle, with the score tied at 16-16. It was at this pivotal moment that his opponent gained the upper hand, secured quick points and Ayush ultimately succumbed, losing the game with a score of 18-21.

With the momentum in his favour, Alwi took an early lead of 4-0 in the second game. Ayush displayed resilience, and managed to tie the scores at 13-13. However, he couldn't maintain his rhythm, and conceded a flurry of points to his opponent, ultimately resulting in a 15-21 loss.

India's S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian had won the silver medal in the men's singles in the last edition of World Junior Championships in Spain.

Red Bull boss hails Verstappen as 'most competitive ever'

AP ■ DOHA

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner hailed newly-crowned three-time world champion Max Verstappen as "the most competitive driver I've ever seen" on Saturday after he clinched his third title at the Qatar Grand Prix.

As tributes flowed and the Red Bull team celebrated in their black "champion" t-shirts, Horner described the 26-year-old Dutchman as "phenomenal" and "out of this world."

His father Jos Verstappen, a former team-mate of seven-time champion Michael Schumacher at Benetton, expressed his pride in not only

his son's achievement but the manner of them.

"Of course, we appreciate it (the championship triumph), but it's also the way he did it," said Verstappen senior. "He was so dominant this year and he delivered really well and I'm very proud of that."

"I knew it, his talent, a long time ago when he was in go-

karts and I think we made the right decision in the beginning of his career and now it's up to him what he does. I'm just very happy with how he does it and how strong he is and the way he works for that."

"He's been by far the most dominant so it's come as no surprise, but to see Max join some of the great names we

spoke about earlier," said Horner.

"He's in that bracket now. The way he's driven this year has been out of this world and I think you have to take a moment to reflect and be in the moment and everything he's done this year is phenomenal."

His team-mate Sergio Perez, who was his only

remaining title rival before Saturday's sprint race, was generous in his appraisal of Verstappen's achievement.

"Of course, I would like to be in his position today, but there can be only one winner so I am happy for him - he has worked really hard for it and so congratulations to him and his team."



Pulisic takes Milan to top of Serie A

AP ■ MILAN

Christian Pulisic fired AC Milan to the top of Serie A on Saturday after a 1-0 win at Genoa decided in a wild final few minutes in which Olivier Giroud slipped on his goal-keeping gloves and saved the day.

Little had happened at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris until Pulisic struck with three minutes remaining, spinning and slamming home the controversial winning goal which was only given after a long VAR check for a possible handball.

The decision to give that goal would eventually lead to a livid Genoa president Alberto Zangrillo alluding to a conspiracy in which the "usual suspects always come out on top".

Pulisic's fourth Milan goal moved his team two points ahead of Inter thanks to a fourth straight win since last month's five-goal humiliation suffered at the hands of their local rivals, who could only draw 2-2 with Bologna.

His strike also sent the match spiralling into chaos as the home side tried to scramble a point, Mike Maignan shown a straight red card in the seventh minute of stoppage time for charging out of his goal and clattering into Caleb Ekuban.

Coach Stefano Pioli had made his fifth substitute moments before so Giroud, who had been brought on in the 66th minute to score a win-

ner, was then tasked with stopping Genoa and immediately watched on helpless as Albert Gudmundsson clipped a free-kick onto the crossbar.

"Pulisic wanted to go in goal but we told him he was too short, so Oli got picked to go in," said Pioli to Sky Sport.

With the home crowd baying for blood Genoa's goalkeeper Josep Martinez came up for the subsequent corner but ending up being sent off himself for a second bookable offence.

And Giroud capped an incredible evening by rushing out of his goal to twice deny Genoa and ensure Milan took the three points back to the San Siro.

When asked what he would do with the goalkeeper's jersey, he said: "I'm going to frame it!"

"I didn't know if Cala (Hakan Calhanoglu) was going to head me the ball so I said to myself, 'go'. I don't have the natural skills of a goalkeeper and I really hurt my arm but that's OK."

Juventus are four points behind Milan in third after their 2-0 derby victory over struggling Torino.

Second-half goals from Federico Gatti and substitute Arkadiusz Milik made sure Juve stayed within sight of Milan and moved three in front of fourth-placed Napoli ahead of the champions' home clash with Fiorentina on Sunday.

Liverpool held by Brighton, Newcastle drop points in PL

AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool missed the chance to go second in the Premier League as the Reds were pegged back in a pulsating 2-2 draw at Brighton on Sunday, while Newcastle were also held 2-2 by West Ham.

Manchester City can go back to the top of the table later when they travel to Arsenal in a clash between last season's top two.

A point leaves Liverpool three points behind leaders Tottenham and after their justified fury in losing to Spurs last weekend when a goal was wrongly ruled out by a VAR error, Jurgen Klopp's men will feel aggrieved at another refereeing decision.

Pascal Gross somehow avoided a red card when pulling down Dominik Szoboszlai for a penalty that led to Liverpool's second goal just before half-time.

The visitors had been given the run around by Brighton in the opening half hour.

Alexis Mac Allister struggled on his return to the Amex Stadium and was one of the culprits for the opening goal.

The Argentine was caught in possession by Simon Adingra, who then caught Alisson Becker out of position by taking his shot early from outside the box.



After a bright start to the season, Brighton have now won just once in six games as the rigours of European football have told on Roberto De Zerbi's men.

The Seagulls' daring approach has won plenty of plaudits but Liverpool pounced on their weaknesses to turn the game on its head five minutes before the break.

Twice Brighton were punished for giving the ball away inside their own half as Harvey Elliott unselfishly allowed

Darwin Nunez's pass to find Mohamed Salah to slot home the equaliser.

Liverpool's high press then won the penalty as Szoboszlai dispossessed Gross and was pulled down by the German midfielder.

Salah confidently dispatched the spot-kick, but Liverpool will ask questions about why they were not up against 10 men for the rest of the game.

Ryan Gravenberch was introduced at half-time to stiff-

en the Liverpool midfield and should have made it 3-1 when he hit the bar with the goal gaping after more good work from Szoboszlai.

That miss proved costly as Lewis Dunk levelled 12 minutes from time and Brighton should have taken all three points when Joao Pedro blazed a glorious chance over late on.

Fresh from thrashing Paris Saint-Germain 4-1 in the Champions League, Newcastle suffered a first-half hangover at the London Stadium.

Tomas Soucek tapped West Ham into an eighth minute lead after brilliant play by Lucas Paqueta and Emerson down the left.

Newcastle were lucky not to then have Bruno Guimaraes sent off for a second bookable offence.

The Magpies turned the game around in a five-minute spell around the hour mark thanks to Alexander Isak's

The Swede produced a cool finish when a free-kick into the box broke his way before taping home Kieran Trippier's inviting volleyed cross across goal.

But Newcastle could not hold out for victory as Mohammed Kudus smashed home his first Premier League goal. Aston Villa missed the chance to climb into the top four at Arsenal's expense after being held 1-1 at Wolves.



Medvedev out of Shanghai Masters

AP ■ SHANGHAI

Defending champion Daniil Medvedev said missing one key opportunity had cost him a spot in the Shanghai Masters' fourth round after he was knocked out in straight sets by 26th-ranked Sebastian Korda on Sunday.

The Russian fell apart in the second set after Korda won the first on a tiebreaker taken to the brink, with the match finishing 7-6 (10/8), 6-2.

"I should have won the tiebreak but didn't," said the world number three afterwards.

Medvedev had said the game would be "interesting" for him beforehand, referencing his loss to Korda in their last meeting.

At a press conference after Sunday's match, looking dejected, he said he would sum up his time in China as "not amazing".

He made the final of Beijing's China Open this week but lost to Italian Jannik Sinner.

Earlier, world number nine Casper Ruud continued his smooth progress through the tournament with another straight-sets win, this time against the United States' Christopher Eubanks.

Ruud appeared in control throughout against the 32nd-ranked American, with the third-round match ending 6-4, 6-2.

World number seven Andrey Rublev is through to the third round after defeating France's Quentin Halys 6-4, 7-5.

Two top-20 players exited the tournament in the second round on Sunday.

Britain's 16th-ranked Cameron Norrie was defeated by the United States' JJ Wolf, ranked 51st.

Messi's Miami eliminated from MLS playoff race

AP ■ MIAMI

There will be no Hollywood ending to Lionel Messi's first season in Major League Soccer after his Inter Miami team were eliminated from the playoffs, grabbed the win with a goal from Argentine Alvaro Barreal.

Messi made little impact on the field and although he had two free-kick opportunities within his shooting range, both his efforts sailed harmlessly

United star Wayne Rooney, was leaving his post by "mutual agreement".

Messi returned from injury as a substitute in the 55th minute but Cincinnati, who have earned top seed in the playoffs, grabbed the win with a goal from Argentine Alvaro Barreal.

Messi made little impact on the field and although he had two free-kick opportunities within his shooting range, both his efforts sailed harmlessly



wide.

"I could see that he was lacking football (game time)," said Miami head coach Gerardo Martino.

"The injury is fine, he doesn't have any problems, but (his performance was) logical because in recent times he has played very little and it could happen that he is lacking in rhythm, which is also why he only played 32 or 33 minutes," he added.

With other results going

against Miami, Messi's side were left next to bottom of the Eastern Conference, seven points off the last playoff spot with just two games remaining.

Messi had played just 37 minutes for his club since September 3, having returned with an injury from international duty with Argentina last month.

Without him Miami struggled, paying the price for their successful run to the Leagues Cup title in August when Messi

lit up the tournament and collected his first trophy since joining the club in July.

Saturday's loss was the second straight for Miami following their 4-1 crushing at Chicago on Wednesday and Martino's team have won just once in their last six MLS games.

Messi had played in the only win in that stretch, coming off in the first half of their 4-0 win over bottom club Toronto.

Andrade reigns on vault as Biles falls to silver

AP ■ ANTWERP

US superstar Simone Biles was denied another title on the penultimate day of the world gymnastics championships in Antwerp on Saturday taking silver on the vault behind Brazil's Rebeca Andrade and finishing fifth on the uneven bars.

On Friday, Biles won the all-around title ahead of defending champion Andrade to become the most decorated gymnast in history, having also led the United States



women to a seventh consecutive team title during the week.

But Olympic vault champion Andrade shone on Saturday, edging Biles who fell while landing her first jump - the demanding Yurchenko double pike vault, which now bears her name as the "Biles II".

As a result, the Texan lost a point on her execution score. She was docked another half point due to the presence of her trainer Cecile Landi on the side of the mat.

She finished 0.201 points

behind the Brazilian who won her second world gold in the discipline. For Biles it was a 28th world medal.

South Korea's Yeo Seo-jeong took bronze.

Andrade, a revelation at the Tokyo Olympics, had already been crowned world vault champion at the 2021 worlds in Japan.

At 24, the delighted Brazilian, silver medalist in the team and the all-around competition behind Biles, now has seven medals on the world stage.

Rooney standing down as DC United coach

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Former England international Wayne Rooney is leaving his position as head coach of Major League Soccer's DC United after the team missed out on a spot in the playoffs.

The club said in a statement that the decision to part ways had been "mutually agreed".

"We have spoken with Wayne and agreed it is best for

us to part ways at this time. This decision creates the avenue for our next General Manager to have the full opportunity to impart a new philosophy and structure onto our sporting operations, which begins with the critical identification of a Head Coach who will best align with this," said Jason Levien the club's CEO and co-chairman.

"We are grateful to Wayne Rooney for all he has done for

our club and for soccer in the Nation's Capital, first as a DC United player and captain and most recently as our coach.

Rooney told reporters that it was the right moment to move on.

"It's the right time. I've done everything I can to get this club into the playoffs. It's not a single thing that's happened. It's about timing," former Manchester United forward Rooney said.



INDIA DISMISS AUS FOR 199

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Ravindra Jadeja became the biggest nemesis among Indian spinners on a tacky Chepauk track as India rolled over Australia for 199 in 49.3 overs in their opening World Cup match here on Sunday.

Jadeja, who knows the track like the back of his hand, courtesy his decade-plus association with Chennai Super Kings, took 3 for 28 in 10 overs as the slowness of the surface and subtle variations used by the all-rounder became Australia's undoing.

Ravichandran Ashwin (2/34 in 10 overs) and Kuldeep Yadav (2/42 in 10 overs) also played their parts to perfection.

But it was Jadeja's show all the way as he tilted the scale in India's favour with quick dismissals of an under-pressure Steve Smith (46 off 71 balls) and an unusually subdued Marnus Labuschagne (27 off 41 balls).

The Indian spin trio collectively bowled 101 dot balls to completely choke the run-flow. In all there were nearly 29 worth dot balls by Indian bowlers, phenomenal by any stretch of imagination.

The lack of grass and dry surface underneath prompted Pat Cummins to opt for batting with an eye on the deteriorating surface towards the second half of the match.

It certainly didn't go as per plan as Bumrah (2/35 in 10 overs) bowled one full, which also held its line to square up Mitchell Marsh (0) with Virat Kohli completing a good catch at first slip.

It was a pitch on which hitting through the line was never an option. Rohit Sharma



understood that and brought spinners into operation very quickly as Ashwin was introduced in the 8th over.

While David Warner (41 off 52 balls) and Smith added 69 runs but it took them 14 overs to score them.

They were not at all comfortable and not being very adept with sweep shot meant that one scoring option went out of the window.

It was Kuldeep, who got the important wicket of Warner, as he bowled one full and fast that skidded a bit and the left-hander tried to loft it but could only offer a return catch.

Smith and his protégé Labuschagne then added another 36 but once Jadeja

Warner breaks Sachin's fastest 1,000 WC runs record

AP ■ CHENNAI

Australia opener David Warner on Sunday snatched Sachin Tendulkar's record for the fastest to reach 1,000 World Cup runs during the clash against India.

Warner achieved the landmark in 19 innings in Chennai to better Tendulkar and former South Africa skipper AB de Villiers -- both of whom got



the runs in 20 outings.

The left-handed Warner smashed Hardik Pandya for a boundary to take the record after Australia elected to bat first as the cricket powerhouses opened their 2023 campaigns.

Tendulkar, an Indian batting great who retired from the game in 2013, has the highest runs -- 2,278 -- in the 50-over showpiece event.

started finding the rhythm, both were in tangles.

Jadeja, who has dismissed Smith 10 times across formats, hoodwinked his bunny with subtle variations.

Scared of getting trapped leg before wicket, Smith was consistently trying to keep his pads outside the line of Jadeja's deliveries.

Jadeja, who was bowling at a pace around 96-97 kmph and not actually turning it much, gauged his 'bunny's' apprehension.

The next delivery Kuldeep bowled was at least 5 kmph slower and the ball turned way more than usual. In his bid to negate the leg-before possibility, Smith didn't cover the delivery which turned past his bat to dislodge the bails.

With Australia in a spot at 110 for 3 and run-rate taking a hit, Labuschagne went for an uncharacteristic sweep shot, which isn't his forte, and the under-cutter bowled by Jadeja found a faint edge into KL Rahul's gloves.

Alex Carey (0), with not much wherewithal to survive against spin, also got a skidder, which instead of playing on the front-foot was negotiated on the backfoot.

From 110 for 2, Australia slumped to 119 for 5 and there was no looking back for Indian bowlers.

Kuldeep and Ashwin then came for their next spells and 'Big Show' Glenn Maxwell (15), who was already under pressure, played a lousy slog against Kuldeep with fatal results.

Cameron Green (8) got a delivery that bounced and his cut shot went straight to Hardik Pandya as the match took a disastrous turn for the Aussies.



Serial pitch invader Jarvo enters Chepauk arena

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Notorious social media influencer and serial pitch invader Daniel Jarvis aka Jarvo was apprehended by the security authorities at the MA Chidambaram Stadium after he entered the ground wearing India blues before the start of their World Cup match against Australia here on Sunday.

The ICC banned Jarvo from attending further matches in the tournament. But the question remains how did he get access to the VIP area and could breach multiple security layers to enter Field of Play (FOP).

"The individual concerned has been banned from attending any further games at the event and the matter is in the hands of the Indian authorities," ICC spokesperson said.

This is the fourth time the Englishman, considered as a nuisance across all venues in the UK, has managed to breach security in a match involving India.

It must have left ICC as well as BCCI embarrassed as Jarvo, wearing the India jersey,

coolly entered the venue just as the Indian team were lining up for the march past, trying to move closer to team's biggest star, Virat Kohli.

Initially startled, the Indian team's security officer quickly grasped the man and escorted him outside the venue even as Kohli wasn't one bit amused.

Jarvo had been banned from English grounds after he repeatedly showed loopholes in England's security system by entering the playing arena at his will during the 2021 series against India.

Someone known for his notoriety, he has often been picked up by security and then left as no one has taken it as a serious matter.

"The safety and security of everyone involved in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 is our priority. We will work with the venue to understand what happened and consider if any additional security measures are required to prevent it happening again," ICC spokesperson's statement to PTI read.



Sri Lanka fined for slow over-rate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sri Lanka have been fined 10 per cent of their match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against South Africa in their ICC World Cup opener here.

Match referee Javagal Srinath imposed the sanction after Dasun Shanaka's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target during Saturday's match after time allowances were taken into consideration.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined five per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time.

Shanaka pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Richard Illingworth and Shahid Saikat, third umpire Michael Gough and fourth umpire Alex Wharf levelled the charge.

Dutch test for Black Caps

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Having already played their opening encounters in the ongoing Cricket World Cup, it is time for New Zealand and the Netherlands to venture deep into the tournament, as they face each other here on Monday.

The Kiwis played the competition opener on Thursday against defending champions England, pummeling the 2019 champions by nine wickets and once again showing the intent to go deep into the tournament.

Although England posted a decent 282 for the loss of nine wickets, the New Zealanders chased down the target in 36.2 overs, thanks to Devon Conway (152 not out) and Rachin Ravindra (123 not out) playing blazing innings.

New Zealand achieved the win without their regular skipper Kane Williamson, who is yet to regain match fitness having nursed an ACL injury he suffered during the IPL earlier this year.

Tom Latham, who led the side against the Three Lions, will continue wearing the captain's band on Monday as well after Kiwi head coach Gary Stead indicated Williamson is still not fully match-fit to feature against the Dutch.

"Kane's also been progress-



ing very well -- I think the fielding is still the element for him that he's just got to get a little bit higher and get a little more trust in his body," said Stead on Sunday.

"But he is progressing really well, and we are pretty confident he will be playing the third match for us. We have got another training to get through today, so we will finalise the team once we have got through that training. At this stage with Kane, we are looking like the third game is when he will start the tournament," he added.

While veteran pacer Tim Southee's inclusion in the team also looks unlikely, as he is recovering from a broken and dislocated thumb, fellow speedster Lockie Ferguson should be available provided he clears the fitness test on Sunday.

As for the Dutch, they were in a tough encounter against Pakistan on Friday, which the latter won by 81 runs.

However, the Dutch did have their moments in the match, especially early on in the contest as they managed to get

rid of three Pakistani batters in powerplay.

Also, with the bat, opener Vikramjit Singh (52) and Bas de Leede (67) gave a strong fight-back but still fell short.

While the Dutch bowling seems sorted, it is their batting that needs more consistency, especially in the middle order. Skipper Scott Edwards is yet to touch the 30-run mark in the last four ODIs.

The two sides have met on four occasions in the format so far, with New Zealand winning all the matches.

Lyon ready to reinforce Aussies spin department

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Veteran spinner Nathan Lyon has said he is ready to reinforce Australia's spin department if his services are required during the ongoing Cricket World Cup in India.

Australia could face a few challenges in the spin department as Ashton Agar is missing from the ICC event due to a calf tear he suffered during the T20Is in South Africa last month.

With only one specialist spinner in Adam Zampa and all-rounder Glenn Maxwell as the other option, Australia could feel the absence of a slow bowler, especially in spin-friendly conditions in India.

"I sent Andrew McDonald a text message the other day when I saw Ashton Agar was ruled out. I said, 'Just to let you know, I'm back bowling 10 overs, I'm right to go, 100 per cent'. If that happened I'd do anything to go over and play the World Cup," Lyon was quoted as saying by Espnricinfo.

"I'd be more than comfortable going in there and doing it if I had to. But, in saying that there has to be a lot



of things go wrong, so let's hope for Australia's sake that doesn't happen.

"Hopefully, they go out there and have a really good campaign and make sure they go over there to achieve what they've gone over there to do."

Lyon's appearance in the ODIs has been quite limited, bagging 29 wickets in the same number of matches at an average of 46.0 and an economy of 4.92, with the best figures of 4/44.

Aussie batter hits fastest ever ton in one-day match

PA ■ ADELAIDE

South Australia's Jake Fraser-McGurk has scored the fastest century in List A cricket, reaching the milestone in just 29 deliveries in a domestic one-day match against Tasmania on Sunday.

Fraser-McGurk reached his hundred in the eighth over of the run chase at Karen Rolton Oval, bettering the record of 31 deliveries by

South Africa's AB de Villiers against the West Indies in 2015.

The 21-year-old blasted a half-century off 18 deliveries, an Australian one-day domestic record, and he needed just 11 more balls to bring up his ton, including taking 32 runs off one over.

The opener was eventually dismissed for 125 off 38 balls, with ten fours and 13 sixes.

OTHER SPORTS

It's time for India to bid for Olympics: IOA chief PT Usha

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Buoyed by the record medal haul at the Hangzhou Asian Games, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president P T Usha on Sunday supported the government's plan to place a proposal to host the 2036 Olympics.

India won an unprecedented 107 medals, including 28 gold, in the games that ended on Sunday. In the Chinese city, the country saw an increase of 37 medals from the previous

best achieved in the 2018 edition.

"After this record-breaking performance in the Hangzhou Asian Games, if our country's athletes, coaches and national federations work hard, I feel we can win double digit medals in the Paris Olympics," Usha said.

"The government is doing everything possible for the betterment of Indian sports and for the athletes. Our prime minister takes a lot of interest in the country's sports."

She said the time has come

for India to bid for the Olympics.

"We should bid for the 2036 Olympics. I am sure India will win more medals in the Paris Olympics than in Tokyo, and then, with the medals to show, we can host the Olympics," said the 59-year-old former track star fondly known as 'Payyoli Express'.

The government could formally express India's interest to host the 2036 Olympics during the International Olympic Committee (IOC) session in



Mumbai from October 15 to 17.

After recent reforms, the IOC has moved away from the traditional bidding process. After the interested countries place their proposal of interest, the IOC's Future Host Commission will identify and propose its preferred candidate to the Executive Board.

The Executive Board can then enter targeted dialogue with a bid and then decide whether to recommend that a proposal be brought to a vote

at an IOC Session.

Usha, who took charge as IOA chief in December last year, said she was not at all surprised at India winning more than 100 medals in Hangzhou.

"I am an athlete myself and I knew from the beginning that India will win more than 100 medals in Hangzhou. So I was not surprised when we crossed 100 medals," said Usha, who missed an Olympic 400m hurdles medal by one-hundredth of a second in the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

"When it (100 medals) happened, I told my colleagues that I knew India will win around 105 medals, and that happened."

"I am happy that India achieved a record medal haul in the Asian Games during our tenure. Everybody worked hard -- the athletes, coaches, support staff and officials. The government was ready to provide everything."

She said the most encouraging aspect about the record haul was that India won medals

in several sports, and just a few ones.

"As a track and field athlete myself, I am so happy that we won 29 medals from athletics though the number of gold was less than last time."

"Shooting and archery did very well. And we won medals in so many sports, that is the most encouraging thing."

India won at least a medal in 22 sports. India sent 660 athletes to Hangzhou, the largest ever contingent, to compete in 39 sports.