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LONDON SHUT DOWN

MONEY 10
SENSEX, NIFTY FALL FOR 2ND
DAY; IT, BANKING SHARES WEIGH

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 33 Issue 284
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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INDIA TO FACE
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PM Modi says Terror is Terror, anywhere, anytime

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that "terrorism, no matter where it happens or for what reason, is against humanity". "India has been a victim of cross-border terrorism for a long time and two decades ago even Parliament was a victim of terrorism," Modi said, addressing the inaugural session of the Parliamentary (P20) Speakers' Summit of G20 nations. The event is being attended by Speakers of Parliaments of G20 members and invitee countries. The Pan-African Parliament took part in the P20 Summit for the first time after the African Union became a member of G20 at the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit last month. Modi regretted the world is yet to make a consensus on the issue of tackling terrorism of which India has been a victim. "Terrorists wanted to take hostage, kill MPs. India has dealt with numerous such terror incidents," Modi shared with the Presiding Officers from the G20 nations. Against the backdrop of massive Israel-Palestine conflict in the West Asia region, the PM cautioned that conflicts and confrontations being faced by the world today do not benefit anyone, saying the world has to move forward with a human-centric approach. "Now the world is also realising how big a challenge terror-

ism is for the world. Terrorism, wherever it may be, for whatever reason, in whatever form, is against humanity. In such a scenario, we will have to adopt a tough approach in dealing with terrorism," he said. Modi lamented that there is no unanimity on the definition of terrorism even in the United Nations. "Everyone is aware of what is happening in various parts of the world. The world is grappling with conflicts and confrontations. Such a world full of conflicts and confrontations is not in anyone's interest. A divided world cannot provide solutions to the big challenges before humanity. Today also, in the UN, the international convention on combating terrorism is waiting for consensus," the PM said in his address at the newly constructed Yashbhoomi Convention Centre in the national Capital. Modi said Parliaments and representatives across the globe will have to think about how they can work together in this fight against terrorism. The PM also underlined that there can be no better medium than public participation to deal with the world's challenges. Modi called for looking at the world with the sentiment of one earth, one family, one future. The thematic session at the P20 Summit is focussed on four subjects of transformation in people's lives through public digital platforms, women-led development, accelerating



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Duarte Pacheco arrives for the inauguration of the 9th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) at Yashbhoomi Convention Centre in New Delhi on Friday

SDGs and sustainable energy transition. The P20 Joint Declaration adopted by participating G20 nations also talked about conflicts and peaceful

resolution as spoken by the Prime Minister in his speech. "In view of the constructive discussions held during the Ninth P20 and experience gained at

the previous P20s, we reaffirm our commitment to continue our joint work to make an effective and meaningful parliamentary contribution to the

G20 process, as appreciated by the G20 Leaders. We will continue to engage in parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue in relevant fora as a catalyst for

promoting international peace, prosperity and harmony, including supporting the peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes," stated the concluding part of the declaration. Reading out the resolution, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the unanimous adoption of the Joint Declaration at P20 Bharat exemplifies the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. "As public representatives, we pledge to collaborate for a human centric, prosperous and harmonious future. Many congratulations to all the delegates for their support," Birla stated at the end of the opening session. Modi also said that the general election scheduled next year is the biggest festival in India where about 100 crore voters are eligible to exercise their mandate. "I invite you to come and witness next year's elections," Modi told delegates. "India has conducted 17 general elections and over 300 State Assembly polls so far. In the 2019 general elections, people made my party victorious for the second time in a row; this was the world's biggest election," Modi said amid the thumping of the desk. During the end of his speech amid huge applause, Modi said the use of EVMs has boosted transparency and efficiency in the election process and results are now declared within hours of the start of counting of votes. The PM also informed the delegates about some achieve-

ments of his governance including the participation of women in every sector with almost 50 per cent of the elected representatives in local self-government institutions being women. The recent law on granting one-third reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies will further enrich the country's parliamentary tradition, he added. The PM also took the opportunity to inform that India has more than 900 TV channels in 28 languages to provide real-time information to people and more than 33,000 different newspapers published in about 200 languages. The parliamentary leaders also congratulated Indian Parliament for passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, ensuring reservation of one-third seats in the Lok Sabha and in State legislatures. In his address, Inter-Parliamentary Union President Duarte Pacheco said maybe "if we have more women in the leadership of our countries, we will not have so many wars". He said it was important to have more women in a participatory democracy. Sources said the PM who was scheduled to leave after the pre-lunch session and his address stayed back to interact with the delegates and exchanged pleasantries with the members. President of the Mexican Senate Ana Lilia Rivera tied a "rakhi" on the wrist of Modi, who in turn gave her his blessings.

Gaza pays for Hamas Horror

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The Israeli military carried out raids inside Gaza Strip on Friday. In a statement, the Israeli Army said troops had entered Gaza to battle militants, destroy weapons and search for evidence about the missing hostages held by Hamas. Israel has been massing troops along the Gaza border since last Saturday's deadly incursion by Hamas militants. Palestinians have begun a mass exodus from northern Gaza on Friday after Israel's military told some 1 million people to evacuate toward the southern part of the besieged territory, an unprecedented order ahead of a ground invasion against the ruling Hamas militant group. The UN warned that so many people fleeing en masse — almost half the Gaza population — would be calamitous, and it urged Israel to reverse the order. Families in cars, trucks and donkey carts packed with blankets and possessions streamed down a main road out of Gaza City, the biggest city. Israel hammered neighbourhoods in southern Gaza with air strikes on Friday, and it said ground troops have conducted temporary raids in the territory to battle militants, search for



weapons and evidence of the missing hostages. Hamas, which staged a shocking and brutal attack on Israel nearly a week ago and has fired thousands of rockets since, called on people to stay in their homes, saying the order was "psychological warfare" to break their solidarity. Many hesitated to leave, fearing nowhere was safe in the tiny territory under constant bombardment by Israeli air strikes. Gaza is sealed off from food, water and medical supplies and under a virtual total power blackout. "Forget about food, forget about electricity, forget about fuel. The only concern now is

just if you'll make it, if you're going to live," said Nebal Farsakh, a spokesperson for the Palestinian Red Crescent in Gaza City, as she broke into heaving sobs. The Gaza Health Ministry said Friday that roughly 1,800 people have been killed in the territory — more than half of them under the age of 18, or women. Hamas assault last Saturday killed more than 1,300 Israelis, and roughly 1,500 Hamas militants were killed during the fighting, the Israeli government said. The week-old war has sent tensions soaring across the region.

Israel has traded fire in recent days with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, sparking fears of an ever wider conflict, though that frontier is currently calm. Meanwhile, weekly Muslim prayers brought protests across West Asia, and tensions ran high in Jerusalem's Old City. The Islamic endowment that manages a flashpoint holy site in the city, the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, said Israeli authorities barred all Palestinian men under the age of 50 from entering. Israel has bombarded Gaza round-the-clock since Hamas attack, in which its fighters massacred hundreds in southern Israel and snatched some 150 people to Gaza as hostages. A military spokesman said that after Israeli ground troops conducted their raids in Gaza on Friday, they then left. Hamas said Israel's air strikes killed 13 of the hostages in the past day. It said the dead included foreigners but did not give their nationalities. Israeli military spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari denied the claim, telling Al-Jazeera Arabic, "We have our own information." Israel said on Thursday it would allow no supplies into Gaza until Hamas frees the hostages.

BSNL lifeline for jawans at Siachen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI



with a much-needed lifeline to their families and loved ones, and it will also improve their ability to communicate with each other and with their commanders. A base transceiver station is a radio transceiver that connects mobile devices to a cellular network. It sends and receives radio signals to mobile devices and converts them to digital signals that are then routed to other devices in the network or to the Internet.

"Siachen warriors, in collaboration with BSNL, established the first ever BSNL BTS at forward posts of the highest battlefield on October 6 to extend mobile communication for the soldiers deployed at more than 15,500 feet," the Fire and Fury Corps of the Indian Army posted on X on Friday. Union Minister of State for Communications, Devusinh Chauhan also took to X to share about this incredible development. He wrote, "The BSNL with Siachen warriors installs first-ever mobile tower at Siachen Glacier. Now our heroes can talk to their near and dear ones at their convenience. Kudos to @BSNLCorporate and #SiachenWarriors." Lauding the feat, industrialist Anand Mahindra also shared

how this "seemingly small event in our turbulent world" is in fact a "big news." He wrote, "These are photos shared by @devusinh of the first ever mobile tower installed in Siachen! A seemingly small event in our turbulent world. But it means our jawans who put their lives on the line every single day on the world's highest battlefield to defend us are now strongly connected to their families. For them, this device is as important as the Vikram Landar. To me, this is really BIG news." The Indian Army was deployed there as part of Operation Meghdoot on April 13, 1984 to secure the Siachen Glacier, which was important from a strategic point of view since the glacier shares boundaries with Pakistan and China.

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Indian returnees from Israel recount horror stories

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traumatized by what they had experienced in the last few days, the first batch of over 200 Indians were glad to be home from Israel on Friday with the sound of air raid sirens, rocket fire and screams still ringing loud in their ears. Israel witnessed an unprecedented attack by Hamas in its southern parts on Saturday morning. The war has till now claimed over 2,800 lives on both sides.

"We woke up to sounds of air raid sirens. We stay in central Israel and I don't know what shape this conflict will take," said Shashwat Singh soon after landing at Delhi airport along with his wife.

The post-doctoral researcher in agriculture, who has been staying in Israel since 2019, said the sound of those sirens and the nightmarish experience of the past few days still haunt him. The step to bring back Indians is a "praiseworthy step", Singh said soon after the flight landed. "We hope peace will be restored and we will return to work... The Indian government got in touch with us via email. We are thankful to Prime Minister Modi and the Indian Embassy in Israel."

Another flight carrying 200 Indian passengers from Tel Aviv are expected to arrive here on Saturday, sources said.

India launched Operation Ajay to facilitate the return of those who wish to come back home as a series of brazen



attacks on Israeli towns by Hamas militants over the weekend triggered fresh tension in the region. Many students who returned home recalled the fateful night of Saturday and how they had to rush to shelters multiple times in the wake of rocket attacks by Hamas. Suparno Ghosh, a West Bengal native and a first-year PhD student of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev at Beersheva in Israel, was also among the group of Indians who reached Delhi on the special flight. "We could not know what happened. On Saturday, some rockets were launched. But we were safe in shelters... The good thing is that the Israeli government has made shelters everywhere, so we were safe," he said.

Several women students also recounted the grim situation they faced when the attacks happened. "It was a panic situation. We are not citizens there, we are just students. So, for us whenever the sirens go on, it's a panic situation for us," Jaipur native Mini Sharma told

Soni, another student, thanked the governments of India and Israel for "taking such good care of us". "I booked two flights as I was not sure when would the Indian government evacuate us. But, I am glad to be back... Many Indians still in Israel," she said.

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday said around 18,000 Indians are currently residing in Israel while about a dozen people are in the West Bank and three to four are in Gaza. Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar welcomed the passengers at the Delhi airport as they streamed into the lounge area from the tarmac side. He greeted them with folded hands and also shook hands with many of them saying, "Welcome home". "I was pleased and honoured today to welcome 212 students who came back from Israel who collectively were very grateful for the smooth and efficient and highly responsive way the government of India came to their rescue."

"For me, it is a matter of pride that I got an opportunity to welcome, on behalf of our Prime Minister and the government, our students who have returned from Israel and to thank the aircrew. They were all unanimously thanking Prime Minister Modi," the minister said. Operation Ajay is consistent with the prime minister's motto of not leaving an Indian behind who finds himself or herself in harm's way. The Government of India will work very hard to make sure that every Indian who needs to come back, return to their families safely, Chandrasekhar added.

Justice to anti-Sikh riot victims began only after Modi came to power: Shah

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said justice to the victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, which were "politically motivated", started being delivered only after the Narendra Modi government assumed office in 2014. Addressing a programme of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee here, Shah said 300 cases related to the 1984 riots were reopened and compensation of Rs 5 lakh was given to the family of each of the victims after 2014. "No one can forget the riots of 1984 and such heinous killings were politically motivated. No one was punished in those riots until the Modi government assumed office. No one was arrested and no one spent a single day in jail till 2014," he said. Shah said probe commissions were set up, but no concrete results ever came.

Prime Minister Modi established an SIT and re-opened 300 cases, leading to the imprisonment of the guilty, he said. The home minister said cases are still ongoing and the Modi government will ensure justice for the victims. "The home minister said that after so many years, the process of giving compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the 3,328 victims was done by the Modi government. He also said that the Modi government opened the way to give citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act to Sikh sisters and brothers who were tortured in neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Paying glowing tributes to the Sikh gurus and the Sikh community, he said the Sikhs move forward taking both religion and karma equally and when it



is an issue of sacrificing one's life for religion, a true Sikh never looks back.

He said that from the days of independence struggle to the security of the country now, the sacrifice of Sikh brothers is unparalleled.

Shah paid tributes to the Sikh gurus and said: "I bow my head to the Guru tradition of the Sikh religion. Guru tradition of 10 generations of Sikh Panth has set before the world an excellent example of struggle and sacrifice against injustice and barbarity before the invaders." He said the contribution of the 9th Guru Teg Bahadur to the country can never be forgotten.

His supreme sacrifice against the atrocities of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb on the people in Kashmir shows his greatness, Shah said. The home minister said when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had decided to celebrate a festival in memory of Guru Teg Bahadur, then it was decided that his admiration will begin from the same spot of the Red Fort from where his martyrdom was

announced. On the founder of the Sikh religion Guru Nanak Dev, he said Guru Nanak Dev preached equality of all religions in many countries through 'Char Udasiyaan'.

"The home minister said no one in the whole world can match the sacrifices made by Sikh Gurus for humanity and the country. He said when every religion in the world was fighting a war for its own ideas, at that time from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to the tenth Guru every one gave the message of equality of all religions to the world, which the whole world is following till today and this is a matter of pride for entire India.

He said Guru Nanak Dev also spread the message of love throughout the world without any self interest. He said the Guru Granth Sahib imbibes all good teachings and there can be no greater message of equality of all religions than the holy book. The home minister said whether it is the freedom struggle of India, the fight against the

horrors of partition, or securing the borders of the country after independence, the Sikh community has always been at the forefront. The history of freedom struggle is full of sacrifices of brave Sikhs, and after the independence of the country, the Sikhs have made the maximum sacrifices for national security, he said.

He said that apart from the Sikh community, there would rarely be any other community which would have such a long tradition of struggle and sacrifice against the injustice of the invaders for 10 generations. Shah said Prime Minister Modi has provided 33 per cent reservation for women in the legislatures of states and Parliament for a women-led development. He said the tradition of women empowerment started years ago in the Sikh panth with the teachings of Mata Khivi's langar.

He said history showcases that Sikh community women have made significant contributions in the freedom struggle as well in the nation's progress.

Tirupur registers four decades of industrial peace



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ TIRUPUR

Friday turned out to be a golden letter day in the history of Tirupur, the knitwear capital of the country, as it was announced in a specially convened meeting that the textile hub completed four decades of peaceful functioning without any agitation or strikes by labor unions. A, Sakthivel, honorary chairman, Tirupur Exporters Association, the apex body of all textile units in the industrial township, declared that peace could be sustained only because of the joint effort by all stakeholders which included the entrepreneurs, employees, labor unions, various NGOs and women organizations. "All have played their roles in addressing labor issues as well as promotion of industry and growth of

exports. Nowhere in the world have all stakeholders come together under one forum to resolve issues and to promote the business," said Sakthivel. Tirupur had undergone a 120-day long strike in 1984 but since then the industrial climate in the township which houses nearly 8,000 units and employs six lakh workers has been peaceful. In addition to the six lakh direct employees, the township provides indirect jobs to two lakh workers. To mark the occasion, the TEA along with various bodies relaunched the Tirupur Stakeholders Forum, an umbrella organization consisting of employers, trade unions, workers and NGOs engaged in various activities ranging from promotion of exports, maintaining cordial ties between employers and employees.

Abhishek's aide held by ED in PDS scam

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

After the coal, cattle and a teacher recruitment scams a new scandal, this time related to the public distribution system, seems to have exploded in the face of the Mamata Banerjee Government.

In a noticeable breakthrough the Enforcement Directorate on Friday arrested Bakibur Rehman, a businessman close to a senior Bengal minister for his alleged involvement in the PDS scam. Rehman was arrested by the ED officials after being questioned for more than 50 hours and raids conducted at about 11 locations in North 24 Parganas and Nadia districts.

Though Rehman would plead not-guilty saying he had answered all the questions put to him by the ED, sources said heaps of documents recovered from his business offices and flats showed questionable transactions. The ED officials raided a number of rice and flour mills apart from some other business establishments and apartments reportedly belonging to Rehman. The accused who allegedly failed to explain his meteoric rise in the past few years owns a network of hotels, restaurants, bars in Kolkata and its vicinity, apart from owning rice and flour mills. "This man Bakibur Rehman is a close confidant of a former Food Minister and should be probed thoroughly so that



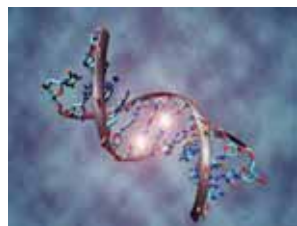
many more things will come out," Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said.

When asked to comment on Adhikari's statements former Bengal Food Minister Jyotipriya Mullick who also hails from North 24 Parganas said he did not know Rehman. "There are many people who you come across as people's representatives ... but I don't know a particular person by this name," a visibly agitated minister said.

The ED officials suspect a lot of money from recruitment scam might have found its way into these businesses. "We are investigating the matter and will take some time to find out the truth," officials said. Meanwhile, days after the Enforcement Directorate issued summons to Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's personal assistant Sumit Roy the latter on Friday moved the High Court challenging the legality of the Agency's action in issuing summons to him. An MP from Diamond Harbour, Abhishek is also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

New test that accurately measures human age developed by researchers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



A new test that can accurately measure biological ageing in a clinical setting has been developed by teams from University of Glasgow in the UK and the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden. The new test is an epigenetic clock -- a type of biochemical assessment that looks at DNA to understand how well the body is ageing in contrast to its chronological age -- and is the first of these cutting-edge tests to be proven to perform accurately in a clinical setting, in both healthy and unhealthy tissue. Epigenetic clocks have been proposed as a 'gold standard' for measuring age accurately, beyond a person's biological age, as they are able to measure methylation tags on DNA. The clock -- named the Glasgow-Karolinska Clock -- was developed by the researchers while studying patients for the ageing effects of chronic kidney disease and related treatments.

"This study is the first time in a clinical setting that we can accurately report on the extent of biological ageing as opposed to chronological ageing in chronic kidney disease patients," said lead author Professor Paul Shiels, from the University of

Glasgow. The study is published in the Journal of Internal Medicine.

"Our findings, using the new Glasgow-Karolinska Clock -- show that not only are these patients ageing faster than people in the general population, their accelerated ageing only slows down once they have had a transplant. Treatment with dialysis does not appear to impact this process," he added. The team studied more than 400 patients with chronic kidney disease in Sweden alongside around 100 matched population controls, to better understand the impact on ageing of the disease, including during dialysis treatment and after kidney transplant. The team used the clocks to measure the change in biological age of around 47 patients one year after kidney transplantation, or one year after the start of their dialysis treatment, as well as how the healthy tissue in 48 controls aged by comparison.

Court reserves order till Oct 18 in TV journalist murder case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Friday reserved its judgment in the 2008 murder of TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan for October 18. Additional Sessions Judge Ravindra Kumar Pandey directed all the accused to be present in the court when he delivers the verdict.

The court had on October 6 noted that arguments by the defence and the prosecution were complete, and posted the matter for today for additional arguments or clarifications. Soumya Vishwanathan was shot dead on September 30, 2008 while returning home from work in her car around 3:30 AM. Police had claimed robbery was the motive behind her killing. Five people-- Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik, Ajay Kumar and Ajay Sethi-- were arrested for killing her and are in custody since March 2009. Police had invoked the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against the accused.

Malik and two others -- Ravi Kapoor and Amit Shukla -- were earlier convicted in the 2009 killing of IT executive Jigisha Ghosh.

ED attaches ₹59.44 crore assets in Power Bank App fraud case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached movable and immovable assets worth Rs 59.44 crore of Vaibhav Dipak Shah, Sagar Diamonds Pvt. Ltd, RHC Global Exports Pvt. Ltd. and their associates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the Power Bank App fraud case allegedly being run by a group of Chinese nationals. The ED initiated investigation on the basis of various FIRs registered by Uttarakhand Police, Special Cell Delhi Police and Karnataka State police under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Information Technology Act.



The ED investigation revealed that few Chinese nationals, who as part of a large conspiracy and with a sole object to cheat the Indian public, incorporated a number of shell companies in India with the help of Chartered Accountants/Company Secretary and other Indian professionals.

Stage set for high profile visit of RSS chief Bhagwat to J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The stage is set for the high-profile visit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. During his three-day long visit, the RSS Chief is expected to take stock of the prevailing political scenario besides reviewing the organizational activities with the senior functionaries of the RSS J&K unit. The RSS Chief is scheduled to reach Jammu late on Friday. On Saturday the RSS Chief will review the political situation of J&K and Ladakh UTs with top



functionaries of Sangh including Prant Pracharak, Seh Prant Pracharak, and Pracharaks of all districts of J&K. Recent political developments and the emerging security sce-

nario are also expected to be discussed during these meetings to ensure complete feedback is shared with Dr Mohan Bhagwat. Elaborate security arrange-

ments have been made at the RSS headquarters in Jammu at Keshav Bhawan. The RSS chief is also scheduled to attend two functions in the Kathua district on October 15 before returning to Delhi late in the evening.

As per the local unit, the RSS chief is scheduled to offer prayers inside the famous Kali Mata Temple, located inside the Bahu Fort in Jammu, attend a meeting of Swayam Sewaks before heading to Kathua. In Kathua he is scheduled to address a gathering of Swayam sewaks from both the Samba and Kathua districts at Sports Stadium, Kathua.

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(H.K.Gupta) Advocate Enr.I.D/2488/1999 Gupta & Associates 19, Lawyers Chamber, Tehsil Building, Tis Hazari Courts, New Delhi-110054 Tel: 011-23921233/Mob.9810101-362/462

Form No. 3 [See Regulation-15 (1)(a)](16/3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2) 1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)

Case No.: OA/403/2021 [Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993] Exh. No.: 20619 ICICI BANK LIMITED VS SHASHWAT DOBHAL.

To, (1) SHASHWAT DOBHAL D/W/S/O-SH SHANKAR DOBHAL, SHRI SHASHWAT DOBHAL SON OF SHRI SHANKAR DOBHAL, R/O HOUSE NO. D-703, 7TH FLOOR, TOWER-D BESTECH PARK VIEW SPA NEXT SECTOR 67 GURGAON- 122001 HARYANA, GURGAON, HARYANA Also At, SHRI SHASHWAT DOBHAL SON OF SHRI SHANKAR DOBHAL, R/O FLAT NO. 003, GROUND FLOOR, TOWER - B4, AVALON ROSE WOOD VILLAGE KHANPUR, ALWAR - 301001 RAJASTHAN, ALWAR, RAJASTHAN -301001 (2) SMT Vandana Sharma W/O SH SHASHWAT DOBHAL R/O HNO D 703 7TH FLOOR TOWER D BESTECH PARK VIEW SPA NEXT SECTOR 67 GURGAON, HARYANA Also At, FLAT NO 003 GROUND FLOOR TOWER B4 AVALON ROSE WOOD VILLAGE KHANPUR ALWAR ALWAR, RAJASTHAN SUMMONS

WHEREAS, OA/403/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 26/09/2023. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 5589496/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under- (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted; (ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application; (iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal; (v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 18/10/2024 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 27/09/2023.

Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

Task force meeting on air pollution held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, P K Mishra, on Friday chaired a high-level task force meeting on air pollution in Delhi-NCR and reviewed the preparedness to deal with the issue of adverse air quality in the region as the winter season approaches. Mishra, during the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, also discussed the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), its monitoring and measures to improve its enforcement, a statement issued by the PMO said. He said the strict implementation of the actions listed under the GRAP by all concerned is

critical to prevent worsening of air quality. The meeting was held to review the preparedness of various stakeholders to deal with the issue of adverse air quality in Delhi-NCR as the winter season approaches, the statement said. During the meeting, Mishra discussed in detail about various measures being undertaken to reduce the impact of different sources of air pollution, including industrial pollution, vehicular pollution, dust from construction and demolition (C&D) activities, dust from roads, burning of municipal solid waste (MSW), biomass and miscellaneous waste, agricultural stubble burning and dispersed sources. Greening and plantation initiatives to abate air pollution were also deliberated during the meeting, the statement said. MM Kutty, Chairman, Commission for Air Quality Management, informed that industries in National Capital Region (NCR) are being shifted to cleaner fuels and out of 240 industrial areas, as many as 211 have already been provided CNG connection. Similarly, out of 7,759 fuel-based industries, as many as 7,449 have shifted to PNG or approved fuels. Kutty also said there has been increase in e-vehicles and currently, 4,12,393 e-vehicles are registered in the NCR, the statement said. The number of e-

buses and battery charging stations has also increased and now there are 4,793 e-vehicle charging points in Delhi, it said. In regard to construction and demolition waste management, the CAQM informed that five C&D waste processing facilities with capacity of 5,150 tonnes



per day (TPD) are operational and one more facility with 1,000 TPD capacity is in the pipeline in Delhi. In Haryana, a C&D facility with 600 TPD capacity is operational and 700 TPD is in the pipeline. In Uttar Pradesh, a 1,300 TPD facility is operational and two facilities are in the pipeline. All states have been requested to augment C&D waste processing capacities, the statement said.

In an effort to ensure reduction of the paddy stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the principal secretary to the prime minister instructed close monitoring of the issue by chief secretaries of the three states. He advised the in-situ manage-

ment of paddy stubble through Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines, and use of bio-decomposers. Mishra also advised the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) to improve the technologies. Elaborating on ex-situ management of paddy stubble, he advised working on developing economic use of paddy straw. He also stressed on developing adequate storage facilities for baled straw along with infrastructure for baling, briquetting and pelleting for effective ex-situ utilisation of paddy straw, the statement said. Further, strict adherence to the stipulated targets for co-firing of biomass, with a focus on paddy

straw, in thermal power plants was also discussed, it said. The data showed that a total 2271 burning events were detected in the six states between 15-Sept-2023 and 13-Oct-2023, which are distributed as 1230, 374, 259, 02, 174 and 232 in Punjab, Haryana, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan and MP, respectively. During the meeting, Mishra stressed on a multi-pronged approach comprising several measures, such as procurement of biomass pellets, adopting the benchmark price issued by the power ministry, expanding gas infrastructure and supply in entire NCR by March 2024, and ensuring expeditious supply of biomass on demand, according to the statement.

Attend mega PTM, CM urges parents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday urged the parents of students in schools run by the Delhi Government and the MCD to attend the mega parent-teacher meeting to discuss the progress of their children. According to the city Government, a two-day "mega" parent-teacher meeting (PTM) is being organised for Government and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) schools for the first time. Education Minister Atishi and Deputy Mayor Aaley Mohd Iqbal interacted with the parents of students at the Veer Savarkar Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Kalkaji and the MCD Primary School in Govindpuri ahead of the meeting. Kejriwal wrote in a post on X, "Parents play a big role in the success of children. Today is

Parents' Day in all the schools of the Delhi government and the MCD. Today and tomorrow (Saturday), mega PTM is being organised in all the schools of the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation." "I request all the parents that like always, you should come to their school with your children today, talk to the teachers about the progress of the children and openly discuss how we can do better for the future," he said. Education Minister Atishi echoed the chief minister. She said, "A joint mega PTM has been organised in all Delhi government and MCD schools. For the first time this year, we are organising a mega PTM on two days, on October 13 and October 14, to enable more and more parents to attend their children's schools. If they are unable to attend today, they can attend it on Saturday," she said.



Parents have played a very important role in transforming education in Delhi government schools and this year's arrangements are nothing short of a "fest", she said. "The mega PTM this year is being celebrated like a fest in all Delhi government and MCD schools and parents are actively participating in it. They are discussing with teachers their children's learning,

their performances and the ways to improve them. This will help them devise better strategies for the future of their children together," Atishi said. The minister asserted that the Kejriwal government aims to transform MCD schools, similar to Delhi government schools, and the involvement of parents in children's education will reflect in their academic per-

formances. "After Delhi government schools, our priority is now to transform MCD schools. But in this process of change, parents have the most important role to play. The higher the involvement of parents in their children's education, the better the academic performance of the children," she said. Deputy Mayor Iqbal said children and parents are enthusiastic about the mega PTM. "Particularly, parents of children in MCD schools are very excited about this new experience and they hope that, very soon, their children's schools will also be transformed, just like Delhi government schools," Iqbal said. During the conversation, parents not only expressed their confidence in enrolling their children in Delhi government schools but also highlighted the significant improvements.

Thyagraj Stadium, Central Secretariat Metro Station fire safety renewals rejected

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) has rejected the fire safety certificate renewal applications of Thyagraj Stadium and the Central Secretariat metro station for failing to meet norms. The department also rejected the applications of some government schools and commercial buildings citing similar shortcomings. According to official documents, the DFS said the smoke management system in the basement of Thyagraj Stadium was found non-functional while the fire extinguishers were found "expired, non-refilled and non-functional." The DFS also flagged that exit signage were found removed at some places while first aid hose reel was non-functional. "... Application of renewal of fire



safety certificate is rejected. The occupancy of the building in the absence of requisite fire protection system/fire safety certificate shall be at the risk and responsibility of the management," the DFS said in a communication to the Public Works Department, which manages the stadium. While rejecting the Central Secretariat metro station's application, the department said the "smoke curtain provided for compartmentation between line-2 and line-6 was found

non-functional." Reacting to the development, Anuj Dayal, principal executive director, Delhi metro corporate communications, told PTI, "The process of getting such certifications is a continuous exercise and we are always in touch with the authorities concerned." "Regarding Central Secretariat, the fire curtain issue has already been resolved and other issues are also being resolved on priority." The DFS has also refused to renew the fire safety certificate of the World Trade Centre building on the Barakhamba Road, saying the lift signage were found removed and there was no alternative exit for personnel working on the first floor. It also noted that the corridor on the third floor of the building was found "encroached" and unavailable for evacuation.

Drive launched to prevent farm fire



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Friday launched a drive for spraying bio-decomposer in paddy fields from Tigipur in the Capital to prevent stubble burning. "The Delhi Government aims to spray the bio-decomposer over 5,000 acres of agricultural land this year. We have formed 13 teams to undertake the task of spraying bio-decomposer. The government will spray bio-decomposer free of cost on all Basmati as well as non-Basmati agricultural fields. So far, 880 farmers have filled out the form to get their fields sprayed with bio-decomposers free of cost," Rai said. Since 2020, the Delhi government has been using Pusa bio-decomposer, a microbial solution that decomposes paddy residue in 15-20 days, to prevent stubble burning in the capital. Farm fires are a major reason behind a spike in air pollution in Delhi-NCR in October-November. The government sprayed the bio-decomposer over 4,400 acres of paddy fields last year, Rai said, adding that 5,000 acres of land will be covered this season. The Development Minister stated that the Delhi Government has purchased the bio-decomposer liquid from PUSA

Institute directly. The minister said stubble burning is rampant in Punjab, but he hoped that the number of farm fires would come down due to the steps taken by the AAP government in the agrarian state. According to the Union environment ministry, the maximum share of farm fires in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution stood at 34 per cent on November 3 last year and 48 per cent on November 7, 2021. Taking a dig at the AAP government, the Leader of the opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has said the Arvind Kejriwal government has been exposed and this government is propagating a war against pollution. "The machines used to measure real-time pollution have now started malfunctioning as soon as air quality issues arise in Delhi. Over the past three days, pollution data has not been available, and the pollution sources cannot be identified. Moreover, the Super Site initiative launched for this purpose has also been shut down," Bidhuri said. The BJP leader stated that the truth is that for several days, mobile vans haven't been able to collect pollution data, and now even the dashboard is inaccessible.

Probe into body left unattended

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The body of a 70-year-old patient was left unattended for 17 days in a mortuary at the Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Greater Noida, prompting Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak to order an investigation into the incident. The patient was admitted to the GIMS on July 22 after a brain stroke and passed away on September 23 after which the body was shifted to the mortuary. The person who brought the patient to the hospital remained inaccessible

during the entire course of treatment, the GIMS said in a statement. However, earlier this week it came to light that the body was kept unattended in the mortuary for 17 days and the State Government took note of the incident, with Pathak, also the health minister, on Thursday ordering an investigation into the whole episode. "A serious case of (hospital authorities) forgetting a body after keeping it in a freezer for 17 days has come to light at the Government Institute of Medical Sciences in Greater Noida Noida. Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak has taken cognizance of this highly sensitive incident.

"Orders have been given to investigate the matter. "Instructions have also been given to the principal secretary of the Medical Education Department to seek clarification from the director of GIMS," according to a state government statement. "The institute staff had carelessly kept the body in the freezer for 17 days and forgot about it. Deputy Chief Minister Pathak said the entire incident will be investigated and strict action will be taken against those responsible," the statement added. The GIMS said the person who got the

patient admitted to the hospital could not be contacted over the phone despite several calls made to him and eventually it informed the officials of the local Kasna police station about it. "The entire treatment for over two months was provided free of cost to the patient and teams from multiple departments were looking after this patient," the hospital said. "There are three destitute patients admitted in the hospital, which are left by the police or some attendants and it is very difficult to manage these patients for their day to day care and disposal," the hospital added.

76-year-old woman dies after rashly driven car hits her inside housing society

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

A 76-year-old woman died allegedly after she was hit by a rashly driven car inside a group housing society's premises in Noida, prompting the police to book the driver, a co-resident of the condominium, for causing death by negligence. The sports utility vehicle (SUV) rushed out of the basement at high speed and hit her, and its wheels crushed her body, showed CCTV footage. The woman, identified as Krishna Narang, was walking back from the local temple to her home in Mahagun Modern Society in Sector 78 around 1 pm on Wednesday when the incident took occurred. Soon, some people who saw the accident rushed to Narang's help and she was taken to a hospital where she succumbed to the injuries during treatment. The accused, Gaurav Walia, also helped take Narang to the hospital along with three private security guards of the society, the eyewitness claimed. Several passersby gathered at the accident spot and some jumped to her rescue, showed the minute-long footage. The

driver rushed her to hospital along with three private security guards of the society, but she died during treatment. She had sustained serious injuries on her head and other body parts, according to police. "Krishna Narang was taking a stroll inside the complex when the car came out of the basement and hit her. Its wheel passed over her body. The driver admitted her to a private hospital and informed her family members. She died shortly after. Her family members did not file any complaint with the police," said Harish Chandra, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Noida. The local Sector 113 police station in-charge Sarvesh Singh said that they got a complaint from the society's security supervisor Kaushal Kumar on Thursday after which the FIR was lodged. The FIR has been lodged under the Indian Penal Code sections 279 (driving a vehicle negligently), 338 (causing grievous hurt due to negligence) and 304A (causing death by negligence), police said. "The accused, who lives in the same society, is yet to be arrested," the police officer said on Friday morning.

Ramleela themes to revolve around G20 Summit, temple

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

This year, Ramleelas in Delhi are not only going to be richer in terms of grandeur and aesthetics, but will also revolve around themes ranging from the success of the G20 Summit to the replica of Varanasi's Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The Ramleela committees in the national Capital are also ecstatic for the 14-day event with the temple at the Red Fort grounds. A model of Kashi Vishwanath Dham will be constructed atop the stage. Skilled craftsmen from Varanasi, Mathura, Rajasthan, and Haryana are diligently constructing the model," he said. "These effigies will be 100 feet, 90 feet and 80 feet, in height respectively," he said. The Shri Ram Dharmik Leela Committee in Tri Nagar is celebrating the success of the G20 Summit. With a budget of approximately Rs 60 lakh, the committee is all set to host the celebrations from 15 to 24 October. "This grand celebration is being organised in a 10,000-square metre area," said Anil Garg, general secretary of the committee said.

Mukesh Rishi, known for his roles in films like Sooryavansham and Sarfarosh, will play the demon king Ravana, Kumar added. "Lav Kush Ramleela Committee will make a 150X50 feet three-storey stage at the Red Fort ground. A model of Kashi Vishwanath Dham will be constructed atop the stage. Skilled craftsmen from Varanasi, Mathura, Rajasthan, and Haryana are diligently constructing the model," he said. "These effigies will be 100 feet, 90 feet and 80 feet, in height respectively," he said. The Shri Ram Dharmik Leela Committee in Tri Nagar is celebrating the success of the G20 Summit. With a budget of approximately Rs 60 lakh, the committee is all set to host the celebrations from 15 to 24 October. "This grand celebration is being organised in a 10,000-square metre area," said Anil Garg, general secretary of the committee said.

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BRIEFS

Soulful Sojourn, kaleidoscopic journey

NEW DELHI: An art exhibition, 'Soulful Sojourn- A kaleidoscopic journey through the heart & mind' by Anurag Anand an artist and author is on display at All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society, Rafi Marg here from October 13 to October 2023. Categorized in three series, the artist has used vibrant colours and bold images to tell human stories with each artwork ranging from the need to find joy in the little things that surround us, to a very contextual take on the impact of technology on our lives.

AIAASC announces partnership with WASC

NEW DELHI: New Delhi: The American International Accreditation Association of Schools and Colleges (AIAASC) has announced its partnership with Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) to offer joint accreditation to international schools and colleges across India as well as other parts of the world. The partnership strengthen India-US ties in the field of education. The joint accreditation process for schools/ colleges across the Indian subcontinent will be a major boost for Indian students and give them a head start in a competitive global scenario, AIAASC said in a statement.

AAP workers protest against arrest of Sanjay

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party workers on Friday protested near BJP headquarters here against the arrest of senior leader Sanjay Singh in a money laundering case related to alleged irregularities in the scrapped Delhi excise policy. Raising slogans against the party, the AAP workers tried to proceed towards BJP headquarters on DDU Marg but the police and paramilitary personnel stopped them. The protest came hours after the Delhi High Court agreed to list during the day a plea by Singh against his arrest.

LG objects to delay in execution of industries Relocation Scheme

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lt Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday took grave exception to the non-completion and operationalisation of the Relocation Scheme of the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (DSIIDC) even if started way back in 1996, following strict directions of the Supreme Court, officials said here. The scheme was brought out in 1996 to relocate industries operating in non-conforming/ residential areas of Delhi in violation of the Master Plan, to conforming areas by allotting

alternative industrial plots. A total of 51,837 applications were received under the Scheme, out of which 27,985 units found eligible for allotment of industrial plots. As on date, a total of 21,759 allotments have been made under the Scheme, out of which 21,458 (98.61%) of the allottees have already deposited 100 per cent of the cost of plots/ flats; yet they remain largely un-operational due to lack of basic infrastructure. Of these allotments, a majority of 15,838 alternate plots have been given in Bawana only, followed by 3917 in Bawana-II (Bhargarh) and 1467 in Narela.

The Scheme was entrusted to DSII-DC in 1998. Allotments under this Scheme started way back in 1999-2000 and completed in 2010, yet it lies almost totally un-operational, with basic required infrastructure like roads, power, sewer lines, water and transport facilities yet absent from the Relocation Scheme areas in Bawana and Bhargarh, even after a lapse of 26 years. Notably, a majority of the industrial units who have been allotted alternate plots under the Scheme are small units with plot size measuring from 100 sqm to 250 sqm. In Bawana, 4660 plots have been allotted out of

which the maximum 2592 number of allotted plots measure 100 sqm each while 1488 plots measure 150 sqm. LG also expressed displeasure at the fact that in 308 cases, possession still remained pending even as allottees have deposited the full cost of the plots. Of these 308 cases, maximum 231 possessions are pending in Bhargarh and 73 in Bawana. Similarly, the DSII-DC is yet to execute the lease deed in 1384 cases where possession is already taken by allottees. These include 662 cases in Bawana, 306 cases in Bhargarh and 117 in Narela among others.

Saxena in the review meeting attended by Chief Secretary, ACS (Industries), MD (DSIIDC), representatives of Power Department and DJB and representatives of Industries Associations amongst others, expressed shock at the inaction on the part of the departments/agencies and asked for a list of all officers, who had served during this period with responsibility being fixed for stringent action. He noted that this inaction on part of the government had led to setting up of illegal industrial units that were polluting Delhi's air. He also termed it a glaring case of

government inaction where specific directions of the Supreme Court were not implemented even after a lapse of 26 years. The industries representatives present in the meeting complained that even the most fundamental infrastructure like roads, power, sewer lines, water and transport were missing even after a gap of two decades and it was practically impossible to operate industrial units under such conditions. They told the LG that against a total allotment of 21,759 plots, only about 200 units were operational and that too with great difficulties.



212 Indians evacuated in first batch under Operation Ajay

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Operation Ajay to evacuate Indian nationals wishing to return home from Israel saw the first batch of 212 arriving at the Delhi airport via an Air India chartered flight on Friday morning. They mostly included students studying in Israeli institutions.

Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar welcomed the passengers at the airport as they streamed into the lounge area from the tarmac side. He greeted them with folded hands and also shook hands with many of them saying, "Welcome home".

"I was pleased and honoured today to welcome 212 students who came back from Israel who collectively were very grateful for the smooth and efficient and highly responsive way the government of India came to their rescue."

"For me, it is a matter of pride that I got an opportunity to welcome, on behalf of our Prime Minister and the government, our students who

have returned from Israel and to thank the aircrew. They were all unanimously thanking Prime Minister Modi," the minister said.

"Operation Ajay" is consistent with the prime minister's motto of not leaving an Indian behind who finds himself or herself in harm's way. The Government of India will work very hard to make sure that every Indian who needs to come back, return to their families safely, Chandrasekhar added.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday said around 18,000 Indians are currently residing in Israel while about a dozen people are in the West Bank and three to four are in Gaza.

India has launched 'Operation Ajay' to facilitate the return of those Indians who wish to come back home as a series of attacks on Israeli towns by Hamas militants over the weekend has triggered fresh tensions in the region. It was learnt that Air India might be operating more chartered flights to bring back people from Israel,



depending on the requirement. Shashwat Singh, a post-doctoral researcher, who has been living in Israel since 2019, reached Delhi along with his wife.

"We woke up to sounds of air raids' sirens. We stay in central Israel. I don't know what shape this conflict will take... I am doing postdoc in agriculture there," he told PTI.

The evacuation of Indians is a "praiseworthy step," Singh said soon after the flight landed.

"We hope peace will be restored and we will return to work... The Indian government got in touch with us via email. We are thankful to Prime Minister Modi and the Indian Embassy in Israel," Suparno Ghosh, a West Bengal native and a first-year PhD stu-

dent of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev at Beersheba in Israel, was among the group of Indians who reached Delhi on the special flight.

"We were in shelters... The Israeli government has made shelters everywhere, so we were safe," he said.

Deepak, a student, said, "We heard sirens on Saturday. As the

attack happened, we could hear the sound. Israeli authorities were instructing us (to take safety measures). It was a continuous attack. I am happy to return home, but sad also, as our friends are there (in Israel)," he said.

But, the evacuation process was very smooth, the student told reporters.

Duti Banerjee, another West Bengal native who was also among the first batch of Indians evacuated from Israel, said the situation there was "pretty messy and unsettled".

"Normal life has been paused. People are scared and angry. Even when I was leaving, I heard sirens and had to go to a shelter," she said.

Many students who returned home recalled the fateful night of Saturday and how they had to rush to shelters multiple times in the wake of rocket attacks by Hamas.

Several women students also recounted the grim situation they faced when the attacks happened. "It was a panic situation. We are not citizens there, we are just students. So, for us

whenever the sirens go on, it's a panic situation for us," Jaipur native Mini Sharma told PTI.

Asked when she received the information about the rescue flight, she replied, "Just a day before. We packed our bags yesterday morning after receiving a message from the Indian Embassy. They were very helpful. We were able to get in touch with them round the clock," Sharma said.

Soni, another student, thanked the governments of India and Israel for "taking such good care of us". "I booked two flights as I was not sure when would the Indian government evacuate us. But, I am glad to be back... Many Indians still in Israel," she said.

The Indian Embassy has started round-the-clock help lines for people stranded amid the war. The embassy has asked people to stay calm and follow security advisories being issued from time to time.

Meanwhile, the BJP gave credit to the "strong and sensitive" government under Prime Minister Modi for the successful and safe return of Indians

from the conflict zone of the middle-east.

The Modi-government had undertaken a similar but much larger 'operation Ganga' to rescue Indians trapped in Ukraine during the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war.

At a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia hailed the government for bringing back the first batch of more than 200 Indians safely from Israel, calling it an "unprecedented rescue mission".

"When such a horrifying scene is unfolding there, a sensitive and strong government is taking strong steps. Under Operation Ajay, as many as 212 Indians have been brought back safely in a special flight. It was a moment of pride for the entire Bharat," he said.

Bhatia said the successful operation "shows how even in times of difficulties, if any government has the capacity and patience to work for the people 24x7 it is the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government."

Parliamentary diplomacy medium for better future, says Birla at P20

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday called for engaging Parliamentary diplomacy as a medium for a better future for humanity.

Addressing the inaugural session of the ninth G20 Parliamentary Speakers' (P20) Summit, Birla listed out the development initiatives in India's least developed districts and the primacy accorded to green energy transition as part of steps to achieve the sustainable development goals.

The Lok Sabha speaker said the issues discussed at the P20 Summit should continue to be deliberated on in the respective parliaments and lead to policies and initiatives and, if need be, new laws.

"Parliamentary diplomacy



should become the medium for a better future for humanity," Birla said at the P20 Summit attended by presiding officers of parliaments of G20 countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the summit on Friday morning.

"In the backdrop of climate

change, sustainable energy transition is the biggest need of the hour today. India's initiative in the form of International Biofuel Alliance and International Solar Alliance have received overwhelming support across the world," Birla said.

The speaker said India is also

taking steps for women's empowerment and women-led development and cited the women's reservation bill passed by Parliament last month.

"I am confident that women-led development will be the biggest agent of change in the 21st century," Birla said.

He said digital technology has made possible all-encompassing, transparent and accountable governance.

"Through public digital platforms, we have succeeded in changing the lives of the common man. Digital interventions such as Direct Benefit Transfer, UPI have cleared the path of all-round development," Birla said.

"Taking a worldwide, we are also sharing our technological expertise with other nations," the speaker said.

G20 Parliament Speakers pledge to utilise their legislative functions to combat terror

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Speakers of Parliaments of G20 countries Friday committed to utilise their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions to play their part in combating terrorism and violent extremism.

In a joint statement adopted at the Parliament-20 Summit here, they also condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations, including those on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the

name of religion or belief, recognising the commitment of all religions to peace.

"The unanimous adoption of the Joint Declaration at P20 Bharat exemplifies the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam. As public representatives, we pledge to collaborate for a human-centric, prosperous and harmonious future. Many congratulations to all the delegates for their support," Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who chaired the P20 Summit, said on X.

The joint statement by P20 leaders comes against the backdrop of the lingering war

in Ukraine and the recent outbreak of conflict between Israel and the Hamas.

The Parliamentary leaders said terrorism constituted one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

"We strongly condemn all terrorist acts against critical infrastructure, including critical energy facilities, and against other vulnerable targets. All acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed," the joint statement said.

Rijju appointed election incharge for Mizoram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda on Friday appointed Union Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijju as election incharge of Mizoram which will go to Assembly polls next month.

Deputy Chief Minister of Nagaland Yanthung Patton and BJP's National Secretary Anil Antony have also been appointed as election-co-incharge in Mizoram.

Hailing from Arunachal Pradesh in the North-East, Rijju is an MP from Arunachal West. BJP President has also appointed Jatinder Pal Malhotra as party's state president of Chandigarh, according to a party statement.

SC fumes at delay in Speaker call on disqualification of Shinde, MLAs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The delay in deciding the disqualification petitions against Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Shiv Sena MLAs loyal to him came under strict scrutiny on Friday by the Supreme Court which came down hard on the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker, saying the proceedings cannot be a "charade" and he cannot defeat its orders.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing Speaker Rahul Narwekar, to apprise it of the timeline for deciding the petitions on Tuesday, saying it will pass a "peremptory order" if it is not satisfied.

"Somebody has to advise the Speaker. He cannot defeat the orders of the Supreme Court. What kind of time schedule he is prescribing?... This (disqual-



ification proceedings) is a summary procedure. Last time, we thought, better sense will prevail and had asked him to lay down a time schedule...," said the bench. The idea of laying down the time schedule was not to "indefinitely delay" the hearing on the disqualification proceedings, the court said.

A visibly irked CJI said a decision on disqualification pleas has to be taken before the next assembly elections or the whole process will become infructuous. The next state assembly polls will likely be held around September-October 2024. "The decision has to be taken well before the next elections and

this cannot go on merrily to render the whole process infructuous," the bench said.

Voicing concern over non-adherence to its earlier order, the apex court said nothing has moved in the matter since June and asked the government's top law officer to "advise the speaker," saying "he needs assistance which is obvious".

The bench said the speaker must give the impression that he was taking the matter seriously.

"Since June, there has been no action in the matter. What has happened in this case? Nothing! This cannot become a charade. There has to be a hearing (before the speaker)," the bench said. Referring to the court's earlier orders of issuing notices and seeking a timeline for adjudication of the petitions, the CJI said the apex court was concerned about its instructions not being followed by the speaker. "I am concerned about maintaining the dignity of our court," the CJI said.

Delhi HC dismisses plea challenging arrest of NewsClick founder, HR head

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to interfere with the arrest and subsequent police remand of NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and portal's human resources department head Amit Chakravarty in a case lodged under anti-terror law UAPA. Dismissing the petitions, Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said there was no "procedural infirmity" or violation of legal or constitutional provisions in relation to the arrest and the remand order is sustainable in law.

Purkayastha and Chakravarty had contended that the grounds of arrest were not supplied to them when they were apprehended and the trial court order of remand was passed in the absence of their lawyers. The judge said the grounds of arrest needed to be "informed" to the arrestee within 24 hours and furnishing of such grounds, in written, was not mandated by the UAPA.

The court, however, said it would be "advisable" that the police henceforth, provide grounds of arrest in writing after redacting "sensitive material".

"The petition, being devoid of any merit, along with pending applications, is dismissed," said the court in its order passed on the petition by the portal's founder. "After examining the entire issue in the right perspective, it appears as of now that the grounds of arrest were indeed conveyed to the petitioner, as soon as may be, after the arrest and as such, there does not appear to be any procedural infirmity or violation of the provisions of the Section 43B of the UAPA or the Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India and as such, the arrest are in accordance with law," the court further stated.

The court noted that offences under the UAPA directly impact the stability, integrity and sovereignty of the country and are of utmost

importance since they would affect the national security and grounds of arrest only need to be informed. "Keeping in view the law laid down by the Supreme Court in (the case of) Pankaj Bansal (supra), and also considering the stringent provisions of UAPA, it would be advisable that the respondent, henceforth, provide grounds of arrest in writing, though after redacting what in the opinion of the respondent would constitute 'sensitive material'. This too would obviate, as held by the Supreme Court, any such challenge to the arrest as made in the present case," the court, however, added.

Purkayastha and Chakravarty were arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police on October 3. They subsequently moved the high court challenging the arrest as well as the seven-day police custody and sought immediate release as an interim relief. On October 10, the trial court sent them to judicial custody for ten days.

CBI arrests mastermind behind disappearance of 2 Manipuri students

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested a 22-year-old man from Pune suspected to be the mastermind behind the case of two missing Manipuri students who were believed to have been killed.

The CBI which had started an extensive operation to nab the culprits using informers and technical surveillance had found about the alleged involvement of Paolonmang who is believed to be the mastermind behind the incident that triggered a fresh round of protests in the State. The special investigation team which was on the lookout for him established his location in Pune in Maharashtra from where he was taken into custody.

The team immediately flew him to Guwahati to be produced before a designated court which sent him to the CBI custody till October 16 where he



will be subjected to sustained questioning on the sequence of the incident, officials said.

The CBI is also looking for mortal remains of the two students to confirm if they have been actually killed after they went missing, they said.

Phijam Hemanjit (20) and Hijam Linthoingambi, a girl aged 17 years, had gone missing on July 6. Photos purportedly showing their bodies surfaced on September 25, leading to violent protests, mainly by students.

The CBI had arrested two men, Paominlun Haokip and Smalsawm Haokip, and two women, Lhingneichong Baitekuki and Tinneihleng Henthang, on October 1.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
SMM/EMU/GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. 46235031-12-10-2023. The details are as under:

1	Name of the work:	3-Phase Traction Motor with Pinion as per Bombardier part no. 3EJD000001-1504. Make- Bombardier
2	Approx. cost of work:	2,29,86,304.00
3	Quantity	8 Nos.
4	Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender:	11.11.2023 (11:00 Hrs.)
5	Date & Time of opening of tender document:	11.11.2023 (11:00 Hrs.)
6	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen:	www.ireps.gov.in

Note: (i) The tenderers must be registered on the Indian Railways E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. (ii) Please refer to the tender document for all terms and conditions. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable. No.: 46235031 Dated: 12.10.2023

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THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Viresh Kumar S/o Veer Bahadur R/o House. No. S-192E, Pandav Nagar, Shakarpur, East Delhi -110092 Have Changed the name of my minor daughter from Yashika Kumari to Avika Pandit for all future purposes.
PD(176)A

ED arrests three for money laundering in IPO scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has arrested three persons — a resident of the US, one of Vanuatu and an Indian — as part of a money laundering probe linked to an alleged IPO scam worth crores of rupees in Hyderabad.

Pavan Kuchana, a resident of the US, Nirmal Kotecha, a resident of the Republic of Vanuatu, and Kishore Tapadia "formulated a meticulously planned strategy to inflate the revenue of Taksheel Solutions Limited for issuing IPO and for subsequently diverting and siphoning off the IPO proceeds".

To facilitate the issuance of the IPO, Nirmal Kotecha arranged Inter-Corporate Deposits (ICDs) of Rs 34.50 crore to Taksheel Solutions Ltd, the ED said.

Exchange Board of India under the SEBI Act of 1992 against Taksheel Solutions Limited, its promoters and directors and others for irregularities with respect to the IPO of 55,00,000 shares of Rs 10 each for which issue price was fixed at Rs 150 and through which Taksheel raised Rs 80.50 crore, the agency said in a statement.

42% skin disease patients also face sleep disturbances: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

It's not just that chronic insomnia inflicts significant damage to skin tissues that range from premature aging to disorders like eczema, psoriasis, and atopic dermatitis, it can be vice versa also. A new study has revealed that almost half (42 per cent) of patients with skin disease experience sleep disturbances, according to a major study that analysed over 50,000 adults across 20 countries to assess the impact of skin diseases.

The findings, presented at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2023 in Berlin, Germany, showed that the sleep disturbances were found to have broader implications on patients' quality of life.

The main symptoms that impacted the sleep of patients



with skin disease were itching (60 per cent) and burning sensations or tingling (17 per cent).

In addition, patients more frequently experienced a feeling of fatigue as soon as they woke up (81 per cent), 64 per cent in the non-skin disease population), periods of drowsiness during the day (83 per cent vs. 71 per cent), tingling sensations in the eyes (58 per cent vs 42 per cent) and repeated yawning (72 per cent vs. 58 per

cent) than those who did not have a skin disease.

"Our study is the first to uncover the profound impact of sleep disturbances on the physical functioning of patients with skin disease, and these findings underscore the critical need for early detection and effective management of sleep disturbances," said lead author Dr. Charles Taieb, who heads the company EMMA Clinic, in Paris, France.

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi
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NIT No.	Brief Tender Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/23-24/RB/P/FH/1162	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF 1.1KV GRADE POWER CABLE OF SIZE 2CX25 SQ. MM-LSZH	11.10 Crore	11.10 Lakhs	02.11.2023 15:00 HRS	02.11.2023 15:15 HRS
CMC/BR/23-24/RB/P/FH/1163	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF 1.1KV GRADE POWER CABLE OF SIZE 4C CABLES-LSZH	5.28 Crore	5.28 Lakhs	02.11.2023 15:00 HRS	02.11.2023 15:30 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 110/-
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Minister praises govt's achievements in managing water resources

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh praised the achievements of the current government in managing the currently available water resources of the nation. He was addressing the inaugural function of three-day 3rd international conference on River Health: Assessment to Restoration (RHAR), 2023, with a Special Session on Indo-Danish Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR), being organised under the auspices of Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University) at Swatantrata Bhawan in BHU here on Friday. The minister talked about the need and importance of education in nation and how it can benefit the country in achieving sustainable goal in future. Singh gave some key points by which citizens can have a more harmonious approach towards each other. Speaking as the guest of



UP Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh at inaugural function of a conference on river health in Varanasi on Friday.

honour, Ambassador from Royal Danish Embassy Freddy Svane expressed happiness on participating in the conference and hopes for more collaboration between researchers, academicians, industrial experts and politicians to attain their goal of rejuvenating the rivers. The event proved to be a culmination of several international and national delegates to share their ideas regarding river health rejuvenation. The delegates and

experts presented their views, experiences, case studies and for river health rejuvenation from across the globe and the challenges faced. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by Ashok Kumar Singh, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department, G Asok, Director General, NMCG, Prof S Mandal, Head, Civil Department, IIT (BHU), Prof PK Singh, Professor and Convenor of RHAR 2023. The ceremony was organised by the

organising committee that also consisted of Dr Anurag Ohri and Dr Shishir Gaur from the Civil Engineering department of IIT(BHU). The ceremony started with the garlanding of both of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya and 'deep prajwalan' (lamp lighting). It was followed by Clean Ganga Sankalp and Kulgeet. Thereafter, Prof Singh gave the opening remarks about the guests and the conference proceedings. This was fol-

lowed by a welcome address from Prof Mandal. Both of them highlighted the importance of saving rivers and the role that the citizens, social organisations, educational institutes and students can have on it. G Asok highlighted the role and achievements of NMCG in managing the water resources in the country by continued support from experts, research individuals and academicians along with the support from social and industrial organisations. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Anurag Ohri. He expressed the hope that the conference would be beneficial for all the attending participants. Later mementos and shawls were given to the guests as a token of thanks. The conference will see presentations from students and experts from around the world, deliver talks and presentations on topics like water resource management, river rejuvenation and making India water positive.

Cong has always provided real strength to country: Ajay Rai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



State Congress chief Ajay Rai said the party has played a unique role in the reconstruction of India after independence and always gave top priority to national self-respect. He was speaking at a felicitation ceremony organised in his honour at Tikri village here on Friday. "The real strength of any country is measured by the economic and social progress of its citizens. All-round development of any country is not possible unless its citizens have a better standard of living," he said. Rai said the Congress has always provided real strength to the country and whatever schemes are being run in the country today, the same were initiated or introduced by the Congress as the party always advocated that every section, caste and religion of the society to live with pride. "History is witness that Brahmarshi Samaj, like other sections of the society, had given its highest support to Congress. Direct evidence of this can be seen from public concern of our

great revolutionary leaders of that time. We are proud of the fact that the first MP of Varanasi, late Dr Raghunath Singh was from the Brahmarshi community," he said. According to Rai, the first Varanasi MP was a highly educated politician and represented this parliamentary constituency for three consecutive times. "Not only this, during that period, there were many great politicians of Brahmarshi community in Varanasi and adjoining districts who raised the prestige of the country across the world," he said, adding that though Congress is a political party but we should not forget that apart from being a political party, it is also the heartbeat of the Indian public. "Congress never did politics of religion, region and caste. Congress represents an ideology which has the fragrance of Bhartiyyata (Indianness). He expressed his happiness visiting Tikri where a good number of people from Tarapur, Narottampur, Nuaon and other nearby villages were also present. The function was presided over by LC Rai who honoured state Congress president by presenting angavastram and bouquet. Anil Singh, Jai Prakash Singh, Ajit Singh, Sunil Rai, Chandrabhal Singh, Ghanshyam Singh, Jitendra Singh and others were also present.

Hold meetings related to food safety, prevention of fake medicines: Pathak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The meeting of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council Committee to prevent health problems of people due to adulteration of food items and prevalence of fake medicines in the districts of Varanasi division was held at the Circuit House here on Thursday. Committee Chairman Arun Kumar Pathak gave instructions to hold steering committee meetings at the district level related to food safety and prevention of fake medicines in Jaunpur, Chandauli, Ghazipur and Varanasi districts of the division regularly as per the prescribed agenda. He expressed dissatisfaction over the relatively short number of steering committee meetings in Ghazipur. In the meeting the committee took information about the cases related to food safety and fake medicines and the status of food samples taken. Pathak said such cases should also be reviewed in the district level meetings. He directed the officers concerned to get pending cases resolved within the stipulated period and laid emphasis on wide publicity of action taken as per



Chairman of Legislative Council Committee Arun Pathak addressing a meeting in Varanasi on Thursday.

rules against the concerned shops/establishments against the samples found contrary to the standards. Along with conducting regular and surprise checks of fake medicines, he said officers should make concrete mechanisms for medical stores, medicine factories, blood banks and pathology centres and ensure that fake medicines are not sold under any circumstances and there should be no misuse of narcotics and sleeping medicines. Pathak directed the officers to ensure that medical stores and others should keep complete records of purchases and sales apart from checking of licens-

es of medical stores and drug manufacturing firms as per the rules and the action taken so far against them. He instructed the officers to ensure sale of only authorised medicines at Ayurvedic shops. The committee chairman directed the officers that action should be taken against doctors and pharmacists of the government hospitals/health centres who prescribe outside medicines to patients and sought details about actions taken against illegal and spurious liquor in districts of the division. Pathak also instructed the officers to check the quality of food items being sup-

plied from the ration shops and take home ration of Anganwadi centres and asked the officers to ensure proper marking of details like registration number, number of beds and names of doctors etc in all recognised nursing homes. The committee members Pragya Tripathi, Dr Vikrant Singh alias Rishu, Akash Agrawal, Special Secretary Vinay Singh, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, ADM (City), ADM (Administration) and departmental officers concerned of the four districts of the division were present in the meeting.

CMO: Examine fever, dengue patients in pvt hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary gave instructions to the Health department officers to examine patients suffering from dengue and fever admitted in private hospitals and asked ACMOs and Deputy CMOs to inspect private hospitals as at present, patients suffering from dengue and viral fever are being admitted and treated in various hospitals of the district. According to him, it is being learnt from some sources that some hospitals in the private sector are trying to extort money by treating fever patients. He said if the admitted patients are suffering from dengue, they should be properly investigated. The CMO allotted different areas to ACMOs and DCMOs and directed them to contact fever and dengue patients admitted in at least five private hospitals of their respective areas. He asked the Health department officers to collect information related to the treatment of the admitted patients. Dr Chaudhary also asked the officers to see whether the patients are being treated as per the standard or not. If any irregularity is found, action should be taken against the private hospitals concerned, he added.

Korean scholars show keen interest in Ayurveda



BHU Ayurveda Faculty team in South Korea recently.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of scientists of Ayurveda and Yoga from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) attended the three-day Wellness International Festa-2023 held in South Korea and on their return, they said that the Korean scholars have shown a keen interest in Ayurveda as they were of the view that if Indian and Korean medical systems work together, it will be beneficial for patients in future. They have also shown interest in working with the BHU in the field of medicine. The Koreans felt that as India has the knowledge and Korea has the technology, so if both work together then a better path can be made.

The BHU team also informed that the Korean scholars had also shown special interest in the subject of pulse examination and surgery and they are planning to lead the whole world in this regard, if this experiment is successful. In this international festa, on the first day, suggestions were given to patients suffering from various diseases for treatment through Ayurveda and Yoga. A total of 14 sessions of lectures were held on the second day. At the beginning of the first session, the Dean of Ayurveda faculty Prof PK Goswami highlighted the history of Ayurveda of BHU and the beginning of Kshar Sutra by Prof PG Deshpande. He also highlighted the beginning of the concept of integration by Mahamana

Malviya, the university's founder. In the second session, Prof JS Tripathi explained about mental therapy in Ayurveda highlighting the scientific aspects of Sattavajaya and Devyaprashay therapy. In the third session, Prof YB Tripathi did a scientific analysis of diet, science and religious importance of Kashi. In the fourth session Amit Kumar threw light on scientific aspects of Asana and Pranayama while in the next session, the scientific aspects of pulse examination and its importance was described in detail by Vaidya Sushil Kumar Dubey, coordinator of this program from India and Korea. In the sixth session, Dr Vijay Kumar Srivastava described various methods of Panchakarma treatment.

BHU students bring laurels

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The national level Tourism Student Conclave was organised in Ayodhya recently under which a competition was held among 12 universities in which Banaras Hindu University (BHU) students got

the first place by presenting their campus and startup plan. In this two-day conclave, the organisation also included a heritage walk to show the culture of Ayodhya to the students of different state universities. Aparajita, Tejashwi,

Harshita, Jaya, Krishna, Pranav, Jaitra, Yash, Shivraj, Indranil, and international student Rontideb participated in the Ayodhya Conclave and with this, the students also got the opportunity to get industry opportunities and mentorship from the stalwarts of

the tourism industry. The students participated in this competition under the direction of Tourism department teachers Dr Praveen Rana and Dr Anil Singh. Dr Rana and they said that the students of the Tourism department, BHU, prepared for a month.

Ganga aarti for victory of Indian team over Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The activists of Namami Gange, who inspire the people for the cleanliness of river Ganga every day, performed Ganga aarti near the Ganga Dwar of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) for the victory of Indian team over Pakistan in the World Cup Cricket scheduled to be played on Saturday in Ahmedabad. Carrying the national flag with the pictures of Bharat Mata, cricket kits, bats, helmets, pads, gloves etc, they prayed for the thumping victory of the Indian team over Pakistan. They also raised slogans like



Ganga aarti being performed in Varanasi on Friday for India's win over Pak in World Cup cricket

'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Chak De India', 'Jeetega Bhai Jeetega, Hindustan Jeetega etc. A section of women, elders

and youth along with the members of Namami Gange prayed for the Team India. Namami Gange (Kashi Region) coordi-

nator Rajesh Shukla, who was himself a state level cricket player, said that cricket is the favourite game of Indians and the Indian cricket team has won the World Cup twice. To ensure that the Indian cricket team moves ahead by defeating the Pakistani opponents, we have performed aarti of Maa Ganga and Baba Vishwanath and sought their blessings, he said, adding that the hopes and eyes of 135 crore Indians are on the Indian cricket team. City co-ordinator Sarika Gupta, Sanjay Agrahari, Suman Yadav, Anita Nagar, Rajkumar Yadav, Mahadev Mishra etc were also present.

Sarvesh Dwivedi makes NCR proud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Sarvesh Dwivedi, an officer of the North Central Railway headquarters, Prayagraj, made NCR proud by becoming first Ironman from this railway in Goa Triathlon sports event.

Sarvesh is an IRSS officer of 2009 batch and is presently working as Dy CMM/M/NCR. He participated in the Ironman Goa 70.3 triathlon an international event on October 8. This triathlon is considered to be one

of the toughest endurance challenge to be completed within 8.30 hours without a break. The event consists of 1.9 km swimming course, 90 km cycling course and 21.1 km run course. Each course has its own cut off time. If someone does not complete the course within the allotted cut off time, the participant is disqualified. Sarvesh completed the entire race within six hours and 40 minutes. This feat has been achieved by him in his first attempt. There were about 1500 triathletes from about 50

countries of the world who participated/registered for the event. Last year he could not participate due to a shoulder injury. On asking what kept him moving for long hours during training, he said, "Training for long-distance triathlon is like fighting a gorilla, you don't stop when you are tired, you stop when Gorilla is tired. Secondly, it is never too late to re-invent yourself and fight to achieve a dream. Dreams don't have expiration date, keep going." Swimming started at Miramar beach. He

completed 1.9 km swim within 48 minutes. The course of 90 km cycling with an elevation of 650 m was described as the best part of the triathlon by Sarvesh. The three-lap bike course started at Miramar Circle along the scenic Mandovi river over the National Highway-66 where climb, stunning landscape and lush greenery on either side of Agaçam village were quite enticing. The run course had an elevation of 250 m and was also a three-lap course in the hot and humid climate of Goa.

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NORTHERN RAILWAY PENSION ADALAT

ON 15th December - 2023

Pension Adalat for Pensioners will be held all over Northern Railway i.e., Northern Railways Headquarters office (Baroda House, New Delhi) and all Divisional Headquarters on 15th December 2023.

The LAST DATE of receiving the application for PENSION ADALAT is 10.11.2023

PENSIONERS

- Retired from HQs Office, Northern Railway may send their representations to Dy.CPO/HQ-II, Northern Railway for Pension Adalat;
- Retired from Divisional office and Offices under the control of DRM may send their representations to Sr. DPO of the respective Division for Pension Adalat;
- Retired from Workshops, may send their representation to Sr. DPO of the Division in whose territory the Workshop is located, for Pension Adalat.

The representation for PENSION ADALAT should, however, be addressed to Dy. CPO/HQ-II/Sr.DPO/Dy.CPO & SPO (Workshop) as the case may be. The envelope carrying the representation should be super-scribed- PENSIONADALAT-2023.

Addresses of Dy. Chief Personnel Officer/HQ-II Northern Railway, Head Quarters office and Senior Divisional Personnel Officer of Divisional Head Quarters are mentioned as below.

<p>Dy. Chief Personnel Officer/HQ-II, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, Baroda House, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110001</p> <p>Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Station Road, Firozpur Cantt - 182001</p> <p>Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055</p>	<p>Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Divisional Railway Manager office, Northern Railway, Hazrat Ganj, Lucknow- 226001</p> <p>Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Rail Vihar, Ambala Cantt, Ambala - 133001</p> <p>Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Divisional Railway Manager office, Northern Railway, (Near Railway Stadium), Moradabad - 244001</p>
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Clearing the air

Contrary to general perception, there is no change in India's stand on Palestine

There has been considerable speculation in media and elsewhere that India has amended its long-standing policy of supporting the Palestinian cause. After the Hamas attacked Israel last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X to show solidarity with Israel, saying India stands with the nation in its hour of grief. The statement was misconstrued by many as India's shifting stand on Israel, given India's proximity with Israel and a right-of-centre BJP Government in New Delhi. However, the analysts had jumped the gun. India has always supported the Palestinian people and the just cause of Palestinians to have a homeland free from any interference from outside forces (read Israel). But it has always rejected terrorism and the use of force on either side, advocating for a negotiated settlement. India's support for the Palestinian cause has been consistent. In 1974, India became the first non-Arab State to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In 1988, India recognised the State of Palestine. Way back in 1996, India opened its Representative Office in Palestine in Gaza City. India has always extended support to the Palestinian cause across various international forums. India co-sponsored the draft resolution on "the right of Palestinians to self-determination" and voted in favour of it during the 53rd session of the UNGA. India also voted in favour of the UNGA Resolution in October 2003 against the construction of the Separation Wall by Israel.



But Hamas and Palestine are not synonyms, like LTTE and Tamilians in Sri Lanka were not the same. When the Prime Minister made the statement, he did not endorse the Hamas brutal actions. To clear the confusion, the Ministry of External Affairs reiterated its call for the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State, saying there was an "obligation" to uphold humanitarian principles which is in line with India's long stand on the issue. "India has always advocated the resumption of direct negotiations towards establishing a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, living within secure and recognised borders, side by side with Israel," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. However, he fell short of calling Hamas a terrorist organisation. Four previous conflicts between the sides ended with the Hamas still firmly in control of the territory it has ruled since 2007. Meanwhile, India has launched 'Operation Ajay' to rescue its citizens from Israel, and evacuation flights have started landing here. So far, there have reportedly been no Indian casualty. India is in close contact with "relevant stakeholders" on the fast unfolding situation. India's stand has so far been consistent but the situation is quite fluid. If something drastic happens, India might have to recalibrate its West Asia policy.

PICTALK



Devotees perform 'Tarpan' rituals at the bank of River Ganga during the 'Pitru Paksha', in Varanasi

PTI

Israel-Hamas conflict: No holds barred

There is more to the Hamas-Israel conflict than meets the eye; it could be part of a larger gameplan of either side



PRAFULL GORADIA

West Asia has been an enigma for many years, especially after the Balfour Declaration of 1917, when the then British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour promised the Jews a homeland of their own in the territory of Palestine. Missing in the Balfour Declaration was the timeline by which this was to be brought about.

All three Abrahamic religions have a claim on the region centred around Jerusalem, considered one of the world's holiest cities. The Jews hailed from there; Jesus Christ preached there and his miracles were performed in this area. He was crucified on Calvary Hill and was buried nearby. Jesus was born a Jew, some miles away at Bethlehem.

Islam's claim to Jerusalem and its territory is based on the belief that Prophet Mohammad's favourite horse Bakhra took him to meet Allah from the centre of what today is Jerusalem. The spot from where the Prophet is said to have ascended to heaven is marked as the Al Aqsa mosque.

In 1948, the region was divided into the Jewish part called Israel and the dominantly Muslim part called Palestine, which however, failed to become a proper country. It exists as a crowd, vaguely ruled by a terrorist organisation called Hamas. Ever since the rule of the Ayatollahs began in Iran in 1979, that country has patronised Hezbollah, a terrorist group based in Lebanon, apart from also siding with Hamas (although the latter is a Sunni terrorist group). Whether this policy and measures thereof are meant to keep Israel on the boil, or are intended to engage in geopolitical manoeuvring in the West Asian theatre is a matter of debate.

As is well known, the Arab sheikhdoms of the region have largely been indifferent to Israel despite the latter's declared Jewish identity. Curiously, it is the non-monarchical countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Syria that have been stridently anti-Israel. Since the coming to power of Gemal Abd El Nasser in Egypt in the early 1950s, the Arab monarchies, i.e.,



the sheikhdoms have been more wary of the threat of Arab socialism than Jewish nationalism. This must have been likely to keep their people loyal or subservient to their monarchies rather than any entity outside. In the process, the Palestinian issue fell into neglect. On the rebound, they have been dependent on terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah. The current war between these outfits and Israel has indeed come as a rude surprise. It is a desperate attempt on their part, to wipe out the existence of the Jewish country.

There are widespread allegations that the latest terrorist attack on Israel cannot be an independent act but has the guidance and support of some other country, possibly Iran. The Ayatollah's regime of Tehran has been apprehensive of Israel attacking or even destroying its nuclear programme. Israel's great ally the United States of America certainly does not approve of what it calls nuclear proliferation, and Iran's nuclear programme, although claimed by Tehran to be of only a peaceful nature, has been a hugely contentious issue of American administrations of both of the country's political parties, Republican

and Democrat, for a considerably long time.

The question, therefore, arises: could this explosive war be an attempted pre-emptive strike by Iran to keep Israel or the US from attacking its nuclear sites? Alternatively, could it be a precursor for armed action by Israel and the US to knock out Iran's nuclear programme, which according to Israeli and American allegations, is just a couple of steps away from building a bomb?

This is no mere speculation. The late Saddam Hussein, Iraq's military dictator for three-and-a-half decades, was pursuing a similar nuclear program of an ostensibly peaceful nature. Saddam, though, was a self-declared enemy of the Jews; in 1981, without warning, Israeli F-16 and F-15 warplanes burst into Iraqi airspace without warning and in a matter of a few minutes, totally bombed the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor to ashes, completely ending Iraq's nuclear ambitions and wiping out an existential threat to Israel.

A third possibility is that this is Iran's bold gamble to grab for itself the dominant position of leadership in the politics of West Asia, although, for a Shia nation, such a role might be difficult to achieve

and sustain in a Muslim world dominated by Sunni Islam. Whatever Tehran's aim, the attacks by Hamas have undoubtedly been on a large scale. Conversely, Israel might also look at this temporary rude military setback as an opportunity to not only obliterate Hamas but also wipe out Iran's nuclear programme for good, which the Jewish nation sees as an existential threat to itself; indeed, many of Israel's politicians and military leaders have often said so, publicly.

Jerusalem would also want to reshape the politics of West Asia to its advantage in the decades to come. This is one objective which Israel's foremost ally the United States would be unambiguously aligned with.

Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, even while launching a retaliatory war against the Hamas held up in Gaza, has publicly declared his intention to do so, saying "We will change the Middle East". Given the history of Jewish resolve, it shouldn't surprise us if this happens to be the beginning of that event.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)



JERUSALEM WOULD ALSO WANT TO RESHAPE THE POLITICS OF WEST ASIA TO ITS ADVANTAGE IN THE DECADES TO COME. THIS IS ONE OBJECTIVE THAT ISRAEL'S FOREMOST ALLY THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE UNAMBIGUOUSLY ALIGNED WITH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NOBEL PRIZE FOR CLAUDIA GOLDIN

Sir—Claudia Goldin, a distinguished economics professor at Harvard University, has been honored with the prestigious Nobel Prize for Economics for her groundbreaking research spanning over four decades, which delves into the disparities between labor market outcomes for men and women. Her work has effectively dispelled the widespread belief that economic growth alone can bridge the gender gap, shedding new light on this critical issue.

The Economics Nobel Prize granted to Goldin signifies far more than the rectification of historical injustices, particularly in a time when the labor market heavily favors men due to the unequal distribution of household responsibilities, societal norms that perpetuate discrimination, and the disparity in remuneration for equal work. She has presented the most comprehensive historical account of women's earnings and labor market involvement throughout the ages. As only the third woman to receive the Economics Nobel since its inception in 1969, she has established a compelling U-shaped correlation between the number of women in paid employment and the growth of the U.S. economy.

Goldin's contributions not only deepen our understanding of women's labor market outcomes but also elevate economic history to a captivating field of study. Her insights into women's roles can play a pivotal role in a world where only half of all women are in paid employment compared to 80% of men. Her research can be an invaluable asset for bridging the substantial gender disparities through effective policy interventions.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

CHALLENGE TO THE MONEY BILL

Sir—According to reports, the Supreme Court has established a seven-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Chandrachud, to address the Congress's petitions challenging the Central government's method of passing key Bills as Money Bills, which Congress deems unconstitutional. The final

Sports education in India



Setting up dedicated sports schools and colleges across India can yield multiple benefits, including enhancing India's international sports performance, reducing unemployment, illiteracy, and poverty by offering lucrative national and international opportunities for

aspiring athletes. To achieve this, admission should be free for the underprivileged and affordable for the middle class, with the option for students to repay fees in installments after securing well-paid jobs.

Traditional academic schools often struggle to accommodate sports in their hectic schedules. Sports schools should focus on both students' interests and their physical abilities, promoting a holistic approach to education. Introducing a basic curriculum that includes English, personal development management, communication skills, and relevant subjects alongside sports training can prepare students for prosperous global careers in the future.

It is essential to provide separate mark sheets for academics, English, and sports, emphasizing the importance of each facet of a student's education. This approach can revolutionize sports education in India, ensuring a brighter future for aspiring athletes.

PV Madhu | Secunderabad

verdict, expected soon, could have significant implications for the functioning of the Indian Parliament.

Congress has consistently raised this issue both in Parliament and through three petitions in the Supreme Court, with the first one filed on April 6, 2016. These challenges pertain to Bills like the Aadhaar Bill, the one weakening the powers of Tribunals, including the National Green Tribunal, and the amendment to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The Congress contends that these amendments should not have been passed as Money Bills. Indian constitutional guidelines state that the Rajya Sabha has no power to amend or reject Money Bills; it can only make suggestions.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

RBI ON UNSECURED RETAIL LOANS

Sir—This week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sounded a note of caution regarding the unsecured nature of the retail

loan segment. This comes at a time when Indian household savings are at a decade-low, and surging inflation is compelling people to dip into their savings and resort to loans for their spending needs. The retail loan segment accounts for one-third of the gross loans in the banking system, growing at a compounded annual rate of 24.8% between March 2021 and March 2023. This substantial growth is a cause for concern, given that the overall gross advances of banks grew at a much lower rate of 13.8%. This disparity is alarming, as the financial assets of households have grown by 14%, but their financial liabilities have surged by 76%, outpacing asset growth. In 2022-23, Indian households' net financial assets were at 5.1% of GDP, the lowest in 23 years

R. Narayanan | Mumbai

A tale of the journey of 'two wanderers'

Two Wanderers, a travel novel takes the reader on a tour of China to Europe and gives a glimpse of the terrain and its people on the way

The dictionary meaning of the word wanderer is a person who travels from place to place without any particular destination or purpose. It reminds me of one's early college days when one was required to read the old English poem 'The Wanderer'. It is narrated by a man deprived of his lord and kinsmen whose journeys lead him to the realization that there is stability only in heaven. The poem reads like the meditations of a solitary exile, extorting the values of faith and forbearance in the heavenly lord. However, the two original wanderers to whom all the traditional accounts of Buddhism relate were Maudgalyayana and Sariputra; they became spiritual wanderers in their early youth, then came across Buddha's teachings and later met Buddha and were ordained as monks. They later became two of the closest disciples of Buddha.



They go through intense personal experiences in their wanderings, until their paths cross at Kashgar, and they embark on a journey together for Tibet. The journey is dictated part by expediency and part by a commitment made by Srivarma to a dying Buddhist monk. The journey to Tibet is itself fraught with dangers, both at physical and psychological levels. As the dreadful journey unfolds, Snorre was seeking the meaning of knowledge. These two sides are joined together through the medium of emotion and passion, and both Snorre and Srivarma search for an understanding of these roots. Taken together, Srivarma and Snorre's story defines a praxis for every man in search of answers to the eternal 'whys' of life and living.

While reading 'Two Wanderers', what struck me most was the amount of research into the topography, history and geopolitics of North India, Silk Route, Tibet and even Nordic areas of the 9th century that has gone into the book. We get to know that on your way from Sweden to Kashgar, you have to cross two rivers Emba and Dariya and pass through Tamday-Terek, a small desolate village a little away from the Emba river.

Then you go through Kazaly and Chachkand; from Chachkand you cross Terek-Devan or Poplar Pass and then traverse through the Pamirs crossing two high passes and the Isfairan River. On the way, you pass through Kokand and Marglan, where there is an old fort believed to have been built by Alexander, the great, locally known as Sikander.

This place Kashgar is rich and important because all the caravans travelling through the Silk Route have to pass through Kashgar. Like Samarqand and Chachkand, Kashgar also was a heavy mixture of all kinds of peoples and religions. There were

Jews, Manicheans, Nestorian Christians, Zoroastrians, and of course, Muslims. There were pagans also from the wild nomadic tribes, and not a few Tibetans professing a religion they called Bon. The novel is full of such a wealth of information at every stage of description.

Their journey to Tibet reads like a taut thriller with treachery, murder, betrayal, and espionage—all aplenty. With the advent of Lady Pema, the daughter of a Tibetan chieftain, the author introduces the element of love in its full splendour. There are some profound thoughts expressed throughout the novel, perhaps emanating from the author's knowledge of Buddhist texts. For instance, the wanderer Srivarma told the Shreshthi of Kanyakubja, "You see, I have reached the conclusion that to experience the world, movement is of the essence. I was proud of every step that I took because it signified my movement—both physical and in the mind."

(The writer is an author, professor of English Literature and former editor of Sahitya Akademi. Views are personal)



NIRMAL KANTI BHATTACHARJEE

FIRST COLUMN

BENEFITS OF CHANTING GOD'S NAME

Chanting God's name can bring down physical and psychological issues



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Even as there is a call by atheists and Dravidians to abolish Sanatana Dharma, a team of medical researchers in Maharshi Adhyatma Vishwavidyalaya at Ramnadi, Goa, has come out with findings that chanting God's name can play a major role in bringing down physical and psychological issues.

Dr Jayant Athavale, founder of Maharshi Adhyatma Vishwavidyalaya, himself a clinical hypnotherapist and psychotherapist and his team of researchers have scientifically proved that chanting God's name would attract enormous positive energy towards the individual and prevent the flow of incorrect and impure thoughts to the mind and helps overcome destiny.

Dr Athavale says that a study using the GDV Technique (a computer registration and analysis of electro-photonic emissions of biological objects, specifically the human fingers, resulting from placing the object in the high-intensity electromagnetic field on the device lens) showed that chanting of God's name for just 40 minutes brought about the alignment of one's Kundalini Chakras.

Dr Nandini Samant, senior faculty of MAV says that these findings have the potential to resolve issues like autism and other mental disorders. "For that we have to take this result forward but I am sure that there is a strong possibility of finding a cure for such defects through this process," said Dr Samant.

Sean Clarke, a senior scientist in the team said that the chanting could be performed by people irrespective of their religion, caste and creed. Dr Athavale has already established that implementing the Personality Defect Removal (PDR) process could help in reducing impressions of Personality Defects in the subconscious mind.



Clarke, formerly of the Indian Navy, said that the main spiritual problems are destiny, departed ancestors in the afterlife and negative energies in the subtle world account for more than 50 per cent of the problems one encounters in life including physical ailments. Dr Athavale's research spanning more than four decades has proved that these defects caused by negative energy could be addressed by daily chanting of God's name.

According to Clarke, the impact of departed ancestors in one's life has been established. The Tarpan (Pitru Tarpan) is performed to propitiate the departed souls. "That is what Sanatana Dharma teaches us. For those believing in departed ancestors, the chanting has proved to be a blessing," said Clarke.

Milky Agarwal, a member of the research team summed up the findings: "Practicing spirituality as per the University principles and making sustained efforts for eradicating personality defects and ego, we can overcome the problems in our life and we can experience lasting happiness".

The research also found that dipping the feet in salt water for 15 minutes daily would help extract the black energy present in the body. "A measurement of the intensity of negative energy showed that negative aura was reduced to half after dipping the feet in salt water while water in the bucket acquired a negative aura after 15 minutes," said Clarke. The finding was presented as a scientific paper at the International Conference on Emotional Well-Being held at Middlesex University, Mauritius in July 2023.

(The writer is a correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Testing the waters for General Elections 2024



K S TOMAR

Assembly polls outcome in five states may impact 2024 Lok Sabha polls as it would reveal if the strategies employed by the political parties worked to their advantage



Now battle lines have been drawn between NDA and I.N.D.I.A to establish supremacy in the ensuing five state assemblies though the former is ahead of the latter in releasing some lists of candidates which seems to be part of a well-thought strategy. Some writers are dubbing it as 'Semifinal' to 2024 whereas others differ which makes no difference as voters will have a final say in deciding this qualm.

By any stretch of the imagination, none can contest the logic of relevance of the outcome of five state-bound polls in creating a narrative that will influence the psyche of the voters during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. BJP high command and the top brass of RSS have made a conscious decision by opting for Prime Minister, Narendra Modi as the face of the party and refraining from naming chief ministerial candidates in poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.

Based on a different analogy, BJP has experimented with a new strategy of fielding 24 MPs and 4 union ministers in three poll-bound states including MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh which reflects the saffron party's 'desperate move and resolve' to ensure victory in these states to create a better narrative for 2024 parliamentary polls. 2nd, it may be aimed at 'neutralizing' the anguish of the voters with sitting MLAs and they may have to rethink when new faces are fielded from such constituencies.

Well-planned strategy: Political observers say that the party's strategists may have a twin purpose in opting for innovative methodology. First, Modi is a vote catcher, who has got a national and international image that could be exploited to woo the voters. Second, due to the presence of several aspirants for the top slot and as a preventive step to check factionalism and desertions, the BJP might have refrained from naming one candidate for the post of CM in each state.

Entry of Ministers and MPs: To checkmate sitting CM, Shivraj Chouhan, the BJP high command surprised its ministers like Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel



BJP'S 'GUJRAT MODEL' OF REPLACING OLDER GENERATION LEADERS YIELDED POSITIVE RESULTS IN UTTARAKHAND, GOA AND TRIPURA BUT IT MISERABLY FAILED TO DELIVER IN KARNATAKA

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist; views are personal)

and Fagga Singh Kulaste who figured in the first list of candidates for MP polls. As per party calculations, union ministers may have their influence across the state though they have yet to prove their statewide appeal amongst the people. Questions being asked whether they have nursed their respective assembly segments which is so essential to defeat the rivals? Political observers believe that ministers normally focus on bigger areas and hardly deal with a particular segment in their home states which may create problems for them. One can deny the fact that voters spread over right up to villages have become more demanding as well as conscious of their right to make logical decisions. The aspirations of unemployed youths are very high besides skyrocketing prices of essential goods etc. hence they may see a track record of five years of every candidate before exercising their franchise.

Experts say that the ministers or MPs hardly do micro-level management of particular constituencies which should worry them in MP. They may not have the state-level stature when compared with Chouhan.

Ignoring the risk factors: Political observers feel that if BJP fails to oust Congress in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and C.S. Rao's 'Bharat Rashtra Samithi' (BRS) in Telangana besides losing MP then it may have a direct bearing on the 2024 parliamentary elections in 2024. But in case the results go in favour of BJP then it may have a double impact to ensure the victory of Modi for the third successive time. But contrary to it, there is no denying the fact that assembly polls are fought on local issues and voters may be swayed owing to freebies being distributed by CMs of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and

Telangana besides being dispersed by CM of BJP-ruled MP. The political dynamics may be different when Modi appeals to the voters in the country to vote for him in 2024 and subsequently I.N.D.I.A fails to decide the PM candidate which would be attributed to inner contradictions and personal ambition of each regional satrap as well as that of the Grand Old Party.

Raje loyalists are sidelined: In Rajasthan, the ground reports say that ministers like Ganendra Singh Shekhawat, Ashwani Vaishnav, Arjun Ram Meghwal and even former union minister Rajyavardhan Rathore do not have grassroots-level mass appeal like Raje in Rajasthan. Diya Kumari, a member of ex ruling family of Jaipur, is a sitting MP from Rajsamand and will be contesting from the Vidhayadhar Nagar segment in the pink city which was being represented by Narpal Singh Rajvi, son-in-law of late Octogenarian, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. At the same time, Meena community leader, Rajya Sabha MP, Dr Kirori Lal Meena may prove an asset in the eastern region of Rajasthan as he will contest from the Sawai Madhopur seat, dominated by Meena-Gujjar communities. BJP kept Raje in political oblivion for five years which has alienated the ex-CM from party workers to some extent though she still has got maximum number of loyalist MLAs. Raje was missing from BJP's 'Parivartan Yatra's' even in her home turf, Jhalawar in Kota district where she wields immense influence which can be attributed to her long association with people. BJP could not play the role of an aggressive opposition during the 5-year regime of Ashok Gehlot as high command kept on experimenting with younger generation leaders

Chhattisgarh is a tough call for the It will be Baghel versus Baghel in Chhattisgarh which is considered the strongest turf of the Congress due to the leadership of Bhupesh Baghel. The India Today-CVoter survey has predicted that BJP may narrow the gap by five per cent but it may not be sufficient to block Congress from surpassing the majority mark of 46 seats. BJP has named CM's nephew Vijay Baghel, Lok Sabha MP as a candidate for the top slot. BJP's Chhattisgarh unit could not put the Baghel government on the mat during the entire 5-year term which may give an advantage to Congress to retain power. Former CM Raman Singh does not figure in the scheme of things of high command. Ahead of the assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, BJP leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Ranvijay Pratap Singh Judeo, the present Raja of the erstwhile Jashpur state, has expressed his desire to resign from organizational posts but asserted his commitment to not quitting BJP.

Telangana: Poised to witness a fierce battle While toying with the new idea of relying on the 'Charisma' of union ministers or MP, BJP high command has given the command of state unit to union minister, G Kishan Reddy who faces a big challenge of bringing the party on track which is faction-ridden. The removal of Bandi Sanjay Kumar who was vociferous against the KCR government has not sent the right signal to the party cadres though the party denies it. BJP's 'Gujarat Model' of replacing older generation leaders yielded positive results in Uttarakhand, Goa and Tripura but it miserably failed to deliver in Karnataka. Now it will be interesting to see whether the new strategy to push ministers and MPs into the electoral fray will work to the advantage of the party or it will backfire.

Lessons from the pandemic will help us move with confidence

The experiences of adolescents during the pandemic are valuable lessons. Their stories are all about resilience and adaptation in the face of adversity

As we reflect on the past three years since the emergence of COVID-19, we find ourselves in a world forever changed. The pandemic disrupted lives, reshaped our norms, and left an indelible mark, especially on the adolescent population.

While we strive to move forward and regain a semblance of normalcy, the experiences of adolescents during this period continue to hold valuable lessons. Their stories remain a testament to resilience, adaptation, and transformation in the face of adversity—a message that resonates even more strongly today. In the heart of Leh, Ladakh, teenagers like Mohammad Sapten, a 17-year-old resident of Gongma village in Chuchot block, faced



QAMARUN NISSA

(The writer studies at Leh, Ladakh; views are personal. Charkha Features)

extraordinary challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their journeys through adversity offer insights that are not only relevant but crucial in navigating the uncertainties of the present.

Chuchot Village, located approximately 18 kilometres from Leh's district headquarters, was among the first places in India to impose a lockdown weeks before the Janta Curfew. When the pandemic began, Sapten found himself far from home, studying in Jammu. The fear, uncertainty, and distance from his family weighed heavily on him. Thanks to the All Ladakh Student Welfare Association's support, Sapten and other stranded students eventually made it back to Leh. Upon returning home, Sapten faced new challenges. His par-

ents, understandably, wanted him to excel in his studies, creating an environment that felt restrictive. To cope with the stress, Sapten began smoking with his friends. Yet, he soon realized that smoking jeopardized not only his health but also his dreams, especially his passion for football. Determined to prioritize his well-being and aspirations, he chose to quit smoking. However, not all of his friends found it as easy to break free from the grip of addiction. Their struggles serve as a lasting reminder of how the pandemic has left a mark on the lives of young people.

The story of 17-year-old Skarma Tsering Wangyal's family in Leh reflects the unexpected ways in which the pandemic brought families closer.

Skarma's parents, who were outside of Leh at the pandemic's outset, returned home, testing positive for COVID-19. Sharma found himself alone at home, grappling with fear and stress. Worries about his younger brother, who was in Karnataka at the time, added to his anxiety.

Despite the challenges, Skarma and his family discovered a silver lining. Their shared experiences during this time brought them closer, and they found strength in their bond. Richen Dolma, a mother from Sankar, Leh, shared her perspective on how the pandemic affected her family. Initially planning a short break in Jammu for her daughter's school admission, their stay was extended due to the pandemic's unforeseen grip. The

15-day break stretched into a prolonged stay, and the uncertainty of their situation took a toll on them.

Richen noticed changes in her daughter's behaviour during this period. Like many students, her daughter had to attend online classes, which required a mobile phone. However, her daughter started using the phone for other purposes, raising concerns. Although online resources offered flexible learning opportunities, the increased screen time and mobile phone use became a source of worry.

These families, like many others, faced the challenges of adapting to online learning and increased screen time for their children during the pandemic. The experience brought both positive and

negative changes, reflecting the complex impact it had on adolescents and their families.

Tsetan Kunzes, the mother of a 16-year-old Rigzen Nurboo from Nimoo, Leh, shared how the pandemic affected her family. Her son, once not heavily reliant on his phone, became increasingly engrossed in gaming and screens. The addiction to screens led to behavioural changes, increased frustration, and neglect of studies. Tsetan's story echoes the challenges faced by many families during the pandemic, underscoring the significant impact of technology addiction and isolation on adolescents and their families.

These stories reveal the multifaceted effects of the pandemic on adolescents. In

the face of adversity, young individuals like Mohd Sapten and Skarma Tsering Wangyal displayed resilience, guiding us through uncertain times. Families like Richen Dolma's and Tsetan Kunzes's experienced the unpredictability and challenges of the pandemic, learning to navigate the storm and finding strength and unity in the process.

Their experiences underscore the power of understanding and support as they embark on a journey towards balance, discovering that healing is most profound when undertaken together. These lessons of resilience, adaptation, and unity are more relevant now than ever as we navigate the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and strive to build a more resilient future.

Morgue at Gaza's biggest hospital overflows

AP ■ GAZA CITY

The morgue at Gaza's biggest hospital overflowed Thursday as bodies came in faster than relatives could claim them on the sixth day of Israel's heavy aerial bombardment on the territory of 2.3 million people.

"The body bags started and just kept coming and coming and now it's a graveyard," Abu Elias Shobaki, a nurse at Shifa, said of the parking lot. "I am emotionally, physically exhausted. I just have to stop myself from thinking about how much worse it will get."



Jews pray during a communal prayer to honor and offer support for the victims in Israel at B'nai Jeshurun Synagogue on Thursday in New York. AP/PTI

With scores of Palestinians killed each day in the Israeli onslaught after an unprecedented Hamas attack, medics in the besieged enclave said they have run out of places to put remains pulled from the latest strikes or recovered from the ruins of demolished buildings.

The morgue at Gaza City's Shifa hospital can only handle some 30 bodies at a time, and workers had to stack corpses three high outside the walk-in cooler and put dozens more, side by side, in the parking lot. Some were placed in a tent, and others were sprawled on the cement, under the sun.

Iran's foreign min warns war could spread

Beirut (AP): Iran's foreign minister warned Friday that if Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip don't stop immediately, the violence could spread to other parts of the Middle East.

reporters in Beirut after a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart, during which the two officials called for an end to Israel's attacks on Gaza.

from its national water company and blocked electricity, food and fuel from entering the coastal enclave.

care, the dead can't get to the morgue." Lines of white body bags — soles of bare feet sticking out from one, a bloodied arm from another — brought

Suicide bombing at Af mosque during prayers kills 7

AP ■ KABUL

A suicide bomber blew himself up among worshippers attending Friday prayers at a Shiite mosque in northern Afghanistan, killing at least seven people and wounding 15 others, a police spokesman said.

targeted Afghanistan's minority Shiites in past large-scale attacks. The Taliban footage from the mosque showed debris strewn over a red-carpeted floor, scattered personal items and bodies covered with shrouds.

Putin calls for ex-Soviet states to expand influence

AP ■ BISHKEK

Russian President Vladimir Putin, on his first trip abroad since being indicted by the International Criminal Court in March, on Friday called on an alliance of former Soviet states to expand relations with non-Western countries.

ed to the ICC; Armenia, which recently approved joining the court, did not participate in the summit amid rising disputes with Russia.

Jewish schools in London shut down amid security fears

PTI ■ LONDON

A number of Jewish schools in London have informed parents that they will remain closed on Friday due to security fears amid the conflict in Israel after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak unveiled additional funding support targeted at enhanced protection for the country's Jewish communities against antisemitic attacks.

should remain open as normal," said a spokesperson for the charity Community Security Trust, which has recorded 139 antisemitic incidents in the last four days since the conflict in Israel escalated.

27 Americans killed in Israel

Washington (PTI): At least 27 American citizens have died and 14 remain unaccounted for as a result of unfolding violence in Israel and the US will arrange charter flights to evacuate its citizens from the strife-torn Jewish state, the White House has announced.

Teacher killed, 2 others hurt in stabbing at french school

AP ■ PARIS

A man armed with a knife killed a teacher at the high school in northern France he once attended and critically wounded another teacher and a security guard on Friday, authorities said, an attack being investigated as potential terrorism amid soaring global tensions over the war between Israel and Hamas.



wrongdoing. Sliman Hamzi, a police officer who was one of the first on the scene said the suspected attacker, a former student at the school, shouted "Allahu akbar" or "God is great" in Arabic.

the school and the attacker being taken away. "Colleagues arrived quickly but unfortunately couldn't save the victim," Hamzi said.



An Afghan girl and woman receive aid, while they are scared and crying from the fierce sandstorm, after an earthquake in Zenda Jan district in Herat province, western of Afghanistan on Thursday. Another strong earthquake shook western Afghanistan on Wednesday morning after an earlier one killed more than 2,000 people and flattened whole villages in Herat province in what was one of the most destructive quakes in the country's recent history. AP/PTI

China's inflation data show economy in doldrums despite improvement in trade

AP ■ HONG KONG

China's economy remains in the doldrums, data released Friday showed, with prices due to slack demand from consumers and businesses.

International Monetary Fund cut growth forecasts for China, predicting economic growth of 5 per cent this year and 4.2 per cent in 2024, down slightly from its forecasts in July. The IMF attributed its downward revision to weaker consumer confidence, subdued global demand and a crisis in the property sector that has made a big dent in business activity.

prices, rose 0.8 per cent from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said, similar to a 0.8 per cent rise in August.

vey of factory managers showed activity returning to growth. The official purchasing managers' index for September rose to 50.2 from 49.7 in August, the first time it had topped 50 in six months.

N Korea raises spectre of nuclear strike over US aircraft carrier's arrival in South Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea lashed out on Friday at the arrival of a US aircraft carrier battle group in South Korea, calling it a provocation and again raising the spectre of using nuclear weapons to defend itself. Emboldened by its advancing nuclear arsenal, North Korea has increasingly issued threats to use such weapons preemptively.

hallucinate its followers, and the bases of evil in the Korean peninsula and its vicinity", KCNA added.

In a first, NASA spacecraft launched to rare metal asteroid

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA's Psyche spacecraft rocketed away Friday on a six-year journey to a rare metal-covered asteroid. Most asteroids tend to be rocky or icy, and this is the first exploration of a metal world.

Psyché is the biggest, orbiting the sun in the outer portion of the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter alongside millions of other space rocks.

Elkins-Tanton of Arizona State University. "The pressure is too high. The temperature is too high. The technology is impossible," she added. "But there's one way in our solar system that we can look at a metal core and that is by going to this asteroid."

across at its widest and 173 miles (280 kilometres) long. They believe it's brimming with iron, nickel and other metals, and quite possibly silicates, with a dull, predominantly gray surface likely covered with fine metal grains from cosmic impacts.

"There's a very good chance that it's going to be outside of our imaginings, and that is my fondest hope," she said. Believed to be a planetary building block from the solar system's formation 4.5 billion years ago, the asteroid can help answer such fundamental questions as how did life arise on Earth and what makes our planet habitable, according to Elkins-Tanton.

reach the asteroid and attempt to go into orbit around it, circling as high as 440 miles (700 kilometres) and as close as 47 miles (75 kilometres) until at least 2031. The spacecraft relies on solar electric propulsion, using xenon gas-fed thrusters and their gentle blue-glowing pulses.

One cop killed in shooting at Philadelphia airport garage

Philadelphia police officer was shot and killed and a second officer was wounded Thursday night when they confronted people breaking into cars at Philadelphia International Airport, police said.



one child, Stanford said. "They are here at the hospital, as you can imagine, heartbroken," Stanford said.

US to provide employment authorisation cards for 5 yrs

Washington (PTI): The US has announced it will provide employment authorisation cards to some non-immigrant categories, including those waiting for green cards, for five years, a move that would benefit thousands of Indians living in the country.

Three lawyers detained in Russia for representing Alexei Navalny

Russian authorities on Friday detained three lawyers representing imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny after searching their homes, the politician's allies said.

EU warns China that European public could turn more protectionist if trade deficit isn't reduced

Beijing (AP): The European Union's top foreign policy official warned Friday that public sentiment in Europe could turn more protectionist if the region's trade deficit with China is not reduced.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, centre left, welcomes Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, left, aboard HMS Diamond before holding bilateral talks ahead of the Joint Expeditionary Summit (JEF) on the Baltic island of Gotland, Sweden, on Friday

EU can't reach decision on prolonging use of chemical herbicide glyphosate

A European Union decision on whether to authorise the use of the controversial chemical herbicide glyphosate in the 27-nation bloc for at least 10 more years was delayed for a month after member countries failed to agree on Friday.

Nawaz Sharif performs Umrah in Saudi Arabia

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif performed the Umrah pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia and is expected to meet top leaders before his scheduled return to Pakistan on October 21, ending a four-year "self-imposed exile".

S Korea expresses concern to China for sending North Korean escapees back home

Seoul (AP): South Korea on Friday said it had expressed its concerns to China after assessing that it recently returned a "large number" of North Koreans, including escapees, back to their homeland.

PUBLIC NOTICE: My Clients Hoshiyar Khan S/o Riyajudeen & his wife Suman W/o Hoshiyar Khan R/o H-89, Nihal Vihar, Nangli, Delhi-41 have debarred & disowned their Son Hamid Ali & his wife Gulafsa from their movable & immovable properties.

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot Notice: Written test for the recruitment to the post of Pharmacy officer (Advt. No. BFU 21/07 & 23/05) under Director Research & Medical Education, Govt. of Punjab, Staff Nurse (Advt. No. 23/08) and Steno Typist (Advt. No. 13/21) under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot will be held on 05/11/23 (Sunday).

APPENDIX IV-A [See proviso to rule 8(6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property: E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles, VEHICLES FOR SALE: 1) TATAMOTORS TACEGOLD REG. NO. UP15GT0627-YOM-2023

NORTHERN RAILWAY Tender Notice: Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems) (N.I.T. No. 21-A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I & J-2023-24-W-5)

India, UK FTA talks at advance stage

Both working to iron out differences: Commerce Secretary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement between India and the UK are at an advanced stage, and both sides are working to iron out differences on the remaining issues, a top government official said on Friday. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that negotiations on tough issues are underway.

going on," he told reporters here. These remarks assume significance as both sides are expected to conclude the talks this month and may sign the deal in the last week. A majority of the 26 chapters are closed and for the remaining issues, high-level engagements at various levels are ongoing. An official delegation from the UK is here for the negotiations. A team led by Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal was in London recently 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 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 consulta-

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. Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in



'India Inc revenues to rise 8-10 per cent in Q2, profit margins to also expand'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India Inc is all set to report an 8-10 per cent jump in revenues for the September quarter while profit margins will also witness an expansion, an arm of rating agency Crisil said on Friday. This will be the first time in four quarters that the revenue growth will see an increase, it said. Automobiles, construction (which benefitted from truant monsoons) and information technology services sectors will be driving the revenue growth in the quarter, the rating agency said, adding that the year-on-year revenue growth in the preceding June quarter had stood at 7 per cent. The agency said its expectations are based on an analysis of 300 companies excluding ones in banking and oil sectors. "Growth in revenue was largely skewed towards consumer discretionary products and services, where automobiles and the retail sector led the pack, and construction-linked sectors, where companies accrued benefits from an early

deployment of capital expenditure by the roads and railways ministries," Director of Research at Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics, Aniket Dani, said. The improvement in revenue growth would have been stronger had it not been for a decline in agriculture-linked sectors such as fertilisers, industrial commodities such as chlor-alkalis, petrochemicals and commodity chemicals, and aluminium, the report said. Nine sectors accounting for 70 per cent of the overall revenue will report a growth in revenue, the agency said. On the profitability front, the agency expects the operating profit margins to improve to 20 per cent during the second quarter as against 17.2 per cent in the year-ago period. However, these would be moderating from 20.5 per cent in the preceding June quarter. The report said rising crude oil prices are monitorable, and added that inadequate monsoons could impact rural demand in the second half of the fiscal.

Forex reserves drop by USD 2.17 bn to USD 584.74 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's forex reserves dropped by a further USD 2.166 billion to USD 584.742 billion for the week ended October 6, the RBI said on Friday. India's forex kitty had gone down by USD 3.794 billion to USD 586.908 billion in the previous week. It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year. For the week ended October 6, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 707 million to USD 519.529 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Sensex, Nifty fall for 2nd day; IT, banking shares weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the second straight session on Friday following selling in banking, financial and select IT shares amid a weak trend in global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 125.65 points or 0.19 per cent to close at 66,282.74 as 16 of its constituents fell and 14 advanced. The index opened lower and fell further by around 513 points to the day's low of 65,895.41 in morning deals. However, a rebound in auto shares helped Sensex trim losses and touch a high of 66,478.90 in the pre-close session before settling lower. The broader Nifty of NSE fell by 42.95 points or 0.22 per



cent to close at 19,751.05, with 27 of its components ending in the red and 23 in the green. "Weak revenue guidance of the IT sector and the current uptick in crude prices weighed on the sentiment. While higher-than-expected US inflation data pulled down the week's early uptrend, which was positive on a remark of a less

hawkish US Fed meeting. "However, some optimism was visible from domestic factors like a steep decline in domestic inflation and impressive industrial production data, along with bright earnings expectations for Q2," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. Axis Bank was the top

loser in the Sensex pack, sliding 2.33 per cent, followed by Infosys, SBI, Wipro, HDFC Bank, JSW Steel, and Tata Steel. On the other hand, Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, HCL Tech, Nestle India and Maruti were the gainers. In the broader market, BSE Midcap declined by 17.11 points or 0.05 per cent to 32,305.62 and SmallCap by 13.67 points or 0.04 per cent to 38,184.83. "Mixed trends on the sectoral front kept the participants busy wherein auto and realty posted decent gains while pressure continued in banking and IT," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said. Sectorally, BSE Bankex dropped by 0.75 per cent, IT by

Sebi to auction 9 properties of Orion Industries, Rakhal Bharoti firms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday said it will auction nine properties belonging to Orion Industries Ltd and Rakhal Bharoti group of companies to recover investors' money raised by these firms. The nine properties to be auctioned include land parcels located in West Bengal and

Jharkhand. The total reserve price of these properties is pegged at around Rs 9 crore, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice. Inviting bids for the sale of the properties in the recovery proceedings against Orion Industries Ltd and Rakhal Bharoti group of companies, along with their respective promoters and directors, Sebi said



the auction will be conducted through online mode on November 20 from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. Quirk Realty Ltd has been engaged by Sebi to assist in the e-auction. Of the 9 properties to go under the hammer, seven belong to RB Group of companies, which comprises Rakhal Bharoti Fish and Food Processing Ltd and R B Horticulture and

Animal Project Ltd, and the remaining two relate to Orion Industries. This came after directives asking the companies to refund investors' money, along with interest, did not materialise. These firms had raised funds from investors without complying with regulatory norms. The regulator said the bidders should make their own

independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims, among others, prior to submitting their bids. Going by the Sebi's order, Orion Industries collected Rs 5.46 crore between 2011 and 2013 by issuing redeemable preference shares (RPS) to nearly 4,200 people without complying with the public

'No restriction on laptop imports, we are only monitoring'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will not impose the licensing requirement on imports of laptops and computers but will only monitor their inbound shipments, a top government official said. The remarks assume significance as the government in August announced that these products, including laptops, tablets and computers, would be put under licensing regime from November 1. "On laptops, we are of the view that there are no restrictions as such. We are only saying that somebody who is importing these laptops, have to be under close watch, so that we can look at these imports. It is basically monitoring, which we are doing. It has nothing to do with restrictions as such," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters here. Explaining further, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said there will be an import management system,

which will come into place from November 1. The work is in progress and hopefully it will be in place before October 30, he said. The government in August imposed import restrictions on laptops, computers (including tablet computers), micro computers, large or mainframe computers, and certain data processing machines with a view to boost domestic manufacturing and cut imports from countries like China. While the IT hardware product industry comes under MeitY, the DGFT notifies decisions with regard to import/export of a product. Following this notification, IT hardware industry had flagged concerns. India already has an import monitoring system for certain products like steel, coal and paper. The licensing conditions on imports were put on the grounds of security and to spur domestic manufacturing of these products.

BMW posts record car sales at 9,580 units in India in Jan-Sept period

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

German luxury vehicle maker BMW Group on Friday reported a 10 per cent rise in total car sales at 9,580 units in India in the first nine months of 2023, driving towards another record sales in the year. The group's three brands -- BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad (two-wheeler) recorded the best-ever January-September period sales in the country, BMW Group India said. The BMW brand clocked 8,998 units in the first nine months of the year, up 10 per cent from the year-ago period, while the MINI brand posted 582 units, also at a growth of 10 per cent. The group's premium motorcycle brand BMW Motorrad registered sales of 6,778 units in the January-September period, rising 26 per cent from the same period a year ago. "After the first half results, which was the best ever first half in our history, quarter three has been even more promising because we knew



that we did all the launches in the first quarter of 2023 and all the suppliers ramp up started from the second half of this year...We have the best quarter three results," BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah told PTI. He further said, "It shows that the growth is going to be promising, now that the festive season is here and our supplies are back to normal. So we expect really solid growth. In the first half of 2023, BMW Group sold a record 5,867 cars in India, up 5 per cent year-on-year while registering over 50 per cent jump

Exports dip 2.6 per cent to \$34.47 bn in September; trade deficit narrows to \$19.37 bn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Exports contracted by 2.6 per cent to USD 34.47 billion in September even as the country's merchandise trade deficit narrows to USD 19.37 billion during the month under review, according to the government data released on Friday. Easing commodity prices helped in cutting down the country's import bill by 15 per cent to USD 53.84 billion in September, the 10th consecutive month of decline. During April-September this fiscal, exports contracted by 8.77 per cent to USD 211.4 billion. Imports during the six-month period fell by 12.23 per cent to USD 326.98 billion, leaving a trade deficit of USD 115.58 billion. Briefing media on the trade data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that the September figures are reflecting that "green shoots" are visible at exports front despite global challenges. He expressed hope that in

the remaining six-months, the country's outbound shipments would register positive growth. The contraction which was there in double digits during April, May, June and July, is now in single digits, he said, adding, "there is an optimism which we will see in the coming months" also. The weekly exports trend during the current month is showing a positive movement, he added. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has forecasted that the global trade will grow only by 0.8 per cent in 2023. Despite this, Barthwal said that India's exports are doing "well" and in fact entering new markets also like Turkey for office equipment; and Finland, Malta and Philippines for drug formulations. When asked about the reasons for dip in imports, he said the country's import substitution policy is working well and global commodity prices including crude oil have also come down.

Infosys stock settle 2 per cent lower

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Infosys settled 2 per cent lower on the bourses, a day after the IT services company announced its September quarter earnings. The stock of the company declined 2.24 per cent to end at Rs 1,431.80 apiece on the BSE, emerging as one of the biggest laggards among the Sensex shares. On the NSE, Infosys shares dropped 2.23 per cent to close the day at Rs 1,432.85 per piece on the NSE. On the volume trade, nearly 1.80 crore equity shares were traded on the NSE, while 11.35 lakh shares changed hands on the BSE. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 125.65 points to close at 66,282.74 points, while NSE Nifty fell 42.95 points to settle 19,751.05 points. Infosys on Thursday reported a 3.1 per cent year-on-year increase in net profit to Rs 6,215 crore in the September quarter. The company, a major player in the IT services market, competes with firms like TCS, Wipro, and HCL Technologies. Its revenue increased 6.7 per cent to Rs 38,994 crore for the just-ended September quarter. While announcing the September quarter results, Infosys Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Salil Parekh said, "We had our highest large deal value at USD 7.7 billion in Q2 spread across all verticals and geographies.

33 industry professionals launch initiative to reduce printing of visiting cards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A group of 33 professionals, including from the mutual fund industry, has launched an initiative to reduce the printing of traditional business cards and replace them with

digital cards. Kotak Mutual Fund Group President and Managing Director Nilesh Shah and CEO HDFC Mutual Fund MD and CEO Naveet Munot are among the professionals behind the "Save Tree VC"

mobile app developed by the 'Save Trees by DMI' initiative to promote digital contact sharing. "Thirty-three distinguished professionals have united as thought partners to support DMI's 'Save Trees by DMI'

Initiative, which introduces the 'Save Tree VC' mobile app, promoting digital contact sharing and personal social responsibility (PSR) for the environment," a release said, adding that Deepak Mundra has conceived the project. Using the app for one year by 50 people can save one tree, as 20,000 paper business cards are equivalent to one tree, it said. Beyond its ecological benefits, the app streamlines contact management, saving users

time and costs associated with paper business cards, it added. According to the release, roughly 10 billion business cards are printed annually, with an astonishing 88 per cent discarded within a week. The app offers several fea-

tures, including the ability to make calls directly and a search function in the saved cardholder feature, while also integrating with WhatsApp. The mobile app is available for free, and it will remain free for a lifetime, the release added.

While announcing the September quarter results, Infosys Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Salil Parekh said, "We had our highest large deal value at USD 7.7 billion in Q2 spread across all verticals and geographies.

Its revenue increased 6.7 per cent to Rs 38,994 crore for the just-ended September quarter.

MESSI PLAYS ONE HALF IN ARGENTINA'S 1-0 WORLD CUP QUALIFYING WIN

AP ■ SAO PAULO
Lionel Messi hit a post twice after he came off the bench but struggled to deliver a strong performance following his return from injury. Still, Argentina beat Paraguay 1-0 in a South American World Cup qualifying match. But Argentina's biggest South American rival left the pitch to some jeers at Cuiabá, Brazil after the home side and Venezuela drew 1-1. The result put pressure on new Brazil coach Fernando Diniz and kept Argentina as the sole leaders of the round-robin competition with their third victory in three matches. The next World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada is expanding to a 48-team format, meaning direct entry to the top six teams in South America. The seventh-place team will contest an intercontinental playoff for a berth. Argentina leads South American World Cup qualifying with 9 points, followed by Brazil (7), Colombia (5), Uruguay (4), Chile (4), Venezuela (4), Ecuador (3), Paraguay (1), Peru (1), and Bolivia (0). All 10 teams will play the fourth round on Tuesday.



The next round will offer the following matchups: Peru vs. Argentina, Uruguay vs. Brazil, Ecuador vs. Colombia, Paraguay vs. Bolivia and Venezuela vs. Chile. **ARGENTINA 1, PARAGUAY 0** The only goal of the match at the Monumental de Nunez Stadium came in the third minute after a corner kick that found Nicolás Otamendi free from marking in the penalty box. The defender smashed the ball into the net with a left-foot volley. The 36-year-old Messi has felt muscular pains in his right leg that have sidelined him for several matches at his club Inter Miami. Coach Lionel Scaloni picked Nico Gonzalez as his replacement. The star substituted Julian Alvarez in the 52nd minute.

when Argentina was already in the lead. Messi hit the post in a corner kick he took 10 minutes after stepping on the pitch of the Monumental de Nunez Stadium in Buenos Aires, but his other efforts to dribble and give deep passes fell flat. A free kick from the same spot where he scored the winner against Ecuador in September raised hopes for Argentina fans shortly before the final whistle, but Messi's shot hit the right post. "I get very calm when we have Leo on the pitch," midfielder Rodrigo De Paul said after the match. "We are at a very good level. We feel comfortable with the way we are playing." Paraguay's new coach Daniel Garnero had his debut against Argentina, and his team gave little evidence of attacking power. The 54-year-old coach took over from Guillermo Barros Schelotto last month after the first two qualifiers. Messi has missed four MLS matches for his club plus the U.S. Open Cup final. He played 10 minutes on Saturday in Inter Miami's 1-0 loss to Cincinnati. He also skipped Argentina's 3-0 win at Bolivia in another World Cup qualifying match in September.



Belgium Grand Prix to stay on F1 calendar at least until 2025

AP ■ BRUSSELS
The Belgian Grand Prix at the iconic Spa-Francorchamps track will remain on the Formula 1 calendar until 2025 following a one-year extension. It's one of the seven circuits from the inaugural world championship in 1950. The 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) circuit nestled in the Ardennes forest is also F1's longest and has hosted 56 Grands Prix. "Spa is synonymous with Formula 1 having been one of the circuits in our first ever season and is much-loved by fans and drivers alike, so I am delighted to extend our relationship with them until 2025," Stefano Domenicali, president and CEO of Formula 1, said on Friday. Concerns have occasionally been raised about the track's safety record. Dutch teenager Dilano Van't Hoff died after a crash at Spa-Francorchamps in a rain-hit Formula Regional European Championship race in July. The circuit is where French driver Anthoine Hubert was killed following a multi-car crash during a Formula Two race at the Belgium GP in 2019. This year's Belgian GP saw an attendance of 380,000 people, an increase of 20,000 over the 2022 edition of the event. The race also remains a firm favourite with drivers, with world champion Max Verstappen calling it his favourite track in F1. Verstappen won this year's race. "The promoter has taken big strides in the last few years to improve the fan experience and infrastructure, and work is ongoing between all the stakeholders with a clear focus on delivering safe and exciting racing," Domenicali said. "I would like to thank the promoter and the Government of Wallonia for their continued support." Willy Borsus, the vice president and minister for the economy of Wallonia, the French-speaking region where Spa is located, said the race made financial sense. "According to a study carried out in 2021, the Grand Prix generates positive spin-offs of USD 44 million for our region, after deduction of public funding, which is steadily decreasing," he said. "These figures constitute a solid indication of the financial impact, and the positive outlook means that we can expect even more positive results this year."

Aakruti-Sohini pair clinches U-16 girls doubles title at National Tennis Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Maharashtra's Aakruti Narayan and Odisha's Sohini Mohanty combined well to lift the U-16 girls doubles title at the Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship, here on Friday. The winners got the better of Nainika Bendram and Ishi Mahewari 6-4 6-4 in the title clash. In the boys doubles U-16 final, the duo of Vraj Gohil of Gujarat and Maharashtra's Samarth Sahita overcame the challenge of Kabir Chothani (Gujarat) and Arnab Yadav (Uttarakhand) 7-5 6-2 to emerge winners. In the boys doubles U-14 category, Hruthik Katakam of Telangana and Haryana's Tavish Pahawa beat Shaurya Bhardwaj and Ranvir Singh 6-4 7-5 to claim the winners' trophy while West Bengal's Aleena Farid and Odisha's Aradhya Verma defeated Aahan and Akansha Ghosh 6-1 6-1 to take home the girls doubles U-14 trophy. In the U-14 singles competition, top-seed Hruthik extended his winning run to enter the final with a 6-4 6-1 win over Anurag Kallambella. Haryana's Anandita Upadhyay beat Aleena Farid 6-0 2-6 6-4 in a thrilling semifinal of the girls singles U-14 category. Tamil Nadu's Thirumurugan V overcame Prabir Chavda 6-4 6-4 to get one step closer to the title in the U-16 boys singles category. Delhi's Aishi Bisht notched up a 6-1 6-4 win over Laxmi Dandu of Telangana to reach the finals of U-16 girls singles event.

AP ■ LAS VEGAS
Lexi Thompson kept a rough round from getting worse and wound up holding her own in the Shriners Children's Open until darkness kept her from finishing. Beau Hossler set the pace by matching his career low on the PGA Tour with a 9-under 62, which included a tee shot that found the water left of the par-3 17th at the TPC Summerlin. Thompson was the main attraction of this FedEx Cup Fall event, the seventh woman to play a PGA Tour event and the first in five years. She was 1-over par for her round through 16 holes and chose to mark her ball - a 20-foot par putt on the 17th - and return to finish the first round in the morning. Still in play was a chance to make the cut, though it was hard work to keep her score around par. "I played decent," Thompson said. "I had one bad hole and a few iffy shots. But it's golf; it was kind of expected."

Lexi Thompson holds her own on PGA Tour in Las Vegas, Beau Hossler sets the pace



Thompson took advantage on two of the par 5s for birdie, and she got a bonus with a birdie putt from inside 25 feet on the second hole that at least put her in red numbers. But through 17 holes, she had only five chances inside 20 feet. It looked as though this round could get away from her on the front nine. She was even par when she came up short of the green on par-4 seventh and had 12 feet for par. She ran that about 4 feet by and missed that to make double bogey. On the par-3 eighth, she came up well short in the rough, chipped about 25 feet by the hole and left her par putt 6 feet short. Facing another double bogey, she made that to limit the damage. Then, she drilled a 3-wood on the par-5 ninth that rolled on the firm fairway just onto the green to set up a two-putt birdie from 30 feet. "I knew I could get a birdie as long as I hit that fairway," Thompson said. "I knew I could get 3-wood up close to the front of the green and make birdie there. Hit a good drive and just really stayed committed to that 3-wood. Tried to make eagle, but definitely take a birdie." She didn't make another bogey the rest of the way, though she had limited chances at birdies, missing from 8 feet on the 12th and leaving an 8-foot putt short on the par-5 16th.

Incredibly tough challenge to win in India, but we've got the players: Woakes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
While admitting the toughness of the task, all-rounder Chris Woakes said England are capable of delivering a knockout blow on India in the on-going World Cup. India started their campaign in the quadrennial big bash with two wins over Australia and Afghanistan, while champions England lost to New Zealand before regrouping to wallop Bangladesh. "It's an incredibly tough challenge to win in India. I think the sub-continental teams will feel more at home with the conditions," Woakes was quoted as saying by Sky Sports. However, Woakes, who was part of England's World Cup winning squad in 2019, said they have the wherewithal to pin India to the mat.



India and England will face each other on October 29 at Lucknow. "That makes it extremely hard for us to knock them off their perch. But we've got the squad and the players to be able to compete. "People have looked at us for a

while and we've had a little bit of a target on our back as a white-ball team, around the world," said Woakes. The Warwickshire player said England will have to tame expectations on them to do well in the tournament. "It's a tough competition to win isn't it? Especially here. But we'll give it a good crack. We're taking it each game as it comes. "Naturally, people have got expectations of us and we've certainly got our own expectations of ourselves," he added. In their next assignment, England will lock horns with Afghanistan at New Delhi on Sunday. Woakes said he wanted to improve his bowling performance. "I certainly feel that I would've liked to have bowled a little bit better. But these are long competitions and you don't want to peak too soon. "I have built into tournaments in the past and into series, which I suppose holds me in good stead. But you contribute every time you go out in the field. So, I'll be working hard in practice to try and make sure that I'm on the money," said Woakes.



Past winners, future stars ready to tee off at Hero Indian Women's golf

PTI ■ GURUGRAM
Indian golfers will stand to gain as former winners and emerging stars of the Ladies European Tour clash at the Hero Women's Indian Open, the region's biggest golf tournament, at the DLF Golf and Country Club beginning October 19. With a purse of USD 400,000 on offer, a strong collection of proven champions and a bunch of Indian women golfers, who are now regulars on the LET, will be part of a star-studded field of 120 which will showcase four of the top five in the current LET's Order of Merit and seven winners from what has been a very competitive 2023 season. India's Diksha Dagar, a two-time LET winner, currently fourth on the Order of Merit, will carry the flag. Among other Indians in focus will be last year's runner-up Amandeep Drall along with Vani Kapoor, Tvesa Malik and Neha Tripathi. One big win can bring a big change in their fortunes on the Order of Merit. Besides Dikha, the other stars from the LET's Order of Merit are Johanna Gustavsson (Sweden), Ana Pelaez Trivino (Spain) and Thailand's Trichat Cheenglab (1448.22). The seven winners from the ongoing season are Sweden's Lisa Pettersson (Helsingborg Open), Spain's Carmen Alonso (Ladies Open by Pickala Resort), Spain's Nuria Iturriz (La Sella Open), Denmark's Smilla Tarning Soenderby (KPMG Women's Irish Open) and Thailand's Trichat Cheenglab (Big Green Egg Open). They were joined by Sweden's Johanna Gustavsson, who won the Lacoste Ladies Open de France, and has now vaulted to second place on the OOM. **BREAKOUT SEASON FOR GUSTAVSSON AND TRICHAT** Sweden's Johanna Gustavsson, who is having a breakout season, leads the race in the chase to hunt down the leader, France's Celine Boutier. Boutier's twin wins at one of the majors, Evian Championship, and the Women's Scottish Open in successive weeks put her in the top spot. Gustavsson (1551.07) is just about 241 points behind Celine (1792.88). Gustavsson is just under 65 points ahead of Spaniard Ana Pelaez Trivino (1487.20) and close behind are home star Diksha (1484.61) and Thai sensation Trichat Cheenglab (1448.22). Ana, Diksha and Trichat are separated by less than 39 points, so there is a lot to play for them. With only three more events left in 2023 after the HWIO, the stakes are high as a win in India for any of the four will put them on top of the Order of Merit. **DIKSHA EYES HISTORIC ORDER OF MERIT TRIUMPH** Diksha has had the finest season of her career. She achieved her second LET win at the Tipsport Czech Ladies Open, where Thai Trichat was second. Diksha picked up pace after a slow start to the 2023 season and has been very consistent after that. She had an amazing five event run from the Belgian Ladies and was topped by a win at the Czech Ladies Open. She finished in Top-8 in four of them. Another fine run came in the period between ISPS Handa Invitational to the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open when she was in Top-7 in three of the four events. A week before the ISPS Handa, she finished T-21 at the AIG Women's Open, the best finish by an Indian at the Major. While Diksha is almost a certain to make the grade for the 2024 Olympics in Paris, she is also eyeing the Race to Costa Del Sol, which has never been won by an Indian before.

T20 cricket all set to feature in 2028 Olympics

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Cricket is set to feature in the 2028 Olympics as the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Executive Board on Friday approved the proposal of Los Angeles Games organisers to include the sport in the programme. Apart from cricket, which will be played in T20 format, four other sports — baseball-softball, flag football, lacrosse (sixes) and squash also got the nod of the IOC Executive Board which met here with President Thomas Bach chairing it. The proposal will be put to vote during the IOC session which begins here on Sunday. Bach said the inclusion of these five sports - only for the Los Angeles Games 2028 — was in line with the American sports culture and will also felicitate the Olympic movement to engage with new athletes and fan communities in the US as well as globally. "The IOC had to take three different decisions. (The) first was about the proposal of the Los Angeles organising committee to introduce five new sports. These five sports are baseball-softball, flag football,



lacrosse (sixes), squash and cricket," Bach said during the media briefing after the conclusion of the two-day Executive Board meeting here on Friday. "We see growing popularity of cricket, particularly the T20 format. The World Cup (50 overs) is a huge success already," he added. Cricket's shortest format along with baseball-softball, lacrosse (sixes), squash and flag football are the five sports proposed only for the Los Angeles Games in 2028 and if approved, which is likely to be, cricket will be a part of the Olympics for the first time since 1900. "Baseball/softball, cricket (T20), flag football, lacrosse (sixes) and squash are the five sports submitted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s Executive Board (EB) to the upcoming IOC Session as additional sports for the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 (LA28)," the IOC said in a statement. "These additional sports were proposed by the LA28 Organising Committee, for its edition of the Games only, and were reviewed by the Olympic Programme Commission (OPC) before being put forward to the EB."



BANGLADESH SCORE 245/9 AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The experienced Mushfiqur Rahim top-scored with 66 as Bangladesh battled hard in the face of New Zealand's disciplined bowling effort to post 245 for nine in their ICC World Cup match here on Friday.

Rahim's 75-ball knock, alongside valuable contributions from skipper Shakib al Hasan (40 off 51 balls) and Mahmudullah (41 off 49), lifted Bangladesh after they were reeling at 56 for four in the 13th over.

The Tigers began on a disastrous note, losing Litton Das (0) off the very first delivery of the game to pacer Trent Boult, as his attempted flick was collected by Matt Henry in fine leg.

Tanzid Hasan (16) and Mehidy Hasan Miraz (30) tried to put up some resistance before the former fell prey to pacer Lockie Ferguson, offering a catch to Devon Conway in square leg in the eighth over.

Notably, Tanzid was dropped when he was yet to open his account by Tom Latham in the opening over itself. It was a tough chance, nonetheless.

When the score read 56, Bangladesh lost Miraz to Ferguson, followed by Najmul Hossain Shanto (7) to spinner Glenn Phillips.

Losing two wickets in a space of three balls was a body blow for Bangladesh, only for Shakib and Mushfiqur to take control for some time with a 96-run partnership for the fifth wicket.



However, Shakib appeared to be struggling in the hot and humid conditions here, taking a medical break before eventually being dismissed by Ferguson in the 30th over.

The pitch appeared to be assisting the pacers, and Ferguson looked to capitalise with his 'bowl short and quick' strategy.

Also, the strip utilised was different from the one that helped the spinners during the India-Australia contest on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Mushfiqur brought up his 48th ODI half-century and was cleverly attacking the loose deliveries, while spinners Mitchell Santner and Rachin Ravindra bowled tight lines.

In the 36th over, pacer Matt Henry gave the Kiwis relief as he bowled Mushfiqur with a beautiful slower off-cutter that stayed low and pruned the off-stump, leaving Bangladesh at 175 for six.

After losing the seventh wicket in Towhid Hridoy for 13, Mahmudullah and Taskin Ahmed (17) added 34 runs for the eighth wicket before the latter gave a catch to Daryl Mitchell off Santner.

While Mustafizur Rahman was the ninth man out in the 48th over, the final pair managed to bat out the remaining deliveries.

Ferguson took 3 for 49, while Boult grabbed 2 for 45, including his 200th ODI wicket. Meanwhile, Santner was the most economical of them all, finishing with figures of 1/31 in 10 overs.



Don't get captaincy because of one match, Babar Azam

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Babar Azam does not believe that the outcome of the much-anticipated India-Pakistan clash in World Cup on Saturday will have an impact on his captaincy. The captains of both the teams feel pressure of the big-game, especially when losing isn't an option for fans from both sides of the border. Babar, though, looked unperturbed.

"I never worry, that because of this match I will lose my captaincy. Whatever God has written for me - I will get. I will get what I deserve. I didn't get the captaincy because of one match and I will not lose it because of one match," Babar, who certainly wasn't amused with the question, replied with an air of disdain. His record against India in ICC events has been a bit underwhelming and he was the first to admit that. But he felt that not playing India enough outside ICC events is a factor.

"My World Cup till right now has not been as it should have been - but hopefully you will see some difference in the next matches. Against India, we only come face to face in the World Cup. There is a big gap.

"It's not that because of a bowler or... I say that I sometimes get out because of my mistake. I try to make as few mistakes as possible."

Babar faced a tricky question about the possibility of no Pakistani fans (save Chacha Chicago Bashir) being present at the Narendra Modi Stadium, but like a good student, who has diligently prepared for the question, it wasn't exactly out of syllabus for him. "This is not pressure because we have played before a lot of time in front of a large crowd, in front of big crowds at the MCG and all the big stadiums," Babar said.

"Yes, there are also big stadiums around and yes, I think Ahmedabad will only be blue. So, if Pakistani fans are allowed, it would have been good for us." Once again, he recalled how well they were received in Hyderabad upon arrival.

"When we arrived in Hyderabad,

I feel there were a lot of supporters of the Pakistan team and I expect that here and we are looking forward to the match." Someone slyly slipped in a query about tweets from players after victory over Sri Lanka, then mentioning about Mohammed Rizwan's support for "brothers and sisters of Gaza".

"I think it's better if we stick to talking about cricket. You are taking the conversation to another direction," Babar was quick to cut it short before controversy could rear its head.

MISSING NASEEM A LOT BUT SHAHEEN UP FOR BIG DAYS

Naseem Shah's absence will be felt dearly, said Babar but he knows that his main weapon Shaheen Shah Afridi is raring to have a go at the Indians.

"First of all, we will miss Naseem Shah a lot. The way he was bowling in the Asia Cup, it was very impressive bowling — and a youngster, the way he was improving day by day, we miss him a lot as a team, as a captain."

"As far as Shaheen is concerned, it doesn't matter if you don't get a wicket in one or two matches - it's not a question mark on you, I don't think that way nor does my team. We have belief in him and he also has full faith in himself that he can do it, and he will."

"MORE THAN OPPOSITION, PRESSURE IS TO GET TICKETS"

Asked if he is getting calls from fans urging him and his team to win the prestige match.

"I have not got calls for this - but yeah, I also got a lot of calls for tickets. Basically, people call me for tickets," everyone laughed.

India have not yet lost to Pakistan in ODI World Cups in seven outings so far.

So will 7-0 become 8-0 after Saturday?

"I don't focus on the past. I try to focus on the future. Such records are meant to be broken. It depends on the day how you play. I believe my team did well in the first two matches and will do well in the next matches as well."

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Rohit Sharma's poise, Virat Kohli's intensity and Jasprit Bumrah's cerebral artistry make India overwhelming favourites against arch-rivals Pakistan in the World Cup match here on Saturday that has a compelling socio-political context, implications of which transcend beyond the 22-yards.

On paper, India is a far superior side and with a batting line-up filled with alpha-male characters, it will all depend on how well left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi's first spell pans out as the cross-border neighbours might not be short on intent but certainly in terms of ammunition.

But this is a match where emotional quotients play a role and it has created heroes and villains in equal measure over the years.

THE SHAHEEN IN MATCH

Shaheen in Urdu means 'King of Birds' and Rohit won't mind clipping his wings at the earliest inside an imposing amphitheatre that can house 132,000 people.

Shubman Gill is recovering well post dengue and if he is ready to go to Shaheen what he did in the Asia Cup in Colombo with those half a dozen fours in Powerplay, then half the job of deflating Pakistanis would be done.

The master puller would like to reassert his supremacy first up which would create a platform for the likes of Kohli, Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul to consolidate during middle-overs where Pakistan could be a bit short-changed due to lack of quality spinners. Pakistan vice-captain Shadab Khan has gone for 100 runs in 16 overs in the two games and he along with new ball bowler Hasan Ali could be

India vs Pakistan: Rohit's men start overwhelming favourites

the easy target for Indians. Not to forget the second spinner, which has been Pakistan's weak-link so far.

Yes, there is a forecast of inclement weather but no one wants anything to come in the way of a full game of cricket.

KULDEEP VS BABAR, INDIA'S REAL MATCH-UP

Mohammed Rizwan was phenomenal against Sri Lanka and Abdullah Shafique showed his class. There is Saud Shakeel, who can be an 'x-factor' on a given day. But Pakistan's batting depends on its skipper Babar Azam.

Babar's battle with Kuldeep Yadav could even add a fascinating sub-text to the match.

The left-arm wrist-spinner's leg-break that landed Babar in a mess in Manchester in 2019, could be watched on loop as many times as one can.

In between, Kuldeep had lost that flight, loop, dip and deception but he has regained those assets and the spinner can spell doom for Babar and his team.

The Asia Cup match in Colombo is a case in point. But to nullify Kuldeep, Pakistan need to go past the first spell of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj. Rizwan and Shafique would know that negating Bumrah and Siraj could be infinitely more challenging than spanking Mattheesha Pathirana.

The only question that India seeks answer now is whether to play R Ashwin or Shardul Thakur, with both being contenders



for the No. 8 slot. If the pitch is a batting paradise, then Shardul is a better choice but if there is a bit of grip available, Ashwin is the more viable option with longer boundaries on each side. Mahendra Singh Dhoni never liked words like "war", "revenge" being loosely used in connection with the Indo-Pak ties while Rohit would iterate and reiterate to anyone and everyone who wants to listen that he believes in "shutting the outside

noise."

But being a social animal, it is very difficult to shrug off the history of Indo-Pak clashes and the increased bitterness over the years, which makes crazy fans think of this as "not just another game" but "The Game."

There are still those people, that have taken a sizeable number, who feel that "Don't need to win the World Cup but don't lose to Pakistan".

Actually, the seven India versus Pakistan clashes in the World Cups have all been anti-climatic where India sealed the game much before it was officially over.

But these matches have their own charm and archived nuggets of incidents, which over time became urban legends.

Miandad's funny impersonation of Kiran More's celebration at Sydney in 1992 or Venkatesh Prasad's angry send off of Aamir Sohail or the ugly bust-up between Harbhajan Singh and Mohammed Yousuf at Centurion, they are all part of the Indo-Pak cricketing folklore now.

In the end, it is just another match and nothing will change even if India doesn't win. It would neither be a tragedy nor the end of the road for the two protagonists as six matches would be there to make an atonement.

But if India happens to win like the previous seven occasions, it gives everyone a reason to smile, some hope and belief.

India's seven-star record against Pakistan in 50-over World Cup

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The cricketing relation between India and Pakistan is, perhaps, the most bizarre in the long history of the sport. At once, it is a force of unity and a sharp-edged exclusionary tool between the two nations, which are madly in love with cricket.

Those idiosyncrasies do not get a clearer reflection anywhere else than in the 50-over World Cup, where India enjoy a 7-0 edge over Pakistan in the ODI World Cup.

But on the grandest stage where India and Pakistan, not just cricketers but fans too, strive to outdo each other, the moments too carry as much importance as the numbers.

The cricket rivalry between the neighbours started in 1952 when Abdulkar Kardar-led Pakistan stepped on to the Indian soil for a five-match Test series, but their more storied World Cup battles have a relatively recent birth in 1992. India took on Pakistan in the fabled Sydney Cricket Ground, and emerged

a 43-run winner. A precociously talented 19-year-old Sachin Tendulkar made a 54 off 62 balls, a precursor to his many knocks that would hurt Pakistan in the future in the World Cup and elsewhere.

India made 216 for 7 and then bundled out the opposition for 173 in 48.1 overs, with Kapil Dev, J Srinath and Manoj Prabhakar taking two wickets each.

But the irrepressible Javed Miandad gave the moment of the match when he aped Indian wicketkeeper Kiran More, jumping up and down.

Four years down the line, Pakistan started the quarterfinals in Bengaluru on the backfoot in the absence of injured Wasim Akram, which later mothballed into allegations of more serious nature.

After Navjot Singh Sidhu's 93, India found late wind through Ajay Jadeja's blitz against Waqar Younis and the hosts posted 287 for 8.

Pacer Venkatesh Prasad produced a moment during Pakistan's chase that now occupies a prime place in the World Cup Hall of Fame.



Aamir Sohail bludgeoned a boundary through the covers, and the Pakistan opener rather impudently gestured to Prasad indicating more punishment.

But Prasad rattled the stumps in the very next ball to give a ferocious send off to Sohail. From that point, Pakistan could not get going and were restricted to 248 for 9.

Much later, a question was posed to Prasad as to what he had told Sohail on that heated Bengaluru evening. He chuckled merrily before giving a cheeky reply: "You can't print that."

Emotion of a different kind was enveloped both the nations when they faced off in Manchester in 1999. The match happened behind the looming shadow of the Kargil War.

The Indian and Pakistani fans did not want to settle for anything else than a victory. But the players from either side did not succumb to the fervent nationalistic mood, and produced an uneventful game of cricket.

After fifties by Rahul Dravid and Mohammed Azharuddin guided India to 227 for 6, Prasad once again emerged the star performer for India.

The Karnataka man took 5 for 27 to wreck Pakistan innings which eventually ended at 180 in 45.3 overs. There was no single fifty in their essay.

By the time the 2003 World Cup arrived, Tendulkar's genius was in full bloom. He did not make much of an impact in the 1996 and 1999 events.

But at Centurion, the Mumbaier waded into Pakistan pace trio of Akram, Shoaib Akhtar and Younis with a legion of sparkling shots - none brighter in memory than that upper cut off Akhtar which sailed for a six over third man.

Tendulkar would have been out on 32 but Abdul Razzaq was woefully out of

position to snatch an aerial offering by the master batter.

It also prompted Akram to ask that now-famous question to Razzaq: 'Tujhe pata hein kiska catch choda hein?' (Do you know whose catch you dropped?). Saeed Anwar had made a creamy 101 in Pakistan's 273 for 7, but Tendulkar's 98 off 75 balls overshadowed that comfortably. Yuvraj Singh also chipped with an unbeaten 50 in India's six-wicket win.

The two protagonists did not meet each other in the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies, crashing out in the league stage itself.

In 2011, the stakes were at its peak for India in the semifinal at Mohali. Tendulkar, who else that could be, produced another fine innings but a vastly different one from his ebullient gem from eight years ago.

Tendulkar had past his prime then, but playing in his last World Cup, the maestro scratched around to make a mind-over-body 85, in which he was dropped four times.