

OPINION 6
HAMAS' RESOLVE MAY
SURVIVE IDF ONSLAUGHT

NATION 4
PLANS AFOOT TO SEND
INDIAN ON MOON BY 2040

MONEY 10
MARKETS REBOUND
AFTER THREE DAYS OF FALL

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 18, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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NZ AIMS TO KEEP
THEIR UNBEATEN
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12 SPORT

Nation Awards its Artists

National Awards for Indian Cinema

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award upon famous actor Waheeda Rehman. She became the eighth woman artiste to receive the award, the highest recognition in the field of Indian cinema. The 85-year-old actor dedicated it to her “dear film industry” and its various departments.

The President presented the award to Rehman during the 69th National Film Awards ceremony, held at Vigyan Bhawan. The veteran, who received a standing ovation from the A-list gathering as she walked to the stage, said filmmaking is a collaborative process.

“I feel very honoured and humbled... But whatever I have achieved today, it is because of my dear film industry. Luckily, I got to work with top directors, producers, filmmakers, technicians, writers, dialogue writers, music directors and musicians,” Rehman said in her acceptance speech.

“I got a lot of support, respect and love from them,” she said, also crediting the make-up artists, hair and costume designers.

“...Which is why I am sharing this award with all the departments of the film industry. They gave me a lot of respect, support and love from the



President Droupadi Murmu after presenting the Dadasaheb Phalke Award to actor Waheeda Rehman during the 69th National Film Awards at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday

very beginning. A film is not made by just one person, we need each other,” she added. President Murmu praised Rehman for championing women empowerment through her roles and life.

“I am elated to honour Waheeda Rehman ji with Dadasaheb Phalke award. I congratulate Waheeda ji. With her art and personality, she has reached on top in the film industry. She has made a name for herself as a woman of dignity, confidence and original-

ity in her personal life too,” the President said. Murmu also spoke about how Rehman refused to change her name as a newcomer in the film industry when it was common for actors to opt for a different screen name.

“In her movies, she played roles of women who broke shackles. Waheeda ji has set the example that women have to take the initiative when it comes to women empowerment,” she added.

Rehman was selected for the

prestigious honour by a five members jury comprising close friend and last year's Dadasaheb awardee Asha Parekh, actors Chiranjeevi, Paresh Rawal, Prosenjit Chatterjee and filmmaker Shekhar Kapur.

The actor made her debut in Hindi films opposite Dev Anand in Guru Dutt's 1956 film “CID” and went on to build a stellar career of over five decades, including classics “Pyasa”, “Kaagaz ke Phool” and “Chaudhvin Ka Chand”,

“Guide” as well as later hits such as “Kabhi Kabhie” and “Khamoshi”.

The announcement of the Dadasaheb Phalke honour coincided with the birth centenary of her “Guide” and “CID” co-star Dev Anand on September 26, 2023.

Rehman, who forayed in cinema with the 1955 Telugu films “Rojulu Maraayi” and “Jayasimha”, has worked in more than 90 films across languages. In the 2000s, she appeared in “Om Jai Jagdish”, “Rang De Basanti”, “Delhi-6” and “The Song of Scorpions”. Film actor producer Devika Rani was the first Dadasaheb Phalke awardee. Other female artists to have received the honour are Sulochana, Kanan Devi, Durga Khote, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle and Asha Parekh.

Alia Bhatt made a fashion statement at the awards ceremony by repeating her ivory wedding saree as she attended the ceremony with actor husband Ranbir Kapoor. Alia won the best actress National Film Award for her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's “Gangubai Kathiawadi”.

Alia shared the best actress award with Kriti Sanon, who also wore a ivory saree. Kriti is receiving the award for her work in Hindi film “Mimi” while her co-star Pankaj Tripathi won the best supporting actor award for his role in the film.

SC says No to same sex marriage

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday unanimously refused to accord legal recognition to same sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, ruling that it is within Parliament's ambit to change the law for validating such union.

The top court, however, recognised equal rights for queer people and their protection, while calling for sensitisation of the general public so they don't face discrimination.

The apex court, while passing four separate verdicts, was unanimous in holding that there is “no unqualified right” to marriage, and same sex couples can't claim it as a fundamental right under the Constitution.

The bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud was critical of the Centre's stand that the pleas for legal validation of same sex marriage was reflective of an urban elitist concept.

Queerness is neither an urban nor an elite concept or characteristic, said the apex court, which pronounced the verdicts on 21 petitions seeking legal sanction for same sex marriages.

It, however, differed on certain aspects, especially on the applicability of adoption rules for queer couples.

The five judges bench comprising the CJJ, and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, S Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha concurred on the main issue

that the court can't accord legal validation to same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, and said the task has to be performed by Parliament.

However, Justices Bhat, Kohli and Narasimha, in two separate judgments, differed with the CJJ and Justice Kaul on certain legal aspects.

The CJJ said adoption regulations are held to be void as they are discriminatory towards queer people and denied them the right to adopt as a couple. Differing with the CJJ's opinion, Justice Bhat held that just because queer couples are not allowed to adopt a child does not mean that the regulations are void.

The LGBTQIA++ persons, who had won a major legal battle in 2018 in the Supreme Court which decriminalised consensual gay sex, had moved the apex court seeking validation of same-sex marriage and consequential reliefs such as rights to adoption, enrolment as parents in schools, opening of bank accounts and availing succession and insurance benefits. However, the SC left all these for Parliament to decide. The CJJ, whose views were supported by Justice Kaul in a separate verdict, recorded the Centre's submission that it will set up a committee headed by the cabinet secretary to examine the administrative steps that could be taken for addressing “genuine humane concerns” of same-sex couples without going into the issue of legalising their marriage.

The CJJ said the court can't make law but only interpret it and it is for Parliament to change the Special Marriage Act. Agreeing with the views of the CJJ and Justice Kaul, Justice Bhat said the Constitution does not grant a fundamental right to marry. At the outset, Justice Chandrachud said there are four judgments — by himself, Justices Kaul, Bhat and Narasimha — in the matter. Directing the Centre, states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure the queer community is not discriminated against, the CJJ said queer is a natural phenomenon known for ages and is neither urban nor elitist. Justice Kaul said he agrees with the CJJ on grant of certain rights to queer couples.

“Non-heterosexual and heterosexual unions must be seen as both sides of the same coin,” Justice Kaul said, adding legal recognition of non-heterosexual unions is a step towards marriage equality.

The CJJ said it is for Parliament to decide whether there is a need for a change in the Special Marriage Act regime. “This court can't make law. It can only interpret it and give effect to it,” he said.

While reading out the operative portion of his verdict, Justice Chandrachud directed the Centre, States and UTs to take steps to sensitise the public about the rights of queer people and ensure that sex reassignment surgeries are not performed on inter-sex children at an age they cannot fully comprehend the consequences.

TMC silent on its Party MP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress continues to remain tightlipped on the cash-for-queries charges brought against its MP Mahua Moitra with some senior leaders privately communicating party supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's views that she should be left to “clean the mess she has created, if at all she has created it”.

And as a measure to do so, Moitra on Tuesday filed a defamation suit against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who had written letters to two Union Ministers and Speaker Om Birla charging her with accepting bribes from one business conglomerate in lieu of asking questions against its rival group: In this case the Adanis.

A senior party leader and a State Cabinet Minister said all the party leaders were expected to follow the “austere lifestyle and valued principles of Mamata,” and if anyone “deviates” from that then “it is for that person to explain her

conduct... the party will not take any responsibility”.

Earlier Dubey had alleged that Moitra had taken bribes from a business house to ask questions in the Lok Sabha against its rival the Adani group. Dubey claimed “if the claims are found to be true,” then it “constitutes a serious criminal breach of trust as well as a violation of India's national security”.

The TMC MP, however, put up a brave front saying she is ready for any kind of probe and iterating that all the allegations leveled against her were malicious and untrue. The Speaker is known to have referred the matter to the Ethics Committee.

Moitra on Tuesday filed a defamation case against BJP Dubey before the Delhi High Court. A Supreme Court advocate has also been made a party in the suit.

The reason behind the top TMC leadership distancing itself from the Moitra case, or in the least not openly backing her are three-fold, insiders say.

Firstly, as a straight-talker, Moitra has often earned the wrath of senior TMC leaders most of whom have no sympathy for her now.

Even party supremo Mamata has on a couple of occasions rebuked her for crossing swords with other leaders or their supporters.

Secondly, the Chief Minister who is desperate to showcase some investment in Bengal post her Singur movement that drove away the Nano car factory of the Tata Motors from the State during the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee regime is not willing to enter into an issue where the Adanis are involved.

“Remember the Adani group has offered to construct a deep sea port at Tajpur in East Midnapore district,” a senior Bengal Minister said, adding Moitra had gone too far across asking questions against them in her bid to politically corner the BJP.

“If Mamata is not happy with her on certain issues this is perhaps the one of them,” said the TMC leader, adding the

TMC has privately conveyed to the Adanis that Moitra's stance would not reflect on what the TMC thought about the group.

And finally when a number of its senior leaders are already in jail in connection with recruitment, coal and cattle scams the Bengal ruling outfit does not want to get embroiled in more number of such issues “particularly when Moitra is not a mass leader and a dispensable leader”, a TMC sympathiser and a political analyst said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred the “bribe-for-query” complaint made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against Moitra to the Ethics Committee of the lower House.

Dubey alleges that Moitra accepted “bribes” from a businessman in exchange for posing questions in Parliament. He has urged Birla to establish an “inquiry committee” to thoroughly investigate these accusations. The Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha is presided over by BJP member Vinod Kumar Sonkar.



Netherlands captain Scott Edwards plays a shot during the ICC Men Cricket World Cup 2023 match between South Africa and Netherlands at HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on Tuesday

Sabarimala continues to plead

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Sabarimala, the holy shrine of Lord Ayyappa, nestled amid the jungles in the Western Ghats, is back in the news and is expected to stir up a hornets' nest, even as the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is getting ready to hear the plea demanding the restoration of the ban on women's entry into the temple.

Adding to the woes of Lord Ayyappa devotees is the demand by a section of MLAs and MPs of Kerala, belonging to a particular community, that the Centre should take up the task of laying a railway track to Sabarimala ostensibly to facilitate the transportation of cannabis from the Western Ghats to the rest of the State. The demand for women's entry to the shrine has been made by Ranga Hari, former All India Baudhik Pramukh of the RSS, the organisation that spear-

headed the agitation against the entry of women in the age group of 10 to 50 into the shrine.

“Off with Outgrown Customs”, authored by Hari (93), states that reformation is inevitable in Hindu society. “Traditionalists have always opposed reformers, and it is a human phenomenon in human society. The great Indian poet Kalidasa has said that nothing is good only because it is old and nothing is bad only because it is new,” Hari writes, quoting from Malaavikagnimithram, a play by Kalidasa.

Hari has also quoted Malayalam's mystic poet Kumaran Asan, who exhorted the society to reform and change the rules. “Else those very rules will be your downfall,” the author has quoted Kumaran Asan's explosive poem Duravastha written immediately after the Mappila Rebellion of 1922.

The nonagenarian has called for the extension of the darshan period of Sabarimala from the present three months to a year-round event. “Sabarimala is a global Hindu pilgrimage Centre. Hence we have to consider the status of Hindu women globally, their psyche, knowledge, finance, inquisitiveness, scientific temper, jobs, etc. Today's woman is an entirely different person. Indian women have more adherence to things religion, and culture... Though both men and women have gone through a westernised public instruction system, it is the woman who transforms India into Bharat; it is the man who makes Bharat, India,” Hari has written, and he calls for the establishment of a casteless and classless Hindu society in the country.

To substantiate his arguments, he draws the attention of the Hindus towards temples in Mauritius, Trinidad, Myanmar,

and Singapore. Hari points out in his book that though there are Hindus in these countries,



there is no caste or caste-related discrimination. The custom in Sabarimala,

which was in vogue from time immemorial, was not to allow women to worship in the temple, citing that the presiding deity at Sabarimala was an eternal Brahmachari.

The apex court had passed a landmark judgment on September 28, 2018, in which it allowed the entry of women inside the Sabarimala Temple. The petitioners, Indian Young Lawyers Association, had contended that denial of permission to women for worshipping in the temple was violative of the Right to Equality and liberty. The association argued that the custom violates the Right to Equality under Article 14 since it is “derogatory to the dignity of women.”

Article 25 of the Constitution states that “all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and promote religion.” The exclusion of female worshippers was a vio-

lation of such rights.

The verdict was pronounced by a Bench consisting of the then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justices Rohinton Nariman, DY Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra, and AM Khanwilkar. Following the Supreme Court verdict, the Kerala Government went all out to ensure the entry of women into the temple. Despite a massive agitation staged by hundreds of thousands of devotees across the State and the resistance under the leadership of Valsan Thillankeri, the top RSS leaders in the State, the Kerala Police ferried women activists to the shrine, masquerading them as women cops. Fatima and Bindu Ammini, the women activists who made it to the shrine, are Maoists.

Valsan Thillankeri, who spearheaded the agitation against the Kerala Government's move to allow women into the shrine, told *The Pioneer* that there

was no change in the stance of the RSS. “The Sangh as well as the women themselves are unanimous in their opposition to women entering the holy shrine. What Hari has written are his personal views,” said Thillankeri.

The book, written in Malayalam, has been translated into English by eminent journalist and author Rama Chandran. Many scholars with whom *The Pioneer* spoke expressed their anguish over the views of Hari. “It is an age-old custom and tradition, and there is a scientific reason behind the decision to ban women devotees. A pilgrimage to Sabarimala itself is a ritual that needs stringent regimen,” said Unnikrishnan Panicker, a Vedic scholar in Kerala's Parappanangadi. Many lives have been lost in police action on devotees who had thronged the shrine in 2018 demanding a ban on women.

Modi holds virtual meeting with Google CEO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Opposition parties INDIA Bloc expressed their displeasure to the social media platforms Facebook and WhatsApp, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday held a virtual meeting with Google CEO Sundar Pichai. Pichai thanked Modi for a “terrific” meeting to discuss Google’s ongoing commitment to India. “Thank you, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for the terrific meeting today to discuss Google’s ongoing commitment to India, and how we are expanding our operations, leveraging AI, and increasing our partnerships,” Pichai wrote on social media. Modi virtually interacted with the CEO of Google and Alphabet, Sundar Pichai, earlier on October 16. During the interaction, Modi and Pichai discussed Google’s plan to participate in expanding the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in India. Prime Minister appreciated Google’s partnership with HP to manufacture Chromebooks in India. Prime Minister acknowledged Google’s 100 languages initiative and encouraged



efforts to make AI tools available in Indian Languages. He also encouraged Google to work on AI tools for Good Governance, according to the Prime Minister’s Office statement. Prime Minister welcomed Google’s plans to open its global fintech operations centre at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in Gandhinagar. Pichai informed the Prime

Minister regarding Google’s plans to improve financial inclusion in India by leveraging the strength and reach of GPay and UPI. He also emphasised Google’s commitment to contribute to the development trajectory of India, the release said. Prime Minister also invited Google to contribute to the upcoming Global Partnership on AI Summit, which will

be hosted by India in December 2023 in New Delhi, it added. Last week Opposition coalition led by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge had written to Pichai and the letter addressed to CEO of Meta Mark Zuckerberg and CEO of Google (Alphabet) Sundar Pichai was signed by all top Opposition leaders including Rahul Gandhi, Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav, Uddhav Thackeray, Derek O’Brien and Omar Abdullah amongst others. The Opposition charged the social media platforms of blatant partisanship and bias towards one political formation by a private foreign company which is tantamount to interfering in India’s democracy. “We are writing on behalf of the India National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), an alliance of 28 political parties in India that represent the combined Opposition coalition. We are the ruling alliance in 11 states and represent nearly half of all Indian voters. You may be aware of the recent exposes by the Washington Post newspaper about the role of your social media platforms,” said the Opposition letter last Thursday.

Ancient Jammu temple damaged in lightning strike

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A portion of the ancient Ranbireswar temple, built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1883, was flattened after being struck by lightning amid heavy rains on Tuesday morning. No loss of life or any other injury to devotees was reported from the temple premises. According to Mahant of the Ranbireswar temple, the incident took place around 9.30 am. At least three devotees were around and they immediately ran to safety as the ancient structure collapsed amid lightning and thunder. The temple is located in the heart of the old city near Shalimar Road and is visited by a large number of local devotees and tourists from different parts of the country. The temple houses idols of Lord



Shiva, his consort Parvati, and his son Ganesha; a huge single-stone Shivlingam inside the main temple attracts the devotees. A huge life-size metallic Nandi made of brass sits at the entrance of the main temple which faces the main idols. The rare Ekadash Lingams made of Safatik (a special transparent white stone) were specially brought by Maharaja Ranbir Singh from Banaras. A senior officer of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) supervising the debris-clearing

operations told reporters that the first call was received by them around 9:40 a.m. on Tuesday. “We rushed our teams to the temple premises and launched the operations to clear the debris. The SDRF teams also demolished the leftover portion of the front verandah of the temple complex to clear the debris”. Ashok Kumar Sharma, secretary of the Dharmarth Trust, accompanied Ajatshatru Singh, son of Dr Karan Singh to the temple premises to supervise the operations. The temple authorities also advised the devotees to stay away from the temple premises till the time the security audit is completed and necessary repair works are carried out. Mayor of the Jammu Municipal Corporation Rajinder Sharma also visited the temple premises to take stock of the rescue operations.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mrs. Meena Susta is the owner of Entire Ground Floor, without roof rights, Baidi Tower Property Bearing Municipal No. W2-14C, area measuring 200 Sq. Yds., area of Village Baidi Nagar, situated in the Colony known as Manohar Park, New Delhi. The said property, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 04.11.2013, Registration No. 5084, executed by Mrs. Kiran Mittal & Mrs. Nishi Narwala, who purchased the said floor from (i) Mr. Ranbir Singh, (ii) Mrs. Manjeet Kaur, (iii) (a) S. Dhanraj Singh, (b) S. Mahesh Singh, (c) Mrs. Gulsaran Kaur, (d) Mrs. Rajender Kaur, (e) Mrs. Rajender Kaur for self & a general attorney of her sister Mrs. Manjeet Kaur (f) Mrs. Manjeet Kaur, (g) Mrs. Shobhi Sharma legal heirs of their deceased parents (not acknowledged sale certificates) and death certificate stating legal heirs of Late. Anoop Singh, Late Jagdish Kaur, Late Jaswant Singh, Late Surjit Kaur, Late Sandeep Kaur, Late Anoop Singh, all persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing documents. If anyone has already carried out or the being carries out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 01 days of the present.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Chander Bhan who is owner of the House No. 251B/4 New and Old No. 16, Unique Property ID no.93C3942C, area measuring 110 Sq. Yds. (22'x45'), covered area 700 sq. ft., situated at revenue estate of Village Gurgaon, known as Ram Nagar, Tehsil and District Gurgaon, Haryana and acquired from Mr. Om Prakash, Mr. Gobind Lal & Mrs. Asha Rani vide Relinquishment Deed dated 19.02.2021, duly registered vide Doc. No. 6145, on 19.02.2021, at SRO-Gurgaon; and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Pratham Finance Ltd., dated 08.02.2021, dated 15.03.1987, duly registered vide Doc. No. 2205, on 15.03.1987, at SRO-Gurgaon. Haryana and the same are available to comply the requirements of BANKING/BS, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim/lien/interest/charge against the said property or the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any claim, if any, of such persons will be considered to have been waived and/or, abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This Notice is hereby given to general public that Mr. Ganesh Thapa and Mr. Laxman who claimed to be owner and in possession of the Property bearing No. 28, area measuring 53 sq. yds., out of Chhabra No. 869, situated at Vrindavan Garden Extn., in the area of Village Pasasunda, Sahibabad, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, (U.P.), by virtue of Surviving Member Certificate dated 07.12.2002 issued by Concerned SDM, after decessed Mrs. Raj Kumari. Now Mr. Ganesh Thapa and Mr. Laxman are selling said property to Koushal Thakur and same approached Jans Small Finance Bank Limited for financial assistance and therefore shall be mortgaged with the said Bank. We give this public notice that if any person having any claim/lien/interest/charge against the ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property or any part of the said property in favour of Jans Small Finance Bank Limited, please request to notify the same in writing to undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mention below within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any claim, if any, of such persons will be considered to have been waived and/or, abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof.

PUBLIC NOTICE
We, (i) J.N Kapoor (Joginder Nath Kapoor) S/o Shri Sant Lal Kapoor and (ii) Smt. Sunita Kapoor W/o Shri J.N. Kapoor Both Residents of D-18, Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare. That we are owner of the property No. D-18, land measuring area 180 sq. yds., situated at Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092 and Industrial Plot/Shed Bearing No.88, situated at Block - A, Sector - 63, Nodia U/P - 201301 stands in the Name of M/S Packers India (Partnership Firm). We have de-barred our sons namely (i) Mr. Ashish Kapoor and (ii) Mr. Anoop Kapoor, their wives and their children/family members from our all moveable and immovable properties including above mentioned properties due to their mis-behavior, quarrel and non cooperative behavior towards us.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME

I, Manish Kumar S/o Shri Ramakant R/o H. No.-681, Near Golakdharm Temple, Bijwasan New Delhi-110061, Declare that my name has wrongly mentioned in my daughter Kiran Kumari’s school record as Mohan but my correct name is Manish Kumar, hence Mohan and Manish Kumar are both one and same person.

PD(780)/A
I am Jawahar Lal S/o Om Parkash R/o : E-16/1652, Street No.20, Bapa Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, I have changed my minor son’s name Prateek Kumar to Paarth Kumar for all purpose in future.

PD(781)/A
I, Wanti Devi W/o Sh. Avtar Chand R/o F - 27/160, Gali No.8, Ganesh Nagar, Shakarpur, Delhi - 92 have changed my name from Dhanwanti to Wanti Devi for all future Purposes. Wanti devi and Dhanwanti both are same and one person.

PD(782)/A

Hardcore Maoist held from Gadchiroli forest

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a severe blow to the supply chain of naxalites operating in north-eastern Maharashtra, the C-60 commandos of the Anti-Naxal Squad (ANS) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CPRF) personnel on Tuesday arrested a hard-core Maoist from Jajawadi-Doddur forest area in Gadchiroli district of eastern Maharashtra. Acting on intelligence inputs, a joint team of C-60 commandos and CPRF’s 191 battalion zeroed in on and arrested hardcore Maoist named Messo Gillu Kawado (50), an Area Committee Member (ACM) associated with Maad Supply Team, when he was roaming around suspiciously in the Jajawandi-Doddur forest area. A resident of Rekhhabhatl from Etapalli taluka of Gadchiroli district, Messo Kawado was wanted in murder of two village Patils in 2021 and 2022, burning of a mobile tower at Tadbaili in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh and two incidents of exchange of fire with C-60 commandos of the Gadchiroli police. He was carrying a cash prize of Rs 6 lakh announced by the Maharashtra government on his head. For a few years prior to 2017, Messo Kawado has been engaged in the supply of logistics to the Maoists operating in Gadchiroli district and the neighbouring areas of Chhattisgarh and providing information to the local Maoist leaders about the arrival of police into the naxalite-infested forests. In 2017, Messo Kawado was formally recruited as a member in Supply team and he worked with the team until 2023. In 2023, he was promoted to the rank of ACM.

Messo Kawado was personally involved in an exchange fire with C-60 police commandos that took place in the forest area of Hikker area in eastern Maharashtra. He has been booked under sections 307, 353, 143, 148, 149, 120 (B) of IPC, 3/25, 5/27 of Indian Armed Act, 3, 4 of Indian Explosive Act, 135 Maharashtra Police Act, and 13, 16, 18 (A) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Messo Kawdo is the second hardcore Maoist leader arrested by the C-60 commandos of the Gadchiroli within the last four days. Earlier, Maoist Divisional commander (DVC) Chainuram alias Sukku Watte Korsa had been arrested on October 14. Messo Kawdo used to work with DVC Chainuram. “Today’s arrest is significant considering that Messo Kawdo was the ACM of the Maad Supply Team and was involved in the supply of explosives, various gadgets and daily essentials to the Maoists. He used to work alongside DVC Chainuram whom we arrested on Saturday last. With these two arrests, we have dealt a severe blow has been dealt to the Supply Chain of the Maoists operating in the forests of Gadchiroli district,” a senior ANS official of the Gadchiroli police said. The joint operation was undertaken under the guidance of Neelotpal, Superintendent of Police, Gadchiroli, Anuj Tare, Additional Superintendent of Police (Ops.), Kumar Chintna, Additional Superintendent of Police (Admin.) Yatish Deshmukh, Additional Superintendent of Police, Aheri and leadership of Bapurao Dadas, SDPO Hedri and Officer Commanding E/191 Mohit Kumar AC.

Govt urged to upgrade role of private security personnel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping in mind the recent developments in Israel, the Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) has urged the Centre to upgrade the role of private security personnel to “Para Police” by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. “There are over one crore private security professionals employed in India to protect human and corporate assets. We are the largest security

workforce in the World. It is the time to upgrade the role of private security to “Para Police” by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had already developed international standards for private security. These highly trained security professionals can be given new role in the internal security to ensure safe and secure environment,” said Kunwar Vikram Singh, Chairman, CAPSI, the apex body of the private security

industry. In a statement Singh said the Ministry of Home Affairs should consider grading private security guards and supervisors to the status of “Para Police” by upskilling them to effectively perform para police duties which would significantly increase overall security personnel available for maintaining law and order in the country. This could lead to a stronger and more visible security presence, instilling a sense of safety and deterrence, he added. Stating at the recent develop-

ments in Israel underscore the urgency for India to adopt a new “national security culture”, Singh said by investing in research, upgrading our infrastructure, promoting inclusive dialogues, and fostering public awareness, the private security industry can proactively address emerging threats and ensure the safety and security of our nation and its citizens. He further said that the ongoing crisis in Israel serves as a stark reminder of the ever-present threat to global peace and stability.

Centre gearing up for enhanced zoonotic diseases surveillance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With outbreaks of zoonotic diseases like Nipah, rabies, Zika, African swine fever and Lumpy Skin diseases in cattle and the constant threat of Avian Influenza in various pockets in the country, the Centre is gearing up for enhanced zoonotic diseases surveillance at the human-wildlife interface. Union Health Secretary Sudarshan Pant on Tuesday flagged the disturbing scenario saying that 75 per cent of newly emerging infectious diseases that have affected people over the last three decades are zoonotic in nature. Pant was addressing the National Conclave on “Augmented Zoonotic Diseases Surveillance at Human -

Wildlife Interface” and National Conclave for Endorsement of “National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming” to Stakeholders here. Pant was echoing the views of the World Health Organization (WHO) that around one billion cases and millions of deaths each year are the result of zoonoses, in which pathogens jump from vertebrate animals to humans. And of the 30 novel human viruses that have been identified in the last three decades, a massive 75% originated in other animals. In fact, recognizing the gravity of the surging zoonotic disease in India, the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors early this year approved an US\$2 million loan to India towards the adoption of global best practices for animal

health management to prevent, detect, and respond to endemic zoonotic, transboundary, and emerging infectious diseases. Speaking on the latest occurrences of such diseases, Pant said that a better understanding of specific drivers and mechanisms of zoonotic disease is crucial to preparing for future disease outbreak. Underlining the impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, he said that “it is important to address diseases from both human and animal perspective as most emerging infectious diseases are a result of changing human-animal interface and their shared environment. This interconnectedness highlighted the need for a One Health approach, which helps in leveraging the complementarity and strengths that is

inherent in each sector and devise integrated, robust and agile response systems.” Besides the emergence of zoonotic diseases, Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) has also emerged as a significant threat globally. Pant stated that “the rapid spread of multi-drug resistant bacteria and lack of new antibiotics to treat infections caused by newer & more potent antimicrobial agents like Carbapenems pose a rapidly increasing threat to human health which urgently needs to be addressed.” Similarly, food borne diseases which can be caused by poor hygiene, availability of antimicrobials, environmental contamination, and animal husbandry malpractices on farms, such as misuse of antibiotics also constitute a significant threat, he further stated.

Kejriwal meets Asian Games medallist Punia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday met wrestler Deepak Punia who won a silver medal in the recent Asian Games and said the government would honour the medal-winning athletes from the national capital. Kejriwal said the wrestler “brought glory to our country and Delhi with his splendid performance. Congratulations on winning the silver medal in the Asian Games and best wishes for his future.” “Delhi Government will soon honour Delhi’s medal winning athletes of Asian Games,” he added. He further stated that the Delhi government is working to “nurture athletes’ talent” by providing financial assistance under the Play and Progress, and Mission Excellence schemes. “By strengthening sports infrastructure, we have developed new sports complexes in Najafgarh, Kair, Prahladpur, and synthetic court in Pooth Kalan,” he said. Thanking the chief minister, Punia said the facilities provided by the Delhi government helped them prepare well and win medals for the country. “Thanks to excellent facilities provided by Delhi government, we were able to prepare well and win medals for the country. My dream is to win gold medal for India, and I am working diligently for it,” Punia said.

Nationwide survey suggests carbon neutral measures for hospitals

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian healthcare sector was responsible for more than 9% of all India’s commercial electricity consumption in 2019-20 fiscal, a first-of-its-kind nationwide government survey of over 600 health institutions across the States has said and suggested a wide-ranging carbon neutral measures including mandating of green building bye-laws among others to make the hospitals climate-smart to help achieve the country’s net Zero target by 2070. Thousands of hospitals, health centers and entire health systems around the world are already implementing climate-smart health care strategies. Titled “Towards Climate-Smart Hospitals: Insights From A National

Hospital Energy Consumption Survey” it found that the penetration of on-site solar PV is 17 per cent in private and 11 per cent in public hospitals. In public hospitals the maintenance of the solar PV plant was not effectively conducted even as some of the healthcare facilities surveyed indicated that the solar PV plants’ components needed detailed repairing and replacement. It was also observed that the healthcare facilities are not using solar PV systems as a source for backup and are relying only on diesel generators during the hours of power supply failure to provide critical services. Under the aegis of the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH), the exercise in 18 states with diverse climate

zones was conducted to understand the quantity and quality of energy consumption in different types of healthcare facilities. It noted that there was a wide variation in hospital-level energy intensities (measured in Energy Performance Index (EPI) and Annual Energy Use per Bed (AEUB) between and within hospital typologies. “The large EPI diversity can be attributed to factors related to energy efficiency such as the energy efficiency of end-use equipment/appliances and behavioural energy efficiency, and factors unrelated to energy efficiency such as differences in air-conditioned areas, levels of medical services provided, hours of active use, the climate zone, the degree of outsourcing of services, and patient privacy.” The survey spanning over two years

has been conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry with technical support from Centre for Chronic Disease Control (CCDC) and Alliance for an Energy Efficiency Economy (AEEE). The survey pointed to several differences in end-use uptake and utilisation pathways between the public and private healthcare facilities. “For instance, while heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) use and type depended on the size and level of healthcare in the public health system, (sub-centers and health and wellness centres mostly shown absence of HVAC) there is still immense scope to promote informed decisions in procurement of energy-efficient heating and cooling systems,” it said.

Arrested doctor from Malwani booked in fourth rape case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a disturbing development, an incarcerated doctor from Malad’s Malwani area in north Mumbai has been booked in the fourth rape case within a span of just three weeks. Identifying the alleged “serial rapist” as Dr Yogesh Bhanushali, the police said that he had been arrested earlier after two alleged cases of rape were registered against him on September 27 and October 3. The third offence of sexual assault was registered against Dr Bhanushali on October 15, while the accused doctor was booked in a fourth case of rape on Monday (October 16). Dr Bhanushali is currently in judicial custody in

two cases. “The accused doctor’s judicial custody ends tomorrow (October 18). After that, we will re-arrest him in two more rape cases,” senior police inspector Chimaji Aadhaw of the Malwani police station, who is investigating the cases against the accused doctor said. Notwithstanding the three latest rape cases, Dr Bhanushali has a track record of alleged sexual misconduct in the past as well. He had been also booked by the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Nagar Police Station at Govandi in north-east Mumbai, under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2020, when he had misbehaved in a Covid-19 centre with a patient. The police said that the accused doctor has been adopting the same modus operandi to lure women

into relationships through social media with the promises and inviting them to his home to meet the other family members who lived a lavish lifestyle. After inviting a lady home and introducing them to his family, he would allegedly take her to his private room upstairs and then convince the woman to change hairstyle and clothes to go to a pub, later force himself on her, and even coax them into getting tattoos done on private parts. After winning the victim woman’s heart, the accused doctor would continue the relationship for some time, extract money and jewellery from her under threats of making her intimate pictures viral, ditch her mid way and go after the next victim woman.

Defence Ministry signs contract for construction of ship for ICG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ministry of Defence on Tuesday signed a contract here for the construction of one training ship for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai at a cost of Rs 310 crore under the Buy (Indian- IIDDM) category. This is the first dedicated training platform with integral helicopter capabilities that will provide basic sea training to 70 Coast Guard and other international under-trainee officers to prepare these budding mariners on the multi-dimensional maritime aspects of Coast Guard life, officials said. This training ship with advanced and modern high-tech surveillance and monitoring systems will provide profound insight and expertise to the ICG cadets on the challenges at sea while ensuring the security of coastline and offshore assets. The majority of equipment and systems will be sourced from indigenous manufacturers, including MSMEs. The project envisages to generate significant employment over a period of three years. While meeting the objectives of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’, the contract would also boost the indigenous shipbuilding capability and help in bolstering maritime economic capabilities.

Vehicle aggregator policy approved to clean air

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major decision aiming to cut down air pollution in the national Capital, the Arvind Kejriwal Government has approved a policy “the Delhi Motor Vehicle Aggregator and Delivery Service Provider Scheme 2023”, mandating a time-bound transition of commercial vehicle fleets of aggregators, delivery service providers and e-commerce entities to zero-emission electric vehicles by 2030.

This makes Delhi the first state/UT in the country and among very few cities globally which works to create a framework for regulating aggregator and delivery service-operated vehicles within the national capital. Under the scheme titled, the Delhi Motor Vehicle Aggregator and Delivery Service Provider Scheme 2023, bike taxis, which were recently banned from plying in the

city, will also make a comeback. The policy aims to move towards full electrification of all transport modes by aggregators, delivery services, and e-commerce platforms (each engaging 25 vehicles or more) by 1 April 2030. The scheme envisages a phased conversion to electric vehicle (EV) fleets in the three-wheeler and four-wheeler segment and the two-wheeler delivery service segment within the next five years. The file has been sent to the Lieutenant Governor for approval.

The scheme applies to aggregators, delivery service providers, or e-commerce entities operating within the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It will cover those with 25 or more motor vehicles (two Wheeler, three wheeler, and four wheelers excluding buses) in their fleet, who use a digital intermediary such as an app or web portal to connect



with consumers for their services. Terming it a significant milestone in Delhi's fight against pollution, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, “With this, Delhi has become the first state/UT in India, and among very few cities globally, to mandate a time-bound transition of commercial vehicle fleets of aggregators, delivery service providers and e-

commerce entities to zero-emission electric vehicles. “The scheme also paves the way for the launch of electric bike taxi services in Delhi. Delhi government is committed to take all possible measures to improve transport services for the people of Delhi, while promoting green, sustainable urban mobility,” he said.

As per the scheme, the target

Major highlights of the scheme

- The scheme mandates commercial vehicle fleets to ensure a phased conversion to electric mobility to reduce air pollution and enhance green mobility. The entire vehicle fleet of all the aggregators, delivery service providers and e-commerce entities in Delhi will go electric by 2030.
- Electric Bike Taxis: Aggregators will be permitted to operate electric vehicle-only bike taxi services, with operational guidelines outlined in the scheme.
- To enhance customer satisfaction, the scheme establishes strict standards for service quality. This includes requirements for vehicle cleanliness, driver behavior, and timely resolution of customer complaints.

- The scheme outlines compliances that are intended to enhance the public safety of customers.
- All existing or new operators must obtain a license within 90 days of the scheme's notification or before commencing operations. Licenses will be valid for five years, with annual fees applicable, and zero fees in case of electric vehicles. Additionally, a 50% rebate is provided for vehicles that are less than two years old.
- The scheme is stringent in enforcing compliance, with violations attracting monetary penalties ranging from ₹5,000 up to ₹100,000 per instance.

for introduction of EVs in new fleet for Aggregators has been set at 100% for 2-wheelers. While 3-wheelers have to achieve the target of 10% EVs in new fleet in 6 months, 50% in 2 years and 100% in 4 years. While 4-wheelers have to achieve the target of 5% EVs in the new fleet in 6 months, 50% in 3 years and 100% in 5 years. The entire fleet of all Aggregators, old and new, has

to transition to EVs by April 1, 2030. For Delivery service providers, the scheme has set the target for introduction of EVs in the new fleet of 2-wheelers and 3-wheelers at 10% in 6 months, 50% in 2 years and 100% in 4 years. While 4-wheelers have to achieve the target of 5% EVs in the new fleet in 6 months, 50% in 3 years and 100% in 5 years. The entire fleet of all Delivery

service providers, old and new, has to transition to EVs by April 1, 2030. Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said that this is the first time in India that any Aggregator scheme has defined targets for them to convert their fleet into electric vehicles, promoting green & sustainable mobility in the city. “By laying down clear guidelines for the transition to

electric vehicles and setting high standards for service quality and public safety, this scheme is poised to usher in a new era of transportation services in Delhi. We firmly believe that this scheme holds the potential to not only safeguard our environment but more significantly, enhance the well-being of the citizens of Delhi,” Gahlot said.

‘Dead’ for 20 years, former Navy employee held for triple murder

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 60-year-old ex-Navy employee who faked his death for 20 years was arrested by the Delhi Police Crime Branch for allegedly killing a relative and burning to death two labourers. He was nabbed from a house in Najafgarh. According to police, Balesh Kumar was arrested from a house in Najafgarh where he was staying with his family having changed his name to Aman Singh.

Balesh was 40 when he allegedly killed his brother-in-law, Rajesh alias Khushiram, over money in Delhi's Bawana area in 2004. He also allegedly had an illicit relationship with Rajesh's wife.

Police in 2004 arrested Balesh's brother Sundar Lal, who was also involved in Rajesh's murder, however, Balesh managed to give them a slip. According to Special Commissioner of



Police (Crime) Ravindra Yadav, Balesh, who was in a transport business then, escaped in a truck to Rajasthan. There he set his truck on fire and burned two of his workers to death. “Rajasthan Police during the course of investigation identified one of the persons as Balesh, while the other body remained unclaimed. The family members of Balesh also identified one of the bodies as

his,” Yadav said. Rajasthan Police closed the case assuming the prime suspect dead. After faking his death, Balesh fled to Punjab and managed to procure forged identity proof with the help of his family members and changed his name to Aman Singh. “He remained in touch with his wife and managed to transfer his insurance claim benefits and pension from the Indian Navy to her. Also, the truck involved in the incident

was registered in the name of his brother Mahinder Singh, who allowed him to claim the insurance. He got insurance claim for the truck into the account of his wife,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ankit Kumar said. Balesh then moved to Delhi's Najafgarh with his family and started living with them. “On a secret tip-off, we managed to nab him from his house on Monday. During the interrogation, he confessed his involvement in the murder of his relative and two labourers from Bihar,” Kumar said. The Delhi Police has informed its counterpart in Rajasthan's Jodhpur about Balesh's arrest and asked them to reopen the burnt truck case. The Delhi Police claimed that Balesh had also stolen antique items in 2000 from Delhi's Kota House and was booked for theft at Tilak Marg Police Station.

LG nods for filing corruption case against PWD engineers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sending out a strong message against corruption, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has given his assent for lodging a case under the anti-corruption law against an assistant engineer and junior engineer of the public works department (PWD) in an alleged scam related to a road construction project in 2014-15.

The approval was given despite the fact that the administrative department, PWD, had not recommended an inquiry against the duo. Giving details here on Tuesday, Raj Niwas officials said in the case of the accused Executive Engineer in the same matter, decision will be taken by the NCCSA, since he is a Group 'A' Officer. In giving his approval, the LG has gone by the findings of the Anti-Corruption Branch,



GNCTD and recommendation of the Directorate of Vigilance. Saxena also ordered action to be taken against the concerned officers of the PWD who tried to shield the accused Engineers, despite prima facie case being made out by the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) against them. Saxena accorded approval u/s 17A of Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 for registration of case against JS Chauhan, Assistant Engineer and Devi Singh, Junior Engineer, on the allegation that they released payment

to a contractor without proper verification of work done in a road construction project in south Delhi. The LG noted that on perusal of the facts and records of the case he is of the considered view that it is in the interest of justice to investigate the allegations after registering a case. The allegations are based on the complaint dated 19.05.2017, filed by Rahul Sharma, founder of an NGO- “Roads Anti-Corruption Organization”, that payments were made even as no work was done at the site of “strengthening of road and improvement of footpath, drainage system, central verge of EPDP Road (Malik Ram Issar Marg, New Delhi)” Kalkaji area, thereby causing loss to Government exchequer. The ACB, the Delhi Government after conducting preliminary enquiry has registered a complaint relating to the

aforsaid work against three PWD Engineers, viz Executive Engineer, RS Garg, Assistant Engineer, JS Chauhan and Junior Engineer, Devi Singh. The contract for the work of ₹ 6,33,69,235/-, 18.79 per cent below the estimated cost of ₹ 7,80,31,320 was awarded to M/s. M.C. Construction Co. As per PWD's material inward/MAS register, the material was procured/ received from various firms and the contractor submitted invoices of the major material i.e bitumen, but invoices of other material used in construction were not submitted by him. The 18 invoices provided by PWD on account of purchase of bitumen were verified and were found to be fake. Subsequently, the Trade and Taxes Department also imposed penalty upon the firm for filing misleading return of purchases made by the contractor firm.

Study conducted for proposal of redeveloping IP bus depot

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (DSIIDC) has conducted a financial feasibility study for the long-standing proposal of the redevelopment of the Indraprastha bus depot, suggesting that the DSIIDC should keep a 50 per cent share of the built-up area, as opposed to the existing proposal of 40 per cent.

It further said the redevelopment will be carried out at an estimated cost of ₹206 crore and a 13-storey building with a double basement for parking and other services will be constructed as part of the project. The DTC headquarters, whose building will also be rebuilt, is located adjacent to the bus depot. Constructed in 1958, the headquarters and bus depot has needed repair for a long time. The bus depot has a capacity of housing 180 buses. The depot gets submerged every monsoon, officials said. “The study suggested that the project will prove to be beneficial for the body only if they keep 50 per cent of the built-up area while the remaining is kept by the DTC.



According to the earlier proposal, the total built-up area of the building will be 12,000 square metres while the share of the DSIIDC area is 40 per cent of the built-up area for the lease period of 30 years,” a Government official said on Tuesday. The official said the study was conducted to prepare a reasonable estimation of the likely revenues, and identify risks associated with the project. “Financial advisors suggested that since it is a capital intensive project, it should not lead to losses,” the official said. The official, citing the study, said that if the DSIIDC's share of the built-up area will be equal to that of the DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation), only then can it get at least 10 per

cent interest by renting out the space it will have. “They have made these suggestions, and now we will discuss with the DTC on how to take this forward. We will tell them about the findings of the study and wait for their response,” he added. Spaces for daily maintenance as well as preventive maintenance will also be provided. At present, most of the preventive maintenance is done out of makeshift rooms with vehicle parts being docked up on one side. The redevelopment project of the bus depot and the DTC headquarters — both constructed in 1958 — has been a long-standing proposal that has not achieved fruition till now, an official said.

Atishi finds drainage system on Bawana, Narela road inadequate during inspection

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Atishi on Tuesday inspected the Bawana-Narela and Bakhtawarpur-Palla roads. During the inspection, Atishi found that the existing drainage system on the Bawana-Narela road was inadequate, leading to waterlogging on the road at several locations, and causing damage to the road. Additionally, encroachments on both sides of the road resulted in traffic issues. The minister reprimanded the officials responsible for the poor drainage system and immediately directed the desilting of the nearby drains and fixing of the outfall. She also instructed repairs to the road and drainage covers. In the second part of the inspection on the Bakhtawarpur-Palla road's initial sections, the PWD minister discovered that one side of the road had a drainage system, while the other side did not. In response, she instructed officials to explore the possibilities of creating new drains through a survey in this area. In Bakhtawarpur, due to the inadequate outfall of the exist-



ing drain in the front part of the road, the drain appeared to overflow. The Minister directed officials to quickly conduct surveys of the roads and prepare redesign plans, with a primary focus on improving drainage in the redesign plan. Additionally, she instructed the development of green belts over the drain covers at several locations. A new drain is being prepared on the other side of the road. Atishi reprimanded officials for the delay and instructed them to expedite the remaining work.

She said that along with fixing the drainage system, the road's carriageway should also be improved. The footpath should be repaired for the convenience of pedestrians, and special attention should be given to landscaping to enhance the road's beauty. The minister said, “Whether it's the posh areas of South Delhi or the remote villages of Rural Delhi, the AAP Government will make every part of the roads world-class and provide the people of Delhi with a fantastic road experience.”

Ban firecrackers, allow only CNG, e-vehicles in NCR: Rai to Centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Tuesday demanded that the Centre impose a complete ban on firecrackers and allow movement of only CNG and electric vehicles in the entire National Capital Region in a bid to curb air pollution. In a letter Rai requested the Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav to convene a joint meeting with the Environment Ministers of NCR States at the earliest so that an action plan can be prepared on the above point and the level of pollution can be reduced. Rai said the Delhi government has taken numerous steps to curb air pollution during the winter season. “But these steps will not be effective until Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh deal with the sources of pollution in the NCR region.” Stating on the matter the environment minister mentions that due to these steps, a 30 per cent reduction in pollution levels has been observed. The number of Good and Satisfactory days have risen to 200, which was only 109 in 2016



A report by independent environment think tank Centre for Science and Environment shows that 31 per cent of Delhi's pollution comes from sources within the national capital while 69 per cent is from sources in NCR States, he said. Rai demanded that the Centre convene an emergency meeting to discuss solutions to factors contributing to air pollution in the national capital. The states in the National Capital Region (NCR) should impose a complete ban on firecrackers and stubble burning in the entire region and allow only CNG and electric vehicles, the Delhi minister said. “Many industrial units in NCR states are still running on polluting fuels. They should be immediately converted to piped natural gas. The heavily polluting brick kilns running in NCR states should be asked to adopt zig-zag technology to check pollution,” he said.

Court raps police for filing chargesheet in riots case ‘half heartedly’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has come down heavily on the city police for conducting “further investigation” in a 2020 communal riots case after filing charge sheet in a “half-hearted manner” and asked the officer concerned to appear before it with a written explanation. Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala was hearing the arguments on charges against three accused in the northeast Delhi riots case, where the FIR was reg-

istered by the Gokalpuri police station. Noting that initially 25 complaints were clubbed in the case and the court in April last year had directed that only 17 complaints would be “entered” in the present case, the court said the Investigating Officer (IO) had filed a new supplementary charge sheet on May 17, 2023, for prosecuting 22 complaints. The IO's stand was based on the recording of fresh statements of some of the complainants to show that they had initially mentioned the

wrong date and time of the alleged rioting incidents at their premises, the court noted in an order passed on Monday. It said, “This is a very disturbing trend of investigation, where after the filing of a charge sheet, IO records statement at any subsequent point of time as per his wish, even without seeking any permission from the court and in defiance of laws under Section 173(8) of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).” Section 173(8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure deals with



further investigation in a case. “The lack of seriousness in the stand being taken by the pros-

ecution is well reflected in the fluctuations in the same since the beginning till date,” the

court said. It said even according to the new statements, the complainants did not claim to be eyewitnesses and while modifying the date and time of the alleged incidents, they referred to “some neighbours”. “Who were those neighbours, are not known, courtesy the half-hearted investigation done by the IO,” the court said. ASJ Pramachala said the case was earlier referred to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast district) for assessing the “IO's approach” and delay in the case.

“The supplementary charge sheet being filed by IO with forwarding from Station House Officer (SHO) and Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), taking a contrary stand as taken by them in the past, cannot be accepted without seeking clarification and explanation from the investigating agency,” the judge said. He said the court wanted to know how further investigation without taking any permission from the court was conducted, “that too in a half-hearted manner, with probably a predetermined

objective to show that all the incidents had taken place on a particular date and time”. The judge underlined that for each incident, the date and time of the occurrence cannot be based on “hearsay evidence”. “Copy of the order be sent to DCP (northeast) and it is expected that the DCP himself or some other responsible senior officer shall appear before the court with an explanation in writing,” he said. The matter has been listed on November 20 for further proceedings.

Plans afoot to send Indian on Moon by 2040

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Chandrayaan-3 successfully landing spacecraft on the south pole of the moon and setting new bar for the Indian space enterprises, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked Indian Space Organisation (ISRO) to set up an Indian Space Station by 2035 and send the first Indian to the moon by 2040. India's first human space flight-Gaganyaan- is now expected to take off in 2025, a PMO statement said after the Prime Minister held a meeting with the ISRO Chairman S Somanath here. The Gaganyaan mission entails sending two astronauts to low earth orbit. Modi's directions for future missions came during a briefing by the ISRO Chairman on the progress of the 'Gaganyaan mission', which is to have its first demonstration flight of the crew escape system on October 21, and other initiatives. During the meeting, the Prime Minister outlined the future of India's space exploration endeavours and urged scientists to work towards interplanetary missions, including a Venus



Orbiter Mission and a Mars Lander and also explore the moon in greater detail. "Building on the success of Indian space initiatives, including the recent Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya L1 missions, the Prime Minister directed that India should now aim for new and ambitious goals, including setting up the 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station' (Indian space station) by 2035 and sending first Indian to the Moon by 2040," the statement said. To realise this vision, the Department of Space will develop a roadmap for Moon explo-

ration, it said. ISRO's moon exploration plans will comprise a series of Chandrayaan missions, developing a new rocket - the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), building a new launchpad and setting up human-centric Laboratories and associated technologies. The Department of Space presented a comprehensive overview of the Gaganyaan Mission, including various technologies developed so far such as human-rated launch vehicles and system qualification. It was noted that around 20 major tests, including three

uncrewed missions of the Human Rated Launch Vehicle (HLMV3) are planned. First demonstration flight of the Crew Escape System Test Vehicle is scheduled on 21 October. Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence in India's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration. The Gaganyaan mission, which entails sending two astronauts to low earth orbit, was originally planned for launch in 2022. However, the Covid pandemic and the complexity of the mission led to delays and the first

human space flight was expected to take place in the second half of 2024. From Tuesday's meeting, it has emerged that the Gaganyaan launch will now take place in 2025. Besides Somanath, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra and other officials were present during the meeting. The meeting chaired by the Prime Minister came after India's successful soft landing near the unexplored south pole of the moon on August 23. Within 10 days of the lunar landing on September 2, India launched a spacecraft to study the Sun from a place called the Lagrange Point (L1), situated about 1.5 million kilometers from the Earth. The Aditya L-1 mission will study the solar atmosphere, solar magnetic storms, and their impact on the environment around the Earth. The Department of Space presented a comprehensive overview of the Gaganyaan Mission, including various technologies developed so far such as human-rated launch vehicles and system qualification.

Army to buy military systems to boost capabilities along LAC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further enhance its operational capabilities in border areas, including Ladakh, where tension persists at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Army has rolled out a process to procure six fast patrol boats, eight landing craft assault (LCA) and 118 integrated surveillance and targeting systems. The fast patrol boats are being procured primarily for surveillance in large water bodies, including the Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. The Army has already issued the request for information (RFI) or initial tenders for procurement of the fast patrol boats, LCAs and integrated surveillance and targeting systems, sources said here on



Tuesday. The RFI for fast patrol boats said the vessels should be "rugged and versatile so as to facilitate seamless execution of small team insertion, surveillance, reconnaissance and patrolling" and that they should be capable of operating across a varying matrix of terrain and conditions. It said the indigenously-developed boats should have a maximum speed of 29 knots (at sea state level 2) with eight people on board. The initial tender for LCAs said they are planned to be deployed for search and rescue operations in Creek area

and river basins. It said the length of the LCAs should be between 13-14 metres and maximum speed not less than 20 knots. The LCAs are generally used for ferrying troops. The last date to respond to the initial tenders for fast patrol boats as well as the LCAs is November 28. The integrated surveillance and targeting systems are being procured for use by mechanised forces in border areas. According to the RFI, the systems are being procured under the 'buy Indian' category and they must have 60 per cent indigenous content.

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/208/2022
[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.: 20741
ICICI BANK LIMITED
VS
ROHIT BERI
TO,
(1) **ROHIT BERI**
D/W/S/O- M. N. N. BERI
SON OF SHRI M.N. BERI,
R/O HOUSE NO. 1496,
SECTOR - 15, PANCHKULA,
HARYANA - 134113. PALWAL,
HARYANA- 134113.
ALSO AT- ROHIT BERI SON OF SHRI M. N. BERI, R/O MAG MAG 214/108, JUMEIRAH LAKE TOWER DUBAI, UAE - 50001
ALSO AT- ROHIT BERI S/O SHRI M. N. BERI AT SEM OWNERS, ASSOCIATION MANAGER, OFFICE 1507, TECOM, DUBAI UAE- 500001.
ALSO AT- ROHTI BERI S/O SH. M.N. BERI AT J-004, CAPITAL GATEWAY, SECTOR-111, GURUGRAM, HARYANA- 122101
(2) SANDRA RODRIGUES WIFE OF SHRI ROHIT BERI, R/O HOUSE NO. 1496, SECTOR - 15, PANCHKULA, HARYANA - 134113.
ALSO AT- SANDRA RODRIGUES WIFE OF SHRI ROHIT BERI AT MAG 214/108, JUMEIRAH LAKE TOWER DUBAI - UAE - 50001
ALSO AT- SANDRA RODRIGUES WIFE OF SHRI ROHIT BERI AT J-004, CAPITAL GATEWAY, SECTOR- 111, GURUGRAM HARYANA- 122101. GURGAON, HARYAN A- 122101
(3) M/S TASHEE LAND DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD. HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT 517A, NARAIN MANZIL, 23, BARAKHAMBA ROAD, CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI- 110001.
SUMMONS
WHEREAS, **OA/208/2022** was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on **04/10/2023**. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is about 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. 16105250/-** (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 **22/02/2024 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: 06/10/2023.
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Kamlesh Kumar Rastogi/ Poonam Rastogi/ LBFD00001565259	Cottage No-22, Markanda, "Shri Brij Vasundhara", Village Anyor Goverdhana Tehsil Distt. Mathura- 281001/ October 11, 2023	August 31, 2015 Rs. 8,67,697/-	Delhi- NCR/ Mathura

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: October 18, 2023
Place: Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Number (Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rahul/ Manju/ (24900001033 & QZJNK00004999579)	Gali No. 7, Village Bindapur, Vishwas Park, Delhi/ October 13, 2023	March 28, 2023 Rs. 15,24,724/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Sukhendu Pal/ Munmun Pal/ (196000043600 & QZGRN00005002524)	Property Bearing- F-383, Gali No.87, Plot No. 383, Kasara 111/1, Phase 3/1, Village Palam, Mahavir Enclave Part-111, Delhi/ October 13, 2023	March 28, 2023 Rs. 9,29,157/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Vinod Jha/ Saraswati Devi/ Ranjit Kumar Jha/ (24900001503 & QZJNK00005023880)	Prop No. 628, 3rd Floor With Roof, Rohini, Delhi- 110085/ October 13, 2023	March 28, 2023 Rs. 8,82,310/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Santosh Kumar Singh/ Beauty Singh/ (26600001408 & QZDEL00005022237)	Property No. F-159-A, 1 Floor Without Roof, Block- F, Plot No. 159, Gali No. 2, Kh. No. 31/19, 22, Village Khyala, Vishnu Garden, Delhi/ October 12, 2023	May 17, 2023 Rs. 24,97,296/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : October 18, 2023
Place : Delhi NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Anurag Malik/ Reema Maan/ LBFD000004960893	Flat No.803, 8th Floor, Tower-T-5, "Aagman" Village Mujeri, Sector 70 Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	May 23, 2023 Rs. 11,45,515/-	Delhi & NCR
2.	Bishwjeet Biswas/ Jyoti Biswas/ LBFD000005141300	Flat No-D-103, 1st Floor, Tower-D, Mulberry County, Situated at Village Mujeri, Sector-70, Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	May 16, 2023 Rs. 35,52,494/-	Delhi & NCR
3.	Kuldeep Kumar/ LBFD000005214694/ LBFD000006107397	Residential Plot No.1686, (old Plot No Na-38), Ground Floor, Sector-A, Residential Colony Known as "Greenfields", Village Sarai Khawaja, Tehsil Badkhal Distt. Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	April 25, 2023 Rs. 53,67,672/-	Delhi & NCR
4.	Deepak Khandelwal/ Deepthi/ LBFD000002993646/ LBGUR000005336276	Unit/Commercial Space No.21, Lower Ground Floor, Charmwood Plaza,eros Garden Colony, Situated at Village Lakkarpur, Suraj Kund Road, Haryana, Faridabad, (Admeasuring an Area of 323 Sq. Ft.)/ October 13, 2023	June 20, 2023 Rs. 21,29,788/-	Delhi & NCR
5.	Kirshan Kumar/ Rekha Sharma/ Vishnu Dutt Kaushik/ LBFD000002946348	Plot No-499, Sector-65, Urban Estate Huda Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	June 20, 2023 Rs. 10,34,995/-	Delhi & NCR
6.	Kirshan Kumar/ Rekha Sharma/ LBFD000005337380	Plot No-499, Sector-65, Urban Estate Huda Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	June 20, 2023 Rs. 9,73,440/-	Delhi & NCR
7.	Arti/ Mukesh Kumar/ LBFD000004906934	Flat No-A2-706, 7th Floor of The Building Named as Habitat 78 Situated at Sector-78, Haryana Faridabad/ October 13, 2023	June 07, 2023 Rs. 21,03,199/-	Delhi & NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: October 18, 2023
Place: Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Rajnath announces cash rewards to jawans who won Asian Games medals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Recognising the stellar performance of athletes from the Armed forces in the recently concluded Asian Games, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday announced cash reward of ₹25 lakh to Gold medal winners, ₹15 lakh to silver medal awardees and ₹ten lakh to bronze medal winners. He also said medals and performance will inspire the country's youth. The Defence Minister made these assertions here in a function to felicitate the medal winners, participants and support staff from the Armed Forces, who took part in the recently concluded 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou, China. He interacted with a total of 76 players and staff. On behalf of his Ministry, Rajnath announced cash prizes to the Armed Forces personnel, who brought laurels to the country and once again proved



their mettle at an international event, by bagging 16 individual medals (3 Gold, 6 Silver and 7 Bronze) and eight team medals (2 Gold, 3 Silver and 3 Bronze) at the Games. A contingent of 88 soldiers, including three sportswomen, participated in 18 disciplines at the Games. In his address, the defence minister lauded the efforts of the players, including those who gave their best, but could not win the medals. He reminded them of Flying Sikh Milkha Singh, who missed a medal in the 400-metre race in the 1960 Olympics in Rome by a whisker, but became a guid-

ing star of Indian athletics. Milkha Singh is an inspiration for all even today, he said. Rajnath exuded confidence that these medals and performance will inspire the country's youth to come forward in sports. You are not just representing a medal, but are also representing a narrative of excellence of Indian society. You are a great medium to provide inspiration to the youth," he told the players. Rajnath also pointed out that the performance of the players reflected the image of a rapidly growing and powerful 'New India.' "Many studies show that

NHAI upgrades traffic system for advanced road safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Central road making agency National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has upgraded the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) for enhanced road safety and digital enforcement on national highways and expressways. The enhancements include replacing previous VIDS cameras with the newly introduced Video Incident Detection and Enforcement System (VIDES) to emphasise the digital enforcement of traffic rules. VIDES has the capability to identify 14 distinct incidents, including triple riding, helmet and seatbelt violations, wrong lane or direction driving, presence of animals on the highway, and pedestrian crossings, the statement said. According to a NHAI statement, depending on the detected incident, VIDES will alert route patrol vehicles or ambulances, generate e-challans, relay alerts to nearby Variable Messaging Boards, or send notifications through the 'Rajmargyatra' mobile app to nearby travellers. For comprehensive coverage, the statement said, these cameras are slated for installation every 10 km along national highways, with state-of-the-art command and control centres at every 100 km integrating various camera feeds. Apart from this, Vehicle Speed Detection System (VSDS) is now integrated into VIDES, optimising the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, it added. The Traffic Monitoring Camera System (TMCS) will also be upgraded, the statement said, adding that positioned every 1 km on the national highway, these cameras have been endowed with



advanced capabilities like automated detection of accidents and stalled vehicles. Strengthening collaboration with local traffic agencies, the statement said NHAI will allocate dedicated workstations in the command and control centre for traffic police representatives. Moreover, provisions have been made to share camera feeds over the network to enhance real-time coordination and response. ATMS deployment may also play an active role in disaster management by providing inputs for effective planning and implementation. It will also provide online sharing of highway status and other important information that will help both the agencies and the highway users. The statement said the policy also provisions implementation of Digital Highways by developing integrated utility corridors along the national highways to develop optic fibre cables (OFC) infrastructure. While the ATMS equipment will use OFC to communicate with the command and control centre, there are provisions in the policy for 5G-based communication in the future as the coverage increases, it said. Meanwhile Union Road Transport Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said the NHAI is facing difficulties in the preparation of detailed project

reports, as companies concerned are not ready to accept new technology. Addressing the 'CRISIL India Infrastructure Conclave 2023', Gadkari said big players in the steel and cement industry are indulging in cartelisation to jack-up prices. According to Gadkari, rating of companies that make DPRs is a big challenge. "The preparation of DPRs is a big problem for NHAI.. There is no perfect DPR anywhere in any project," Gadkari, who is known for his frank views, said. "While making DPR, they (companies engaged in DPR making) are not ready to accept new technology, new innovation, new research and even the standard of DPRs are so low that everywhere (there is) additional scope of work," he said. The minister recalled that once upon a time, there were 50 big contractors who used to get contracts for road construction. "I felt that was not correct. (So) I liberalised the technical and financial norms, by which, today we have 600 big (road) contractors," he said. According to Gadkari, the problem is that some of them quote prices below 30-40 per cent for highway construction projects. "We need to maintain the equilibrium between the quality and the cost. And that is also a big challenge," he observed.

Centre told to upgrade private security to 'Para Police'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI


Keeping in mind the recent developments in Israel, the Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) has urged the Centre to upgrade the role of private security personnel to "Para Police" by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. "There are over one crore private security professionals employed in India to protect human and corporate assets. We are the largest security workforce in the World. It is the time to upgrade the role of private security to "Para Police" by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had already developed international standards for private security. These highly trained security professionals can be given new role in the internal security to ensure safe and secure environment," said Kunwar Vikram Singh, Chairman, CAPSI, the apex body of the private security industry. In a statement Singh said the Ministry of Home Affairs should consider grading private security guards and supervisors to the status of "Para Police" by upskilling them to effectively perform para police duties which would significantly increase overall security personnel available for maintaining law and order in the country. This could lead to a stronger and more visible security presence, instilling a sense of safety and deterrence, he added.

DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DELHI 4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001			
SALE NOTICE The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-			
CASE DETAILS	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD AMOUNT
ICICI BANK LTD VS BANSIWALA ROAD LINES, TA/2504/2022	Vehicle No. RJ52GA4260 Make & Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD BLAZO- 49, Manu Year- 2018	Rs. 4,68,000/-	Rs. 46,800/-
	Vehicle No. RJ52GA4261 Make & Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD BLAZO- 49, Manu Year- 2018	Rs. 4,68,000/-	Rs. 46,800/-
	Vehicle No. RJ52GA4262 Make & Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD BLAZO- 49, Manu Year- 2018	Rs. 4,68,000/-	Rs. 46,800/-
	Vehicle No. RJ52GA4263 Make & Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD BLAZO- 49, Manu Year- 2018	Rs. 4,68,000/-	Rs. 46,800/-
	Vehicle No. RJ52GA4264 Make & Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD BLAZO- 49, Manu Year- 2018	Rs. 4,68,000/-	Rs. 46,800/-
Auction Date: October 25, 2023 From 11:00 am to 02:00 pm. Auction Type: Online Auction Auction Portal Name & URL Link: Car trade through www.cartradeexchange.com Contact Person- Swapnil Upadhyay (8126013708)/ Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809) Note: EMD is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED payable at Delhi and Bidder has to deposit original EMD with KYC before 5 pm by dated October 23, 2023.			
Terms of Sale The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves / itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. Successfully bidder shall have to deposit balance sale amount within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited. The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, SHAL TOWERS, Plot No 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.			

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL LITERACY IS A MUST

Our real enemies are not our rivals but suspicion, fear, hatred and violence



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ

It's a proven fact today that disharmony in human relations gives rise to not only wars but to almost all other problems directly or indirectly related to us. The phenomenon of split in families, the rising number of cases of divorces, and even most of the psycho-somatic diseases which are caused by stress or mental tension are due to disharmony in human relations only and nothing else. In the past few days, we all have witnessed how extreme conflict between 2 countries over a border issue resulted in a mass exodus of people from their homeland as well as deaths of innocent people in massive bombings during night time. Hence one cannot deny the fact that the forces that are leading to the disintegration of nations, communities and political parties crop up primarily from disharmony. Most problems of law & order and even the commotions and disturbances in major Legislatures also are due to disharmony in relations between political parties or various linguistic groups, religious communities, etc. It is, thus, very much essential to find a solution to eliminate this problem lest it will eliminate us. But what is the way out? How does one move ahead? Well!! It is quite clear from some of the examples that have been given of the world-events that these problems are mainly the creations of our minds, our attitudes and our negative thinking. Hence, to create harmony, we need to first of all disarm our minds to dismantle the forces of disharmony. It is estimated that world over approximately two trillion dollars are spent every year by various countries on what is called 'Defence' or 'Security' and yet it's quite surprising that insecurity is increasing rather than decreasing. What's more saddening is that all the diversion of resources to war purposes deprives the poorer sections of society of the help that they need or deserve. In this respect, it is essential to redefine security and to break the link between security and military force. We need to understand that our security lies not in an armed state of readiness for war but in friendliness, love and peace with others.



Our real enemies are not men and women but suspicion, fear, hatred, violence and feeling of revenge and these enemies cannot be eliminated by military means. It has, therefore, rightly been said in the Gita: 'Arjuna, the soul is its own best friend and it is its own worst enemy'. A deep study of the history of human civilization would reveal that presently, there are prevalent certain wrong beliefs that have led us to this kind of a negative culture, negative lifestyle and negative attitudes, one of these wrong beliefs is that there has always been disharmony in the world and there was no time in the history of mankind when there was total harmony. If that were so, then why today do we have a greater number of wars that are more devastating and which result in mass killings? Why are we today inventing more and more deadly weapons? It shows that there was a time in the distant past when there were less and less wars and there was also the earliest era which was free from all kinds of disharmony. Thus, there must have been a time when the world population was small, the environment was clean and there were no wars and people lived in amity and peace. Such an era was known as the Golden Age. That was the time when there was Universal Harmony. It is that new world which we wish to usher in again. And, we want those attitudes and that thinking which can restore harmony in human relations. So, how can we bring about that change? It's very simple, for that we need to realize that most of our problems arise from our spiritual illiteracy which has to be eradicated. If, therefore, we can get rid of this kind of illiteracy and have a new lease of consciousness beyond war and enmity, then we can open to a new paradise, otherwise, we will end in eternal darkness.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

State doles can put discoms at risk

Discoms will be profitable only when they are unshackled from state controls and electricity distribution is deregulated



UTTAM GUPTA



Even as the Central government is making all-out efforts to remove the financial distress of power distribution companies or discoms (situated at the core of the power supply chain, they procure electricity from power generating companies or gencos and distribute it to the consumers) and restore them to robust health, actions of the state governments undermine these efforts. The financial distress of discoms arises fundamentally due to their inability to generate enough revenue to pay for the electricity they buy. For over two decades, they have been incurring losses year after year. They have funded these losses by borrowings from banks and other FIs apart from keeping bills pending. At the end of FY 2021-22, their total debt was Rs 620,000 crore. Discoms' inability to generate required revenue has to do primarily with two factors viz. aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses - a jargon for power theft - and shortfall in the average revenue realisation from the sale of electricity vis-a-vis the average cost of supply (cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution), or the ACS-ARR gap. During 2020-21, AT&C losses were 22.32 percent while the ACS-ARR gap was Rs 0.54 per kWh. Both maladies arise due to constant meddling in the running of discoms by their owners namely the state governments. Power theft on such a massive scale is unthinkable without the complicity of the political establishment. People living in slum settlements/jhuggi clusters being a big vote bank, the party in power encourages unauthorized connections to enable their access to free power. As for the second malady, the political brass orders discoms to sell a major slice of electricity to households (HHs) and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of supply or even free (the state electricity regulatory commissions or SERCs which are mandated to fix tariff merely act as rubber stamps). Even as the state government promises to reimburse the differential amount to discoms, most states don't reimburse or do it partially and after considerable delay.



REPORTEDLY, MORE THAN 100,000 METERS HAVE BEEN BIFURCATED OR TRIFURCATED ENABLING EVEN HIGH-END CONSUMERS TO AVAIL OF THE FREE BONANZA

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

Given nearly a quarter of the revenue lost due to power theft and a substantial amount in subsidies remaining unpaid, the financial stress of discoms is inevitable. The politics of freebies now deeply entrenched in the system has exacerbated the already grim situation. Let us look at the developments in Punjab. Last year, amongst a host of freebies promised by AAP the most prominent was free electricity to households (HHs) for consumption up to 300 units per month. Going by sheer common sense, the State should give help only to those HHs who can't afford to pay cost-based tariffs. The way to go is to identify households whose income is below a threshold. AAP hasn't gone by this. Could it be presumed that only low-income HHs have consumption of fewer than 300 units? So, in essence, the assistance reaches only to those who can't afford it. A closer scrutiny would reveal that the approach adopted by the AAP government is mischievous. Its real intent was to give the dole to 'all and sundry'. If a household consumes less than 300 units a month, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is a family with low income. For instance, there would be umpteen number of well-off/high-income old-age couples living alone who consume less than 300 units a month. Even for others, who consume more than this threshold, we see a dastardly trend of consumers applying for multiple connections within the same HH. For instance, a household consuming 900 units a month, gets three meters installed to keep consumption of each under 300 units thereby ensuring zero bill. Reportedly, more than 100,000 meters have been bifurcated or trifurcated enabling even high-end consumers to avail of the free bonanza. As a consequence, cur-


rently almost over 95 per cent of power consumers in Punjab avail of subsidies. The swelling number of connections has increased the subsidy by Rs 125 crore per month on average. As a result, the total domestic subsidy for the current FY is now expected to be Rs 8,813 crore - Rs 1,500 crore higher than the initial estimate of Rs 7,313 crore. In Delhi, where there is no charge for HHs consuming up to 200 units (HHs consuming between 200 and 400 units get a deduction of Rs 800 from their bill), the possibility of the majority of households availing of access to electricity - free of any charge - is not ruled out. The situation in other states won't be different. Given almost the entire population of the State - including the rich, millionaires, billionaires and so on, getting to enjoy the free bonanza, the burden of power subsidy is bound to gallop. Faced with budget constraints, the states will take increasing recourse to underpayment and delayed reimbursement of subsidy dues to discoms. Meanwhile, the Centre is dealing with discoms under a two-pronged strategy (i) forcing them to make timely payments and (ii) helping them cut AT&C losses and reduce the ACS-ARR gap. Under (i), it implemented late payment surcharge (LPS) and related matters Rules, in 2022. The LPS rules made it mandatory for discoms to clear their legacy dues as existing on June 3, 2022, in a time-bound manner in 12 equal monthly instalments (EMI) with the benefit of non-applicability of the LPS after its implementation date. The same rules are also provided for time-bound clearance of current dues failing, which will attract a power supply cut. The pressure tactics have worked. The legacy dues of all stakeholders in the electricity supply chain viz.

power generating companies (gen-cos) and transmission companies (transcos) from discoms decreased from Rs 1,39,747 crore in June 2022 to Rs 69,957 crore in July 2023. Faced with the threat of LPS, the latter could have used loans taken from PFC and REC (out of Rs 130,000 crore sanctioned under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan') to make payments to the former. As for (ii), under the 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution' (RLRBS) launched in July 2021, the Centre has undertaken a massive investment of Rs 300,000 crore to improve the reliability and quality of the power supply and enhance the efficiency of discoms. It has compulsory pre-paid and smart metering components to be implemented across the power supply chain, including in about 250 million households. The Scheme has yielded results. The AT&C losses of discoms have gone down from 22.32 per cent during 2020-21 to 13.5 per cent during 2022-23. The ACS-ARR gap has also reduced from Rs 0.54 per kWh during 2020-21 to Rs 0.15 per kWh in 2022-23. A 9 per cent cut in AT&C losses is a stupendous achievement. It seems that pre-paid and smart meters have been installed, and power theft is almost eliminated. The Centre is keen that the ACS-ARR gap should be reduced to 'zero' by March 2025. This will require making power theft 'nil' and timely recovery of all subsidy dues from the States. But, this won't be possible if states continue with business as usual; it could even lead to erosion of the gains made in 2022-23. Modi's efforts would deliver only when (a) discoms are unshackled from state controls; (b) States give subsidies directly to the beneficiaries and (c) electricity distribution is deregulated.

The Israel-Hamas war: Where does India stand?

India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict

When the global economy is reeling under the crisis, the current geopolitical crisis in the Middle East has doubly heightened the level of inflation. This crisis emerged following the unexpected offensive launched by the Hamas against Israel, which subsequently led to Israel declaring war. Since Israel is a significant trading partner for India, the effects could be escalating. With sheer surprise, the week-end's unexpected strike by Hamas on Israel has triggered a huge armed war in the Middle East. More than 2300 people have been killed in the fighting so far, and hundreds more have been held prisoners. Israeli Prime Minister has warned of a harsh response, so the situation is unlikely to



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

(Chakraborty is HoD-Digital Marketing and associate professor at the School of Management, Presidency University, Bangalore; views are personal)

improve very soon. In this context, India, one of Israel's oldest and greatest allies, has expressed its support for the Jewish state and has pledged to assist in the time of crisis. India's Prime Minister has timely expressed shock and condemnation of the terror incident. Inflation throughout the world is possible if the terror attack and retaliation between Israel and Palestine escalate into a full-scale war. This might be economically comparable to the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. **Consequences on India's Trading** At present, Israel is India's third-largest Asian trading partner and India's 10th-largest trade partner globally. Military trade between India

and Israel is valued at approximately Rs 74,000 crore, making it the second largest supplier of military equipment to India after Russia. India's goods exports to Israel constitute 1.8% of India's overall exports, mostly driven by the sale of petroleum products. Israel imports between \$5.5 to 6 billion worth of refined petroleum products from India. During the fiscal year 2023, the aggregate value of India's exports to Israel amounted to \$8.4 billion. Hence, there exists a significant likelihood of rupee devaluation, necessitating intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In such a scenario, the currency range is expected to increase to the '83-84 bracket. In contrast, India engages in the importation of equipment, pearls, diamonds, and other valuable gemstones, including both precious and semi-precious varieties, from Israel. Israel's primary exports to India are the essential materials and machinery used in India's major industries and factories, such as precious stones and metals, electronic equipment, fertilisers, machines, engines, pumps, medical and technical equipment, organic and inorganic chemicals, salt, sulphur, stone, cement, and plastics. Currently, Israel exports items and equipment to India valued at more than \$3 billion. If bilateral commerce between the two nations is halted due to the terror strikes and the conflict, India might miss out on commodities worth Rs 25,000

crore, resulting in a surge in the prices of several common household items. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has caused a sense of unease in financial markets worldwide, leading investors to redirect their investments towards safe-haven assets. Investors maintain a cautious stance and exhibit vigilance in response to global developments, as a risk-averse mentality pervades the market. Investors may tend to exercise caution when considering high-risk ventures. **Indian stock market** Last week, the Indian stock market had a notable decline, along with the performance of other global stock indexes. This decline was influenced by the unexpected multifaceted assault carried out by the terrorist group Hamas, involving land, air, and sea operations, resulting in the loss of more than 1,000 lives in Israel. The aforementioned trend has resulted in an escalation of geopolitical tensions, accompanied by an increase in crude oil prices and heightened volatility in global stock markets. **Only predictions** There are only predictions with conclusions. The right-wing politics in Israel and Palestine exhibit a disinclination towards embracing compromise. This hinders the process of negotiation. India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict. Indian citizens stuck in Israel may need to be

evacuated as quickly as possible to avert loss of lives. The Indian diaspora residing in these nations may also experience repercussions in their life. In the context of the broader Israel-Palestine conflict, India has always advocated for a peaceful resolution that upholds the rights of all involved parties. The persistent war has resulted in heightened geopolitical tensions. The attainment of a peaceful resolution of the issue necessitates the collaborative endeavours of the global community. A balanced approach is of utmost importance, as it not only facilitates the cultivation of positive ties with Arab nations but also ensures a productive and meaningful interaction with them.

Belgian cops shoot suspect accused of killing two Swedes

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Police on Tuesday shot dead a suspected Tunisian extremist accused of gunning down two Swedish soccer fans in a brazen assault on a Brussels street that sent shockwaves through Belgium and Sweden. Hours after the suspect disappeared into the night and a manhunt was launched in the Belgian capital, Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden posted on X, formerly Twitter, that “the perpetrator of the terrorist attack in Brussels has been identified and has died.”

She thanked Belgium’s intelligence and security services, as well as prosecutors, “for their swift and decisive action.” The man was shot in the Schaarbeek neighbourhood near where the rampage took place. The weapon used in the assault was recovered.

Amateur videos posted on social media of Monday’s attack showed a man wearing an orange fluorescent vest pull up on a scooter, take out a large weapon and open fire on people getting out of a taxi.

He chased them into a building to gun them down. He was also filmed calmly loading his weapon as cars drove slowly by.

Questions remain unanswered over how a man who was on police files, thought to be radicalised and being sought for deportation was able to obtain a military weapon and launch such an attack.

“Last night, three people left for what was supposed to be a wonderful soccer party. Two of them lost their lives in a brutal terrorist attack,” Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said at a news conference just before dawn. “Their lives were cut short in full flight, cut down by extreme brutality.”

“The attack that was launched yesterday was committed with total cowardice,” he said. Security was beefed up in

Brussels, particularly around places linked to the Swedish community, and at Belgium’s southern border with France.

Not far from the scene of the shooting, the Belgium-Sweden soccer match in the national stadium was suspended at halftime and over 35,000 fans were kept inside as a precaution while the attacker was at large.

Caroline Lochs, a fan from Antwerp, said the alarm left her feeling “frustrated, confused, scared. I think everyone was quite scared.”

At a news conference in Stockholm, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said that “everything indicates this is a terrorist attack against Sweden and Swedish citizens, just because they are Swedish.”

He said the suspect had occasionally stayed in Sweden but was not on police files there.

“It’s not an unusual pattern to move around,” Kristersson added. “We have an openness in Europe, which is one of the important reasons why we need to keep an eye on the EU’s external border because otherwise people can easily move between European countries.”

Kristersson has been invited to Brussels to mourn the victims and pay tribute to the work of police at a commemoration ceremony on Wednesday. De Croo announced on X, saying: “We wish the people of Sweden strength and courage to get through these difficult times.”

Sweden’s foreign ministry said the two fatalities were men aged in their sixties and seventies. A third man, also in his seventies, was wounded and remains in hospital.

De Croo said the assailant was a Tunisian man living illegally in Belgium who used a military weapon in the attack. Federal prosecutors said later that the suspect was found after a witness spotted him in a Schaarbeek cafe.

EU leaders seek harmony at virtual summit

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union leaders are trying to overcome the cacophony of different opinions and voices over the Israel-Hamas war into one single political hymn in an attempt to have a bigger diplomatic impact on the global stage.

Even if their summit on Tuesday is by virtual video conferencing only, the attack in Brussels that left two Swedes dead last night further underscored the need to show a unified stance in the face of common threats.

Ever since the attack of Hamas on Israel on October 7, the EU has shown it is a group of 27 different nations and even their common institutions have sent out different messages, sowing confusion about the bloc’s intentions and reaping international criticism.

Many member states feel that EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen overstepped her authority by visiting Israel on Friday without a pre-agreed political message and then toed what many saw as an excessively pro-Israeli line.

“Foreign and security policy remains a responsibility of the member states,” EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Tuesday ahead of the the virtual summit. Von der Leyen’s executive Commission maintains she is free to travel as she wants and express solidarity with a nation in need as she pleases, and will do so again if need be. Still, the unease was compounded because, for some, an EU insistence that Israel respect international law in its fight against Hamas was not expressed explicitly enough by von der Leyen.

“The position is clear: Israel has the right to defense, but this defense has to be developed in compliance with international laws and in particular humanitarian laws – because war also has its laws,” Borrell said.

He insisted that it would be the main common message coming out of the summit.

On Tuesday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz travelled to Israel for an impromptu visit. French President Emmanuel Macron said that he will travel to the region “as soon as I consider that we have a useful agenda and very concrete actions to drive forward.”

Few other international crises divide the bloc like the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Just last week in the wake of the Hamas attack, a commissioner at the bloc’s executive branch announced that development aid meant to help the Palestinian Authority reduce poverty would be immediately suspended. Hours later, the European Commission’s position changed. It announced an urgent review of the assistance to ensure that no money is being misused. Since it is listed by the EU as a terror group, Hamas does not receive any such funds anyway.

Then on Saturday, the commission said it was tripling humanitarian aid to Gaza – money meant to be used in times of crises or disasters.

Macron, a key player in Tuesday’s summit, said that beyond supporting Israel’s right to defend itself, he also has been able “to pass on warning messages calling for respect for humanitarian law, international law and civilian populations in Gaza and the West Bank, and for non-escalation of the conflict in Lebanon.”

“We remain extremely vigilant and committed,” he added.

EU Council President Charles Michel said in announcing the summit that “the conflict could have major security consequences for our societies.” He said that the leaders would look at ways to help civilians in Israel and Gaza caught up in the war and to work with other countries in the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions to try to prevent the conflict from spreading.



In this photo released by an official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks in a meeting in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday. Khamenei warned that Israel’s continuing offensive in Gaza would cause a violent reaction across the region. AP/PTI

MOTHER OF ISRAELI WOMAN HELD BY HAMAS APPEALS FOR HER RELEASE

Jerusalem (AP): The mother of a young Israeli woman held by Hamas appealed for her release on Tuesday, calling the seizure of some 200 hostages by the Palestinian militant group “a crime against humanity.” A day earlier, Hamas’ military wing released a video showing a dazed Mia Schem, 21, having her arm wrapped with bandages. It was the first sign of life from any of the hostages since Gaza-based gunmen smashed through border fortifications on October 7, killing more than 1,400 people in Israel. “I didn’t know if she’s dead or alive until yesterday,” her mother, Keren Schem, said at a news conference. “All I knew is that she might be kidnapped. I’m begging the world to bring my baby back home. She only went to a party, to a festival party to have some fun. Now she’s in Gaza.” Mia Schem was seized at a desert rave just over the border from Gaza that became the site of what is believed to be the worst civilian massacre in Israeli history.

Medics in Gaza struggle to save lives

AP ■ GAZA CITY

For hours and hours, Moen Abu Aish digs through the rubble of demolished homes to find survivors of Israeli airstrikes, toiling in a vast and desperate search complicated by the shortage of critical supplies and the sheer scope of destruction across the Gaza Strip.

Even as rescue worker Abu Aish, 58, and his colleagues struggle to pry lifeless bodies from the concrete and twisted metal where residential towers once stood, the death toll keeps rising.

Gaza’s Health Ministry has reported that Israel’s bombardment – launched after Hamas mounted a bloody, unprecedented attack on Israel on Oct 7 – has killed more than 2,700 Palestinians, many of them women and children.

But far more Palestinians have been killed than have been officially reported, with 1,200 people, among them around 500 minors, believed to be trapped under the rubble awaiting rescue, or recovery,



health authorities said. They based their estimates on distress calls they received.

“So many times medics say they hear victims scream, but they cannot do anything about it,” said Mohammed Abu Selmia, general director of Shifa Hospital, Gaza’s biggest medical centre. The untold scores of victims buried beneath destroyed buildings shed light on the struggles of rescue teams in Gaza trying to save lives, while cut off from the internet and mobile networks, running out of fuel and exposed to unceasing

airstrikes.

Israel imposed a siege on Gaza after the Hamas attack, severing the crowded strip’s access to water, power and fuel. Health authorities have warned that without humanitarian aid, hospitals and emergency services will soon break down. Hospitals running on backup generators say they have enough fuel for another day or two at most.

“The destruction is so intense, there are hundreds of dead under the rubble as we speak,” said Mahmoud Basal, the spokesperson for the

Palestinian Civil Defence, which provides emergency service, his voice cracking as he fought back tears.

“Where are the Arab countries? Where is the rest of the world? We are begging you, please, save us from this madness.”

At dawn Monday, Israeli warplanes struck the headquarters of the Civil Defense in Gaza City, killing seven paramedics as they prepared for a rescue mission, the Interior Ministry said. In widely shared videos of the aftermath, medics, shellshocked and exhausted, crouched on the back of their blood-smeared ambulance with their heads in their hands. “They targeted a centre for ambulances,” one of them cried out, his voice frantic.

“There are no weapons. There are no militants. There is nothing, nothing but civilians.” The Israeli military didn’t immediately comment on the airstrike, but has alleged in the past that Hamas militants use hospitals and rescue services as protective cover.

‘Alleged attacker in French school stabbing declared allegiance to IS’



Paris: France’s anti-terror prosecutor said Tuesday a suspected Islamic extremist declared allegiance to the Islamic State group before fatally stabbing a teacher in school attack last week.

The prosecutor, Jean-Francois Ricard, said, in a press conference, an audio recording was found by police investigators in the suspect’s phone. In it, the alleged attacker declared allegiance to the Islamic State and expressed “his hatred of France.”

Ricard took no questions.

A teacher was fatally stabbed in the neck and three other people injured in the school attack Friday in the northern town of Arras. AP

Legal challenge to dethrone Zulu king heads to court

Johannesburg (AP): The battle for the throne of South Africa’s ethnic Zulu nation has reached the courts as a faction of the royal family seeks to dethrone the king after less than a year. The North Gauteng High Court in the capital Pretoria is hearing legal arguments this week in the royal succession battle between King Misuzulu kaZwelithini and his half-brother, Prince Simakade Zulu, who believes he is entitled to be king. The Zulu nation is the largest ethnic group in South Africa with an estimated 12 million Zulu-speaking people, predominantly in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

They are acknowledged for resisting British colonialism in the early 1800s and the Zulu king is arguably the most influential traditional leader in South Africa. Prince Simakade wants the court to overturn President Cyril Ramaphosa’s recognition of King Misuzulu as the rightful heir. He is disputing the traditional and legal processes followed to appoint Misuzulu, and his lawyers have told the

court that Ramaphosa’s decision to recognise Misuzulu and grant him the relevant certificate was rushed.

Previous attempts to stop the coronation of the king were unsuccessful last year. Misuzulu ascended to the throne last year after the 2021 death of his father, King Goodwill Zwelithini, who ruled for over 50 years, making him the longest reigning Zulu monarch.

He is the oldest son of King Zwelithini and Queen Mantfombi of the royal house of eSwatini. The late king had six wives and several sons. After the king died last year, Misuzulu’s mother served as the regent for just a month before she died, but in her will she named her son to be the next king. Addressing the court on Tuesday, Ramaphosa’s lawyer, Marumo Moerane, argued that the president’s issuance of the certificate recognising Misuzulu as the heir to the throne followed consultations with the Zulu royal family, which confirmed him as the king.

Polish election winner urges prez to move quickly to form new govt

AP ■ WARSAW

The opposition leader who won Poland’s parliamentary election, Donald Tusk, appealed to the nation’s president Tuesday for “energetic and fast decisions” so that a new government could be formed quickly.

Three opposition parties that vowed to restore democratic standards in Poland together won over 54 per cent of the votes in the nation’s weekend parliamentary election, putting them in a position to take power, according to a complete ballot count reported Tuesday. Poland’s constitution now requires President Andrzej Duda to assess the new political alignment of forces and to appoint a new prime minister who is tasked with forming a government that will need parliament’s approval, all within a set timeframe.

In a video statement, Tusk appealed to Duda, saying, “I would like to ask for energetic and quick decisions” and stress-



ing that “the winning democratic parties are ready to take over responsibility for governing the country any moment.”

“People are waiting for the first decisions that will be the result of the elections” that took place Sunday, Tusk said.

Duda is an ally of the conservative Law and Justice party, which has been in power since 2015. His term runs until 2025.

Law and Justice, which governed the country for eight

the collapse of the oppressive Soviet-backed communist system.

Law and Justice had been leading the country down an illiberal path, taking control of courts in a manner that violated the country’s constitution. The party politicised state institutions, including taxpayer-funded public media which it used as a propaganda tool to praise itself and vilify opponents.

The election result was a huge victory for Tusk, the head of the largest opposition group, Civic Coalition. He appeared likely to return to his past role as Polish prime minister, a job he held from 2007-14. He also served as European Council president, a top job in the EU, from 2014-19.

Tusk’s success is all the more remarkable given that state media went into overdrive to portray him as a stooge of Germany and Russia. That portrayal, which appeared baseless, also won him much sympathy.

Greta Thunberg among detained climate activists

London (AP): Greta Thunberg was detained by British police on Tuesday alongside other climate activists who gathered outside a central London hotel to disrupt a meeting of oil and gas company executives. Thunberg was among dozens of protesters who chanted “oil money out” and attempted to block access to the InterContinental Hotel on Park Lane, which is hosting the Energy Intelligence Forum.

The conference is hosting speakers, including the chief executives of Saudi Arabia’s Aramco and Norway’s Equinor, as well as the UK’s energy security minister.

An Associated Press photographer saw Thunberg being led away by officers and taken into a police vehicle, along with about 10 other activists.

Earlier Tuesday, London’s Metropolitan Police said five people were arrested on suspicion of obstructing a highway during the protest.

Protesters attempted to block access to the conference venue by sitting on the sidewalk by the entrance. They held aloft banners and chanted “oil money out” and “cancel the conference,” while some lit yellow and pink smoke flares.

Greenpeace activists abseiled down from the roof of the hotel to unfurl a banner reading “make big oil pay.”

The protesters accuse fossil fuel companies of deliberately slowing the global energy transition to renewables in order to make more profit.

“The world is drowning in fossil fuels. Our hopes and dreams and lives are being washed away by a flood of greenwashing and lies,” Thunberg told reporters before she was detained. “It has been clear for decades that the fossil fuel industries were well aware of the consequences of their business models, and yet they have done nothing.” “We cannot let this continue. The elite of the oil and money conference, they have no intention of transition,” she added.

“We have no other option but to put our bodies outside this conference and to physically disrupt. And we have to do that every time, we have to continue showing them that they are not going to get away with this.”

Sikh teen assaulted in NY for wearing turban

New York (PTI): In a suspected hate crime, a 19-year-old Sikh was assaulted and injured in New York for wearing a turban while travelling in a shuttle bus, the police said.

The attack took place early on Sunday when the Sikh teen was riding a shuttle bus in Queens, a borough of New York City, CBS News channel reported.

According to the police, the suspect approached the victim, asking him to remove his turban and said, “We don’t wear that in this country and take that mask off!” The attacker then repeatedly punched the teen in his face, back, and the back of his head, causing minor cuts. He also tried to remove the victim’s turban from his head before getting off the bus and leaving the scene on foot, the report said. Police described the suspect as “a male, 25-35 years of age, dark complexion, slim

build, approximately 5’9” tall, with brown eyes and black hair,” and sought the public’s help to find him.

The New York Police Department hate crime unit is investigating the incident, and the police department is calling it a hate crime assault, NBC New York TV channel reported. No arrests have been made in the case yet. The Messenger news portal reported. The victim, who was not named, refused further medical treatment at the scene, police said in the statement sent to The Messenger. “Right now, the victim is very traumatised,” community activist Japneet Singh was quoted as saying by ABC7 television station. “The family is very scared for him,” Singh added. Though he refused treatment at the scene, Singh says the victim was injured badly enough that he won’t be able to work for the next few days.

Amazon to battle fake reviews

AP ■ NEW YORK

Some of the most used platforms for travel and online shopping said Tuesday they’re going to team up to battle fake reviews. Amazon, reviews site Glassdoor and Trustpilot as well as travel companies Expedia Group, Booking.com and Tripadvisor said in an announcement they’re launching a coalition that aims to protect access to “trustworthy consumer reviews” worldwide.

The companies said the members of the group, which will be called Coalition for Trusted Reviews, will look for best practices for hosting online reviews and share methods on how to detect fake ones.

That will include developing standards for what constitutes a fake review and sharing information about how bad actors operate.

Phony reviews have long plagued online marketplaces despite their efforts to eradi-

cate it. Much of the problem is fueled by brokers who solicit fake customer reviews through social media platforms, encrypted messaging apps and other channels in exchange for money, free items or other benefits. Brokers can solicit positive reviews to boost sales for businesses or sellers. They can also also post negative reviews for competitors in order to tank their sales.

Last month, Amazon said two review brokers in China were sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison and three years of probation after using messaging apps to advertise and sell fake reviews to Amazon selling accounts.

The company has filed a flurry of other lawsuits in the past year against operators that it says were doing similar things. Last year, it also sued the administrators of more than 10,000 Facebook groups that it alleged were coordinating bogus reviews in exchange for money or free products.

Facebook groups trading reviews for Google and Trustpilot, which allows users to leave feedback for businesses, were also discovered earlier this year by the British consumer watchdog group “Which?”

Federal regulators have also been aiming to crack down on bogus reviews aiming to deceive consumers. In June, the Federal Trade Commission proposed a new rule that, among other things, would prohibit businesses from selling or obtaining fake reviews, suppressing honest reviews and selling fake social media engagement. Businesses would also be prohibited from creating or controlling a website that claims to provide independent opinions about its products and employing other practices like “review hijacking,” which makes reviews for one product appear like they were written for different ones. If the proposal is adopted, violators can be face penalties.

US updates policies to stop China from getting advanced computer chips

Washington (AP): The US Commerce Department on Tuesday updated and broadened its export controls to stop China from acquiring advanced computer chips and the equipment to manufacture them.

The revisions come roughly a year after the export controls were first launched to counter the use of the chips for military applications that include the development of hypersonic missiles and artificial intelligence.

“These export controls are intended to protect technologies that have clear national security or human rights implications,” Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on a call with reporters. “The vast majority of semiconductors will remain unrestricted. But

when we identify national security or human rights threats, we will act decisively and in concert with our allies.” The updates stemmed from consulting with industry and conducting technological analyses.

There will now be a gray zone that will be monitored for chips that could still be used for military aims even if they might not meet the thresholds for trade limitations. Chip exports can also be restricted to companies headquartered in Macao or anywhere under a US arms embargo, preventing countries of concern from circumventing the controls and providing chips to China.

The updates also introduce new requirements that make it more difficult for China to manufacture advanced chips abroad.

Putin begins China visit

AP ■ TAIPEI

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for a visit that underscores China's support for Moscow during its war in Ukraine as well as Russian backing for China's bid to expand its economic and diplomatic influence abroad.

The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations that is now complicated by the Israel-Hamas war. China has sought to balance its ties with Israel against its relations with Iran and Syria, two countries that are strongly backed by Russia and with which China has forged ties for economic reasons as well as to challenge Washington's influence in the Middle East.

Putin's plane was met by an honour guard as the Russian leader began his visit that is also a show of support for Chinese leader Xi Jinping's signature 'Belt and Road' initiative to build infrastructure and expand China's overseas influence. In an interview to

Chinese state media, Putin praised the massive but loosely linked BRI projects.

"Yes, we see that some people consider it an attempt by the People's Republic of China to put someone under its thumb, but we see otherwise, we just see desire for cooperation," he told state broadcaster CCTV, according to a transcript released by the Kremlin on Monday. Putin will be among the highest profile guests at a gathering marking the 10th anniversary of Xi's announcement of the BRI project, which has laden countries such as Zambia and Sri Lanka with heavy debt from contracts with Chinese companies to build roads, airports and other public works they could not otherwise afford. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has praised the Chinese policy as bringing development to neglected areas.

Asked by reporters Friday about his visit, Putin said it would encompass talks on Belt and Road-related projects, which he said Moscow wants to link with efforts by an

economic alliance of former Soviet Union nations mostly located in Central Asia to "achieve common development goals."

He also downplayed the impact of China's economic influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard and where it has worked to maintain political and military clout. "We don't have any contradictions here, on the contrary, there is a certain synergy," Putin said.

Putin said he and Xi would also discuss growing economic ties between Moscow and Beijing in energy, high-tech and financial industries. China has also grown in importance as an export destination for Russia.

Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre, said that from China's view, "Russia is a safe neighbour that is friendly, that is a source of cheap raw materials, that's a support for Chinese initiatives on the global stage and that's also a source of military technologies, some of those that China doesn't have."

'Russia sending more forces to eastern Ukraine city after assault slows'

AP ■ JYIV

Russia is throwing more units into its effort to take a key eastern Ukraine city, Western analysts say, after apparent setbacks that have slowed its dayslong onslaught.

The attempt to storm Avdiivka, a heavily defended city that stands in the way of Moscow's ambition of securing control of the entire Donetsk region, is Moscow's most significant offensive operation in Ukraine since the start of the year, the UK defence ministry said Tuesday.

The Kremlin's push to claim Avdiivka comes after months of fending off Ukraine's counteroffensive, which Kyiv launched some 16 months after Russia's full-scale invasion. Both sides are looking for battlefield advantages ahead of winter. They are also looking to secure future weapons supplies for what is shaping up as a protracted war of attrition.

The Kremlin's forces deployed to Avdiivka are like-



A Ukrainian soldier in his position in Avdiivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on August 18, 2023. Russia is throwing more units into its effort to take this key eastern Ukraine city, Western analysts say, after apparent setbacks that have slowed its dayslong onslaught

ly making slow progress and sustaining high casualties in what is proving a costly effort, the UK defence ministry said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

The pace of Russia's attack on the heavily fortified target

has reportedly slowed in recent days since its launch last week, a Washington-based think tank said. Citing the Ukrainian General Staff, the Institute for the Study of War said Ukrainian forces pushed back 22 Russian attacks on Monday,

down from 30 reported assaults the previous day. Kyiv officials said Russia mounted up to 60 attacks per day in the middle of last week.

The Ukrainian defence ministry said Tuesday that Russia is nevertheless still attempting to encircle the city, with 10 attacks over the previous 24 hours. The UK defence ministry said Russia's effort to overrun Avdiivka "looks increasingly unlikely in the short term."

More widely, Russian forces launched six Shahed drones and one Kh-59 cruise missile over southern regions of Ukraine late Monday, Kyiv authorities said.

The Ukraine Air Force of Ukraine claimed to have intercepted all the targets, with no casualties or destruction reported. Ukraine struck two helicopter airfields near the Russia-controlled Luhansk and Berdyansk regions, the Air Force claimed. It was not immediately possible to verify the two sides' battlefield claims.

Ukraine uses ATACMS missiles against Russian forces for the first time

Washington (AP): A US official says the longer-range ballistic missiles long sought by Ukraine have been delivered quietly by the US and are being used on the battlefield against Russia nearly a month after President Joe Biden promised them to his Ukrainian counterpart.

The official was not authorised to publicly discuss the matter before an official announcement and spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian leaders have been urgently pressing the US to provide the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS. Their delivery to the war front was shrouded in secrecy, with the expectation that the first public acknowledgement would come when the missiles were used on the battlefield.

Pakistan court adjourns Imran khan, Qureshi's indictment till October 23

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

CIPHER CASE

A special court in Pakistan on Tuesday adjourned till October 23 the indictment of former prime minister Imran Khan and his close aide Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case for allegedly violating the secret laws of the country. The case pertains to a secret diplomatic document that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Khan used to criticise his opponents for allegedly orchestrating his ouster from power in April last year.

The document reportedly went missing from his possession. Khan's party alleges that the document contained a threat from the US to oust Khan from office.

The special court set up by the government held the in-camera hearing at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail after the Islamabad High Court on Monday reject-

ed a plea by Khan against holding his trial in jail.

Judge Abual Hasanat Zulqernain adjourned hearing till October 23 with the remarks that Khan and former foreign minister Qureshi would be indicted on that day.

Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry were present as 71-year-old Khan's counsels, the Dawn newspaper reported. Qureshi's wife and daughter also reached the court. However, it was not confirmed whether they were allowed to attend the hearing, it said. Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) special prosecutor Shah Khawar, Khan, Qureshi and their legal teams were all present during the hearing.

Khawar told journalists that the indictment proceedings will take place next



Monday (October 23), Geo News reported.

"On October 23, the charges will be framed and the indictment will be filed. After the indictment, the regular trial of the cipher case will begin," he said.

As per the court's orders of October 9, both PTI leaders were expected to be indicted in the case on Tuesday.

However, the indictment could not take place on Tuesday with the court only distributing the copies of the challan (charge sheet) among the suspects.

Speaking to the media after the hearing, lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat said that Khan and Qureshi will now be indicted during the next hearing.

Khan was ousted through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. He was incarcerated on August 5 this year, after an Islamabad court sentenced him to three years in prison in the Toshakhana case. The PTI chief was lodged in the Attock District Jail to serve his prison term.

Later, his sentence was suspended by the Islamabad High Court, but then he was arrested in the cipher case.

Pak Army backs govt's decision to deport illegal foreigners

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's powerful army on Tuesday extended its full support to the government's decision to repatriate and deport all illegal foreigners, including Afghan refugees, from November 1 onwards. The caretaker government has set October 31 as the deadline for thousands of undocumented immigrants, including around 1.7 million Afghan refugees, to leave the country or risk imprisonment, deportation and forcible expulsion from November 1 as it intensified its crackdown against those involved in militancy and smuggling. Pakistan's decision has drawn widespread criticism, with organisations such as the UNHC for Refugees and Amnesty International calling on the government to rethink its plans. The Taliban-led government in Afghanistan has also expressed its reservations over the move. At the 260th Corps Commanders' Conference held at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, top brass of the Pakistan Army resolved to fully support the federal government's decision to repatriate and deport all illegal foreigners from November 1 onwards, the military said in a statement.

'40 places of worship of Ahmadis destroyed in 2023 in Pakistan'

PTI ■ LAHORE



At least 40 places of worship of the Ahmadi minority community have either been attacked by radical Islamists or partially demolished by police in different parts of Pakistan during the first 10 months of this year, a body representing the persecuted group said on Tuesday. Ahmadis in Pakistan are usually referred to as Qadianis, which is considered a derogatory term for them. Pakistan's Parliament in 1974 declared the Ahmadi community as non-Muslims. A decade later, they were banned from calling themselves Muslims. They are banned from preaching and from travelling to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage.

"At least 40 incidents of desecration of our worship places have taken place this year between January and October in various parts of Pakistan. Of them, 11 occurred in Sindh and the remaining in Punjab province," Amir Mahmood, an official of the Punjab chapter of Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, told PTI.

In Sindh, some Ahmadi worship places came under attack by religious extremists who committed the offence with impunity as police remained silent spectators, he

said. While in most cases, radical Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked the Ahmadi worship places, in some incidents, police demolished minarets, arches and removed sacred writings from the prayer halls under the pressure of religious extremists, Mahmood said.

The TLP argues that Ahmadi worship places are similar to that of Muslim mosques because they have minarets. Mahmood said not a single case against the religious extremists has been registered so far for attacking and damaging the Ahmadi worship places. He also blamed Punjab's caretaker government for its complete failure to stop desecration of Ahmadi worship places in the province.

During its tenure, around 30 such incidents took place in the province, he said.

The Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya

Pakistan said the situation is becoming worse day-by-day for the already marginalised community.

"Ahmadis are facing persecution at the hands of the evil elements. The acts of desecration of the places of worship in various areas of Pakistan continues unabated. It is a new norm and the authorities are doing nothing," it said.

Earlier, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said the destruction of part of Ahmadiyya sites of worship is a brazen violation of the recent Lahore High Court judgment regarding the protection of Ahmadiyya sites of worship.

"It demonstrates yet again that the community is being hemmed in systematically and deliberately by law enforcement and the religious far right alike. According to the 2014 Supreme Court judgment, the police are supposed to protect the community's right to practice its faith. The government must hold the perpetrators accountable, repair the damage and ensure that this does not recur again," the HRCP had said.

Although the number of Ahmadis in Pakistan is around a million, unofficial figures put their population much higher.

Child killed, 9 injured in hand grenade explosion

Karachi (PTI): A child was killed and eight others injured on Tuesday when a hand grenade exploded in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province.

According to police, a group of children belonging to a religious seminary were playing with the hand grenade when it exploded in the Zarchain area of Wadh city.

The injured were immediately transported to a local hospital. Police and law-enforcement agencies cordoned off the area and launched a detailed investigation.

Indian former chief priest fails in appeal to cut jail term

PTI ■ SINGAPORE



A former Indian chief priest at one of Singapore's oldest Hindu temples has failed in his bid for a lighter jail term for pawning the temple's gold jewellery for more than SGD 2.3 million.

Kandasamy Senapathi, 39, was sentenced to six years in jail by a district judge in May after he pleaded guilty to two charges of criminal breach of trust (CBT) and two charges of removing the benefits of his criminal activities from jurisdiction. Six similar charges were taken into consideration during his sentencing.

The Indian national was employed by the Hindu Endowments Board as a priest at the Sri Mariamman Temple in the central business district here from December 2013 until he resigned on March 30, 2020.

He would pawn a piece of jewellery that adorned statues of deities at the temple for cash and then return on another day to redeem the first piece of jewellery using a second piece of jewellery, according to The Straits Times newspaper.

On Tuesday, his lawyer,

Disagreeing with the lawyer, Justice Vincent Hoong pointed out that when Senapathi pawned the jewellery pieces, he received the proceeds, as reflected in the charges. The amount represented the value of the items misappropriated.

"How the appellant chose to use the pawn proceeds subsequently is irrelevant to determining the sum misappropriated in each of the CBT charges," the report quoted the judge as saying.

Noting that sums owed to the pawn shops resulted from Senapathi's unlawful acts, the judge said, "This is simply a disingenuous argument."

Between 2016 and 2020, Senapathi pawned 66 distinct pieces of jewellery at various pawn shops on 172 occasions. He was caught when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, throwing the regular audit timing off and revealing the missing jewellery.

All the pieces of jewellery he pawned have since been returned to the temple. However, the sum of SGD 141,054.90, which was remitted, still needs to be recovered.

Divan Narkunan, argued before the High Court that the sentence imposed was manifestly excessive, the report said.

Divan argued that the district judge had erred by focusing on the misappropriated sum stated in the charges without considering that the money obtained by Senapathi was merely a fraction of the total pawn proceeds.

The lawyer argued that although Senapathi received a total of SGD 2.3 million (USD 1.6 million), he had obtained only SGD 141,054.90 as benefits, as most of the pawn proceeds were used to redeem the jewellery and pay off the interest owed to the pawnshops.

Afghan mob attacks Pak Customs, police and paramilitary rangers

Karachi (PTI): A mob of Afghans residing in Pakistan's biggest city attacked a team of Customs accompanied by police and paramilitary rangers after they carried out a raid to seize smuggled goods from a market in a main commercial area of the city.

A video, which has gone viral, shows dozens of Afghans armed with sticks running after the Customs officials and vehicles of the Police and Rangers on Tariq Road as they tried to carry out a raid during nighttime on Monday.

Tariq Road is one of the busiest commercial centres of Karachi and has numerous fabric and clothing shops in shopping malls and markets which are generally owned by Afghans, who have now settled down in the city after fleeing from their country. A source in the Customs vigi-

lance confirmed the incident and said the team had gone with police and rangers back up after confirmed intelligence reports that smuggled cloth and fabrics worth millions of rupees were being sold by Afghan shop owners on Tariq Road.

Many of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have established successful businesses in Karachi and other parts of the country and mostly focus on clothes, fabrics, carpets, curtains, and rug businesses. They own or rent shops in nearly all the major commercial centres and malls of Karachi. A police official said the raid had nothing to do with the government announcement that Afghans living illegally in Pakistan had to return home by November 1 or would be sent back to Afghanistan forcibly after the deadline.

Baidu unveils Ernie 4.0 AI model, claims that it rivals GPT-4

AP ■ HONG KONG

Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Tuesday unveiled a new version of its artificial intelligence model, Ernie 4.0, claiming that it rivals models such as GPT-4 in the U.S.

Baidu's CEO Robin Li demonstrated Ernie 4.0 at the company's annual Baidu World conference in Beijing. He said the model has achieved comprehension, reasoning, memory and generation, which uses algorithms to produce and create new content.

Li said that Ernie 4.0 was able to understand complex questions and instructions and apply reasoning and logic to generate answers to questions. "It is not inferior in any aspect to GPT-4," Li said, stating that the latest model was "significantly autonomous driving and more recently, improved" compared to its original Ernie Bot model.

In a live demonstration, Li prompted Ernie 4.0 to generate advertising materials including advertising posters and a marketing video. He also asked Ernie 4.0 to come up with a martial arts novel complete with characters with various personalities. Baidu is a frontrunner among a slew of Chinese companies racing to come up with artificial intelligence models, after OpenAI's ChatGPT took the world by storm last year. Beijing sees artificial intelligence as a key industry to rival the United States and aims to become a global leader by 2030.

Beijing-based Baidu started off as a search engine firm and over the past decade has invested heavily in artificial intelligence technology such as the latest model was "significantly autonomous driving and more recently, improved" compared to its original Ernie Bot model.

The company's Hong Kong-listed



shares fell 1.7 per cent Tuesday following the announcement. Baidu introduced its Ernie Bot in March. In August, it made the model available to the public. Ernie 4.0 is not yet available to the general public but

some people have been invited to try it.

Li said Baidu plans to incorporate artificial intelligence technology into its search engine, maps and cloud drive services, and its business intelligence offerings for enterprise customers. He did not give a timetable for that.

The technology can transform how certain products work. Baidu's search engine might generate a customized answer to a query instead of just providing a list of results and links.

China has recently sought to regulate the generative AI industry, requiring companies to carry out security reviews and obtain approvals before publicly launching their products. Companies that provide such AI services must also comply with government requests for technology and data. The US does not have such regulations.

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NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company.

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert-No.	Dist-No.	Lost Shares
1	SPP0003916	NADESH SETHI RAVI PARKASH SETHI	4389	298879-915	37
2	SPP0001699	RAVI SETHI	1749	65274-310	37
3	SPP0005091	ATUL JAYANT SHAH	6318	446431-61	31

Any person having any claim /objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim /objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED
Sd/-
EKTA MAHESHWARI
WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR,CFO & COMPANY SECRETARY

Markets rebound after 3 days of fall

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices bounced back on Tuesday after three days of fall amid recovery in global markets and buying in HDFC Bank post its quarterly earnings. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 261.16 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 66,428.09. During the day, it jumped 392.89 points or 0.59 per cent to 66,559.82. The Nifty gained 79.75 points or 0.40 per cent to 19,811.50. Among the Sensex firms, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, ITC, Bharti Airtel, Nestle, NTPC, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Infosys and HDFC Bank were the major gainers. HDFC Bank ended nearly 1 per cent up after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 16,811 crore for the September quarter, its maiden quarterly earnings announcement after merging parent HDFC with itself. Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, JSW Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards. “The market’s gap-up opening today, offsetting the losses of the past three days, indicates an optimism over the ongoing Q2 earnings despite concerns about the Middle East and subdued start by the IT sector. The



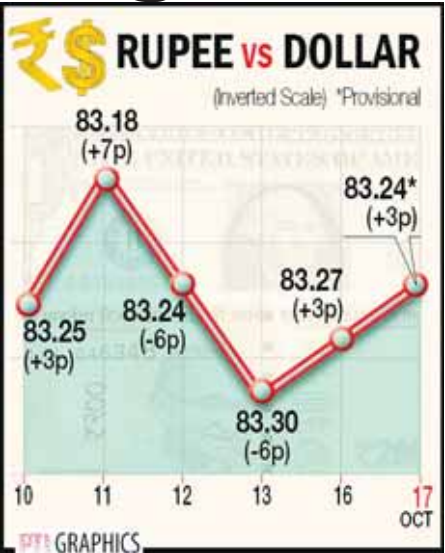
upward trend was broad-based with particular upside in banking, oil & gas and FMCG sectors. “However, some profit-taking was evident as the day concluded. FIIs continue to withdraw funds due to rise in the US bond yields. An insight about the future direction of

interest rates is expected from the Fed chair’s upcoming speech on October 19th. While the market will also closely monitor the developments in the Israel-Hamas conflict, with a consensus emerging that the geopolitical risk will not elevate,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE small-cap gauge jumped 0.70 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.39 per cent. Among the indices, utilities rallied 1.21 per cent, power jumped 0.98 per cent, energy (0.94 per cent), oil & gas (0.80 per cent), financial services (0.66 per cent) and telecommunication (0.64 per cent). Capital Goods and realty were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading in the green. The US markets had ended with gains on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.48 per cent to USD 90.08 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 593.66 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark had declined 115.81 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 66,166.93 on Monday. The Nifty slipped 19.30 points or 0.10 per cent to 19,731.75.

Rupee rises 3 paise to close at 83.24 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 3 paise at 83.24 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid a positive trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the rupee is trading with a slight positive bias on positive domestic markets. However, a strong US dollar and concerns over the ongoing conflict in the Middle East capped sharp gains. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.24 against the US dollar and moved in a range of 83.22 to 83.26 in the day trade. The rupee finally settled 3 paise higher at 83.24 (provisional) against the previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled at 83.27 against the US dollar. “We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the rise in risk appetite in global markets and decline in crude oil prices. Diplomatic efforts to contain the Middle East conflict may also support the risk assets,” said Anuj Choudhary — Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, elevated US dollar and any further escalation on geopolitical tensions between Hamas and Israel may cap sharp gains. “Selling pressure from FIIs and RBI’s maturing of dollar/rupee swap transactions may pressurise the rupee at higher levels. Traders may take cues from retail sales and industrial production data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.90 to Rs 83.70,” Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the



greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.09 per cent to 106.33. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.41 per cent to USD 90.02 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex closed 261.16 points or 0.39 per cent higher at 66,428.09. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 79.75 points or 0.4 per cent to 19,811.50. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they sold shares worth Rs 593.66 crore, according to exchange data.

RBI imposes penalty on ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank for violation of norms

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 12.19 crore on ICICI Bank and Rs 3.95 crore on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance of certain regulatory norms. The penalty on private sector lender ICICI Bank has been imposed for contravention of norms related to ‘Loans and Advances-Statutory and Other restrictions’ and ‘Frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs’. In another statement, the RBI said the penalty on Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has been imposed for contravention of directions related to “Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services by banks”, “Recovery Agents engaged by Banks”, “Customer Service in Banks”, and “Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions”. In both cases, the RBI said the penalties are based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.



Vedanta explores tieup with Japanese tech firms as it plans to set up chip plant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian conglomerate Vedanta Group on Tuesday said it is exploring collaborations with Japanese technology companies as it continues with its plan to set up a semiconductor fab in Gujarat. Vedanta’s semiconductor and display business Global Managing Director Akarsh K Hebbar during Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit roadshow in Japan had said that it is a USD 80-billion opportunity for companies willing to come and invest in the electronics manufacturing hub in Gujarat. “He (Hebbar) outlined Vedanta’s ambitious plans to establish semiconductor and display fabs in Dholera SIR, Gujarat, and invited Japanese companies to partner with Vedanta in helping build the country’s first electronics manufacturing hub in the state,” the statement said. Hebbar also pointed out that the hub has the potential to attract hundreds of SMEs and create more than one lakh jobs. “There is a USD 80-billion opportunity for companies willing to come and invest in this electronics manufacturing hub, and Vedanta will be the anchor

for Japanese companies interested in investing in India,” Hebbar said. Vedanta group firm AvanStrate Inc is headquartered in Japan. Late last year, the company signed agreements with 30 Japanese technology companies to foster the development of India’s semiconductor and glass display manufacturing ecosystem. Japan is also the second Quad partner after the United States to sign an agreement with India for the joint development of the semiconductor ecosystem and maintain the resilience of its global supply chain. With around 100 semiconductor manufacturing plants, Japan is among the top five countries to have a semiconductor ecosystem. Earlier, Vedanta had formed a joint venture with Taiwanese electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn which announced plans to invest USD 19.5 billion in setting up a semiconductor wafer fabrication plant. Both the firms have announced that they will invest in setting up electronic chip plants in India separately, but they are yet to announce the name of their technology partner.

GPT Healthcare refiles IPO papers with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GPT Healthcare, which operates and manages mid-sized multispecialty hospitals under the ILS Hospitals brand, has refiled draft papers with capital market regulator Sebi to raise funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating to Rs 40 crore, and an offer for sale of up to 2.6 crore equity shares by BanyanTree Growth Capital II, LLC, a Mauritius-based structured private equity, according to the draft red herring prospectus filed on Monday. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for payment of debt and general corporate purposes. Kolkata-based GPT Healthcare had in January 2021 filed preliminary papers with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to raise Rs 450-500 crore through the



issue. The company had received the capital markets regulator’s nod to float the issue but it didn’t go ahead with the launch. GPT Healthcare, which started with an eight-bed hospital in Kolkata in 2000, operates four full service multispecialty hospitals, with a total capacity of 561 beds, and attends to over 35 specialties and super specialties such as internal medicine, diabetology, gastroenterology, orthopaedics and joint

replacements, interventional cardiology, neurology, neurology, neurosurgery and paediatrics, as per the DRHP. The company competes with listed industry peers, including Global Health Ltd, Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences Ltd, Jupiter Life Line Hospitals Ltd, Yatharth Hospital & Trauma Care Services Ltd, Kovai Medical Center & Hospital Limited and Shalby Ltd. Its total income increased 7.11 per cent to Rs 366.73 crore in FY23 from Rs 342.40 crore in FY22. The company’s net profit declined to Rs 39.01 crore for FY23 from Rs 41.66 crore a year ago. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 9.98 crore in the June quarter while the total income was at Rs 97.63 crore. JM Financial is the sole book-running lead manager to the issue. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on the BSE and the NSE.



India to spend nearly ₹143 lakh crore on infrastructure between FY24 and FY30: Crisil

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will spend nearly Rs 143 lakh crore on infrastructure between fiscals 2024 and 2030, more than twice the Rs 67 lakh crore spent in the past seven financial years starting 2017, rating agency Crisil said on Tuesday. Of the total, Rs 36.6 lakh crore will be green investments, marking a five times rise compared with the amount spent during fiscals 2017-2023, it added. “India’s infrastructure spending will double to Rs 143 lakh crore between fiscals 2024 and 2030, compared with 2017-2023,” Crisil said in its Infrastructure Yearbook 2023. Crisil Ltd managing director and CEO Amish Mehta said the agency expects India’s gross domestic product to grow at an average 6.7 per cent through fiscal 2031 to be the fastest-expanding large economy. “Per capita income is seen rising from USD 2,500 now to USD 4,500 by fiscal 2031, creating a middle-income country,” he said, adding that this growth will be underpinned by massive all-round infrastructure development, with sharp focus on integrating sustainability. While releasing ‘CRISIL Infrastructure Yearbook 2023’, which includes a unique national index CRISIL InfraInVex, Mehta said policy interventions and a conducive investment climate have aided the uptrend in the CRISIL InfraInVex scores across sectors. “Four of these — roads and

highways, power transmission, renewable energy and ports — have an overall score of 7-plus (out of 10), which underscores the pace of reforms and developments of the past few years,” he added. The rating agency noted that the next phase of infrastructure development will be marked by growth in the average ticket size of projects and a significant number of mega-scale projects. Appropriate and consistent policy and regulatory interventions and focus on timely execution build an attractive case for various stakeholders to accelerate investments across infrastructure sectors, Crisil said. The rating agency predicted that prominent sectors such as roads and power are expected to remain major contributors, while relatively nascent ones such as EVs, solar, wind, and hydrogen will pick up pace. “The share of EVs in India’s overall automobile sales is likely to reach 30 per cent by 2030. “Two-wheeler EV sales are expected to outpace other segments up to 2028, while demand for EV buses will be driven by state transport undertakings,” it said. According to Crisil, favourable total cost of ownership and total cost of acquisition, as well as model availability for two- and three-wheelers will support EV offtake in coming years. It said the share of renewable energy in total capacity is estimated to grow 4x between fiscals 2023 and 2030.

CCI approves merger of IDFC Ltd with IDFC FIRST Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Tuesday approved the merger of IDFC Ltd with IDFC FIRST Bank. IDFC FIRST Bank is in the business of providing banking services, while its parent IDFC Ltd (IDFCL) is an RBI-registered non-banking financial company. The deal is subject to conditions, including the merger of IDFC Financial Holding into IDFC Ltd in the first step and subsequently, the amalgamation of IDFCL with IDFC FIRST Bank. Further, CCI also approved the cancellation of the existing shares held by IDFC Financial Holding in IDFC FIRST Bank and then the issue of new shares of the bank to IDFCL’s shareholders. IDFC Financial Holding is a non-operative financial holding company registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Competition Commission said it has

approved the deal under the green channel route. “There are no horizontal overlaps or vertical/complementary linkages between the business activities of the parties in the country. “Given the absence of any horizontal overlaps or vertical or complementary linkages between the parties, the transaction is being notified under the green channel route,” CCI said. Under the green channel route, a transaction which does not raise any risk of an appreciable adverse effect on competition is deemed to be approved on being intimated to the CCI. In July, IDFC FIRST Bank announced the merger of its parent IDFC Ltd with itself in an all-stock transaction. Also, boards of IDFC FIRST Bank and IDFC have approved the reverse merger and said the composite scheme of amalgamation includes the merger of IDFC and IDFC Financial Holding Company with IDFC First Bank.

Bajaj Finance Q2 profit up 28 per cent at ₹3,551 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bajaj Finance Ltd (BFL) on Tuesday reported a 28 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 3,551 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The non-banking finance company had posted a net profit of Rs 2,781 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago. Its total consolidated income increased to Rs 13,382 crore during the July-September period against Rs 9,974 crore a year earlier, BFL said in a regulatory filing. The Pune-headquartered company’s total expenditure rose to Rs 8,624 crore compared to Rs 6,222 crore in the year-ago period. Its consolidated assets under management (AUM) as of September 30, 2022, grew by 33 per cent to Rs 2,90,264 crore from Rs 2,18,366 crore a year ago. Capital adequacy ratio (including Tier-II capital) as of September 30, 2023, was 23.19 per cent. The Tier-I capital was 21.88 per cent, it said. The board at its meeting held on October 5 has approved raising of capital through a qualified institutions placement (QIP) for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 8,800 crore by issue of equity shares of face value of Rs 2 each. Besides, the board has also approved preferential issue (PI) of up to 15,50,000 warrants convertible into equivalent number of equity shares to Bajaj Finserv Limited, the promoter and holding Company, for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 1,200 crore in accordance with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, it said.

SUV segment to see intense competition among players: Tata Motors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors on Tuesday said it plans to keep updating its SUV range as it expects the robustly growing segment to remain highly competitive with presence of all leading players. Sports utility vehicles are driving the overall growth of the domestic passenger vehicle segment. As per the latest SIAM data, SUV sales account for 60 per cent of the overall passenger vehicle sales in the country. In an interaction with PTI, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said the company has a leadership position in some of the SUV sub-segments and is looking to consolidate in others. “The SUV segment is going to be an intensely fought segment.

The top three-four players will have just a few thousand (units) here and there. At some point someone will be number one, sometimes somebody else will become number two,” he said. He noted that in such scenarios it is more important to focus on the individual products and whether they are in the top two consideration for buyers. Chandra said Punch and Nexon are market leaders in their respective segments while Harrier Safari combo was number two in its vertical. Tata Motors on Tuesday rolled out new versions of Harrier and Safari with price starting at Rs 15.49 lakh and Rs 16.19 lakh, respectively. “Going beyond this, we are coming with two more models — Curvv and Sierra — in 2024



and 2025, respectively,” he stated. So the company’s SUV portfolio is going to further strengthen from where it is now, Chandra noted. “We have been number one for quite some time. There have been few new launches by other players. The ranking will keep changing... There is no clear

number one here. “Important thing is that we are doing excellent in all these four SUVs that we have. More importantly, we are adding to this portfolio, so our strength in SUV is going to always remain very strong going forward,” he added. The updated versions of both Harrier and Safari have received top safety ratings from the vehi-

cle safety group Global NCAP. “With their 5-star GNCAP rating and highest scores by any Indian vehicle to date, our SUVs are the safest spaces on Indian roads,” Chandra said. In a separate statement, Global NCAP said it has given five-star safety ratings to the new versions of Tata Safari and Harrier SUVs. Both models have achieved the

highest ever score for adult and child occupant safety in the crash tests done by Global NCAP on Indian cars so far, it stated. Global NCAP rates vehicles from zero to five based on their safety features and automobiles with a higher rating are considered safer for occupants. “This is a very strong result... The top adult and child safety score in our testing to date confirms the manufacturer’s strong commitment to developing safer vehicles, which we warmly welcome and applaud,” Global NCAP Secretary General Alejandro Furas said in a statement. Global NCAP’s crash test protocols assess frontal and side impact protection for all models, as well as electronic stability control.

IN BRIEF

GOLD REMAINS FLAT; SILVER DIVES ₹300
New Delhi: Gold remained flat at Rs 60,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to HDFC Securities. However, silver declined Rs 300 to Rs 73,700 per kilogram. In the previous trade, silver had settled at Rs 74,000 per kg.

GOVT TO SELL UP TO 7 PER CENT STAKE IN HUDCO
New Delhi: The government will sell up to 7 per cent stake in Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) at a floor price of Rs 79 per share. The Offer For Sale (OFS) for over 14.01 crore shares or 7 per cent stake will open for institutional investors on Wednesday.

MALABAR SHOWROOM COUNT REACHES 333
New Delhi: Malabar Gold and Diamonds, the world’s leading gold jewellery retailer, has taken the global showroom count to 333 with the simultaneous launch of four showrooms located at Rajouri Garden in Delhi, Ambala in Haryana, Bhavnagar in Gujarat and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. Our design versatility which perfectly meets the evolving customer sensibilities and commitment to offer quality, transparency and top-class customer services make us the favourite jeweller among jewellery buyers in India and beyond, said MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group.



Delhi Metro’s first Managing Director E Sreedharan, popularly known as Metroman, visited Metro Bhawan on Tuesday. He was received by the present Managing Director Dr Vikas Kumar and Principal Executive Director, Corporate Communications Anuj Dayal. Sreedharan interacted with the senior officials and wished the Phase 4 of the project all success.

SABITZER’S PENALTY, SENDS AUSTRIA TO EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP



AP ■ BRUSSELS

Substitute Marcel Sabitzer scored from the penalty spot shortly after entering the game to secure a 1-0 win for Austria at Azerbaijan and send his country to next year’s European Championship in a day overshadowed by a deadly shooting in Brussels which saw Belgium’s game against Sweden halted at halftime. “Due to the incidents in Brussels earlier tonight, play is suspended. Our thoughts are with all those affected,” a post from the

Belgian national team read on X, formerly known as Twitter. European soccer governing body UEFA confirmed the Group F match had been called off following consultation with both teams and local police. The score was 1-1 at the time. Viktor Gyokeres gave Sweden a 15th-minute lead, but Romelu Lukaku had Belgium level just after the half-hour. Belgium had already qualified for Euro 2024 while Sweden’s chances of a top-two place had been ended by Austria’s victory earlier.

AUSTRIA ADVANCES After losing 3-2 to Belgium in Vienna last week in the fight for Group F supremacy - Austria’s only defeat in seven qualifying games so far - Sabitzer and his teammates knew a win in Baku would secure a spot at the tournament hosted by Germany. With several key players sidelined because of injuries, Austria struggled to create real chances in the first half. It was awarded a penalty just minutes into the second half after a hand ball. Sabitzer was clinical in converting with a strike into the corner

in the 48th. Sabitzer, who plays for Borussia Dortmund, recently returned to competition after recovering from an adductor injury he picked up last month in a Champions League match against PSG. Austria finished with 10 men after striker Guido Burgstaller was sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card. Austria became the seventh team to qualify after Belgium, France, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Turkey, along with host Germany.

RONALDO SCORES 2 Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice for Portugal in a 5-0 demolition of host Bosnia in Group J. Bruno Fernandes, Joao Cancelo and Joao Felix also scored with all goals coming in the first half. Iceland routed Liechtenstein 4-0 and Slovakia won 1-0 at Luxembourg in the same group. Netherlands came away from Greece with a 1-0 win in Group B to revive its hopes. Virgil Van Dijk’s penalty in second-half stoppage time sent the Netherlands above their oppo-

nents and into second in their group. Both have 12 points. Wout Weghorst earlier failed to convert his penalty. “We do not have a specialist for penalties, corners and free kicks,” said Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman. “When Virgil was behind the ball for the second one, I suddenly thought Surely it won’t be one of those evenings when this one goes wrong too.” But Virgil took it well and decided the match.” Ireland thrashed Gibraltar 4-0 in the group’s other game.



Sweden players take overnight flight home, returning to clubs

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Sweden players were returning to their clubs on Tuesday after taking an overnight flight home from Brussels following the suspension of their European Championship qualifier against Belgium at halftime because a gunman killed two Swedish nationals before kick-off. The squad went directly to the airport and flew back to Sweden once they were allowed to leave King Baudouin Stadium, which was locked down for 2½ hours for security reasons before officials began an evacuation process around midnight local time. It was around 4 am local time when the last of the Swedish supporters — totaling about 650, according to the Swedish Football Association — left the stadium under police surveillance, along with some staff from the federation. All hotels where Swedish supporters were staying were also guarded by police, the federation said. The Swedish FA confirmed to The Associated Press that the national-team players were now making their way back to

their clubs. The suspect in the shooting was shot dead by police on Tuesday, Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden said, and the weapon believed to have been used by the man has been recovered. Authorities had been searching for a 45-year-old suspected Tunisian extremist who was known to police and was living in Belgium illegally. Swedish FA officials said information about the shooting incident, which also led to another Swedish national getting seriously injured and taken to hospital, reached them just before the match began and that Belgian authorities and police considered the game should be played because the stadium was viewed as the safest place for the Swedish fans. A decision was made to halt the match at halftime. Martin Fredman, the federation’s head of security, said about 400 Swedish fans “received help during the evening and night.” “The cooperation between supporters, federations and authorities has worked very well in an extremely stressful situation,” Fredman said.



India men’s hockey plays compactly at Asian Games: Somaya

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Olympic gold medallist M M Somaya feels the Indian men’s hockey team produced one of the most “compact” performances to win its fourth yellow metal at the recently-concluded Hangzhou Asian Games. Somaya, who was the Indian contingent’s deputy chef de mission at Hangzhou, said it was mostly an unblemished performance from the Harmanpreet Singh-led side, who directly qualified for Paris Olympics by winning the gold. “I think they (India) played outstanding in all the matches, barring a few lapses of concentration against Japan and Korea, but otherwise, overall, I think one of the most compact and sound performances we have seen,” said Somaya, a member of India’s 1980 World Cup-winning team in Moscow. With next year’s Paris ticket secured, the Indian team can focus on its preparations now. “Now that the burden of qualifying is gone, they can concentrate on making a strong program up to Paris. So just because

they’re not playing in the tournament for qualification doesn’t mean that they will be complacent. They can now engage in preparatory camps and tours with Paris in mind,” Somaya said. The 64-year-old also lauded the women’s team, who bagged the bronze at the Asian Games but missed out on a direct ticket to Paris. “The women also played very well, barring that game against China in the first half where they were a little overwhelmed. And then in the second half they opened up, but it was too late. Overall, it was an excellent performance from both the teams.” Somaya also had words of appreciation for the Odisha government for its overwhelming support to Indian hockey. “Odisha have stood out because of their support for hockey, I don’t remember any other sport where a state has supported the national team. It’s always been a corporate, but in this case the state itself has supported the national team, which is a big thing.”

AITA actions against Sasi for not wearing official jersey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The AITA is contemplating action against Sasi Mukund for not wearing the official jersey during the Davis Cup tie against Morocco and has also introduced a players’ code of conduct to ensure ‘discipline’ in future. In the opening singles of the World Group II play-off tie against Yassine Dlimi on September 16, Mukund wore the jersey provided by his personal sponsor and not the one made available by official Indian team sponsor ‘OOK’ after taking ‘permission’ from skipper Rohit Rajpal. To make matter worse, the jersey that Mukund wore had ‘INDIA’ spelt wrongly and the matter was brought to AITA’s notice by the team sponsor. The team name printed on the back had an extra ‘I’. It may be mentioned that the official sponsor only provided the kit and no sponsorship money was given to either All Indian Tennis Association (AITA) or the players who were part of the tie that India won 4-1 in Lucknow last month. AITA issued a showcause notice to Mukund on September 28, asking him to explain within seven days why action should not be taken against him for not wearing the official jersey and playing with a jersey that had India written wrongly. On October 3, Mukund sent his reply to the national federation, saying that “shorts received from OOK were not comfortable”. Mukund also wrote that he had taken prior permission from both captain Rajpal and coach Zeeshan Ali to wear the jersey that had his sponsor’s



name printed. Explaining the spelling fiasco, Mukund wrote that he had received eight T-shirts from his sponsor and unfortunately he picked the only one that had printing mistake. He also lamented that neither the captain nor his teammates noticed when he stepped on to the court. “I have immense respect for my country and I would never do something intentionally to tarnish its image,” he wrote and also apologised for the inadvertent mistake. On October 13, the AITA communicated to Mukund that his explanation was not acceptable since the captain has denied giving him any permission and further asked him to clarify his stand. When contacted by PTI,

Mukund said captain Rajpal had indeed allowed him. “There was no money involved. The players were not given any sponsorship fee for this tie. Only the kit was provided by the official sponsor. Captain Rajpal had understood this and allowed me,” Mukund, who had lost his match to Dlimi, said. “Usually the players are asked to sign a contract with the AITA for that one week if they are being paid for wearing that official kit. In this case, we did not sign any contract. My personal sponsor ‘Indian Tree’ pays me, so what’s wrong in it. The pockets of the shorts were such that the ball were coming out. “These are the reasons that the players lose interest in playing for the national team,” he said. AITA Secretary General Anil

Dhupar said they have introduced a players’ code of conduct for clarity and all players will be bound by it. “The players code of conduct is before the Executive Committee members. It will come into effect immediately. It is for all players, be it men’s, women’s, boys or girls,” he said. Asked if they will indeed take action against Mukund, Dhupar said, “Mukund has apologised but we are still discussing the matter”. Asked for his viewpoint, Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali said, “All players should be wearing only the official kit. During the Asian Games all the players and support staff wore the official kit only. Procedure has to be followed by all”. It is not the first time that an Indian player has preferred

playing with the kit that has his personal sponsor’s name written. They do get paid for wearing the sponsor’s name. If the match is telecast live, the amount increases. “The AITA had also introduced the system of paying the players for official sponsor’s name. The initiative was taken by captain Rohit Rajpal. If you have to stop players from wearing the name of their personal sponsor during the Davis Cup, then you have to compensate,” said a team source. “In this case (Morocco tie), no sponsor was willing to pay any sponsorship money to the players and the AITA. Just the kits had arrived through OOK, it is difficult to even arrange for kits for Indian Davis Cup team,” the source said, summing up the state of Indian tennis.



Contrasting results for Indian sub-junior hockey teams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian boys’ and girls’ sub-junior (U-16) hockey teams endured contrasting results on the final day of their maiden tour to the Netherlands. While the boys beat the Netherlands’ U-16 side 4-0, the Indian girls lost 1-4 against the Dutch. Rohit Irengbam Singh, Ketan Kushwaha, Rahul Rajbhar and captain Manmeet Singh Rai scored for the Indian boys team. “This is a great way to finish off such a historic tour. The boys showed immense character and grit and the efforts that have been put in are unmatched. It’s a matter of pride to have produced such a fine show especially in overseas conditions,” Indian sub-junior boys’ team coach Sardar Singh said. In the girls’ game, Kajal Jr scored the lone goal for India. Former India captain and sub-junior girls’ team coach Rani Rampal, said, “The girls played their hearts out and that is exactly what is expected of them every time they step out on the field. “There are a few areas for us to work on and this tour has given us exactly what we needed to identify our strengths and shortcomings.”

Kusale now aiming for gold at Asian Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rifle marksman Swapnil Kusale’s dream of winning an Asian Games medal in Hangzhou might have gone sour, courtesy one poor shot, but that has not stopped him from aspiring for gold at the Asian Championships, scheduled to commence in Changwon, South Korea on October 22. One of the best 50m rifle 3-positions shooter in the country, the 28-year-old Kolhapur marksman was leading by a huge margin in his event at the Asian Games recently before a rank bad 7.6 on the third-last shot in the finals saw him take a mighty tumble from No.1 to 5.

That effectively ended his hopes of winning even a bronze medal in the quadrennial continental showpiece as he finished fourth. However, as the shooting team leaves for the Asian Championships, Kusale has put the disappointment on the back-burner and wants to concentrate on the next assignment. “That shot... How did it go that way, I have absolutely no idea. It’s a game basically. I still had two shots remaining and I focused on them. I just forgot that had I shot a poor score,” said Kusale, one of the early birds to secure a Paris Olympic quota place. Initially, I was a bit shocked how it

could happen to me. But without bothering about it much, how and why it happened, I prepared myself for the next two shots,” said Kusale, who had bagged the 2024 Olympic quota by finishing fourth at the World Championships in Cairo last year. “Yes, it did strike me that I had missed the gold medal because of that one shot, but then I thought it can happen in this sport and I will concentrate on the next championship.” A similar last shot in the finals at the 2022 World Championships in Cairo had robbed him of a medal, but that disappointment was masked by the Olympic quota place

he won there. “It had happened to me at the World Championships in Cairo last year as well, but yes, I bagged an Olympic quota there and finished fourth, so that was the saving grace,” said Kusale on the sidelines of a function organised by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to felicitate the Asian Games medal winners. India returned home with 22 medals in shooting, their best ever performance at the Games. “I was very deeply concentrating on the moment, too much focused and because of that, maybe, my entire process (went for a toss). It’s something which I never anticipated I

could do. I tried my level best to come back, but I still missed an individual medal. Kusale, though, won the team gold along with Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Akhil Sheoran. Kusale, a junior TC with the Railways, says that world champion rifle shooter Tejaswini Sawant has helped him handle tricky situation while competing. Sawant, who also hails from Kolhapur but now resides in Pune, had become world champion in 2010 in women’s 50m rifle prone. “Teju di (Tejaswini) has taught me how to handle different situations, etc. I have learnt from her and she has inspired me a lot over the

years,” said Kusale. Kusale is also not surprised that his “best pal” Akhil Sheoran too has bagged the second Olympic quota for the country at the World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan just before the Asian Games. The two have been competing together since 2012, when they were juniors, and Kusale said he cannot remember a national camp when they have not been roommates. “Akhil has been my roommate and best pal since 2012 since the time we were competing as juniors. We are like brother and both have won (Olympic) quota, albeit one year apart.”



NZ AIMS TO KEEP THEIR UNBEATEN RUN INTACT

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Afghanistan's upset win over defending champions England has given the side a new stature and New Zealand would underestimate Hashmatullah Shahidi's side at their own peril when the two sides clash in their World Cup match here on Wednesday. While the Kiwis would look to keep their unbeaten run going in the tournament, Afghanistan, who shocked England by 69 runs, would be keen to create another big upset and put their campaign firmly on track in the showpiece event.

New Zealand are going great guns in the tournament, having won all three matches so far and are currently placed second on the points table, trailing India on net run rate.

On the other hand, Afghanistan had an inauspicious start to their campaign losing to Bangladesh and India before leaving Jos Buttler's England in a tizzy with a victory to be cherished for long in New Delhi on Sunday.

New Zealand will again be led by wicketkeeper-batter Tom Latham after their charismatic skipper Kane Williamson suffered a fracture on his left thumb during the match against Bangladesh and was ruled out for a few games.

Williamson, who had missed the opening two matches — against England and the Netherlands — due to an ACL injury suffered during IPL 2023, was looking good to strike a century after being out of action for more than five months. But the skipper's innings was cut short at 78 when he was struck on the thumb by a throw from the outfield.

Despite the huge setback, the Kiwis would be banking on their success so far to win their fourth game on the trot against an unpredictable Afghanistan, who played their guts out against England. It would be interesting to see if pacer Tim Southee finally gets a chance against Afghanistan, having recovered from a thumb injury, though his match fitness has remained an issue.

The Kiwis will rely heavily on their top order comprising Will Young, Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell, while all-rounder Rachin Ravindra, with his impactful performances across departments, will also be the player to watch.

The Kiwi batters would certainly have watched the video footage of Afghanistan spinners Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi many times over to counter the slow-bowling threat, given that the duo accounted for five England wickets.

With the meeting happening at the Chepauk, where the pitch has traditionally assisted spinners, New Zealand will have their hands full when they take on the trio of Rashid, Mujeeb Ur Rehman and Nabi. As for the Afghanistan batting, opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz is the man in form, having scored 50-plus in two matches so far, while the likes of skipper Shahidi, Azmatullah Omarzai and Ikram Alikhil could come in handy as well.

While Trent Boult and Matt Henry's searing pace will be feared by the Afghan batters, their main challenge could unexpectedly come from the spin duo of Ravindra and Mitchell Santner, with the latter being the most successful slow bowler in the competition so far.

The two teams have clashed in this format only twice with New Zealand winning on both occasions.



Rohit best man to lead India to third WC title

PTI ■ DUBAI

Australian legend Ricky Ponting believes a "laid-back" Rohit Sharma is the ideal captain to lead India to their third ODI World Cup title, the second on home soil after the 2011 triumph.

With three convincing wins under their belt, India have made a perfect start to their World Cup campaign.

India defeated Australia by six wickets in their tournament opener, before registering emphatic eight and seven-wicket wins over Afghanistan and Pakistan to sit on top of the points table.

"He's very laid back, Rohit. Very laid back with everything he does. You can even see that by the way that he plays. He's a pretty laconic sort of batsman as well, and that's the way he is both on and off the field," Ponting told the ICC on Tuesday.

Rohit took the captaincy reins from Virat Kohli in both the white-ball formats in December 2021.

And Ponting believes Rohit's character fits perfectly for the India job, allowing Kohli to focus on his batting.

"Someone like Virat, who is a bit more heart-on-the-sleeve, and probably listens to the fans and plays up with the fans a little bit more, someone with his personality would probably find it a bit harder," the two-time World Cup winning Australia skipper said.

"But I think Rohit will be fine with it. He's a terrific bloke and has been a great player for a long time, and he's done a great job as leader of India."

The Men In Blue last won the World Cup when the tournament was jointly hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in 2011.

So, the extra pressure of performing in front of home fans would definitely be there, but Ponting feels Rohit is the best man to deal with that.

"We can't sit back and say that the pressure won't get to them (India) at some stage, or it won't affect them, because it will, just with the enormity of the tournament.

"But he'll (Rohit) take it and cope with it as well as probably anyone," he said.

Ponting said that with all bases covered, India are the team to beat in the ongoing showpiece.

"I said from the start that I think they're going to be the team to beat. They've got a very talented team," he said.

"They've got all bases covered with their fast bowling, their spin and their top-order, middle-order batting. They're going to be extremely hard to beat. But we'll see how they hold up under extreme pressure as well," Ponting concluded.

India will next play Bangladesh in Pune on Thursday.

We regret squandering promising: Nissanka

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

A disappointed Pathum Nissanka said anything close to 300 would have been a challenging total but Sri Lanka failed to sustain a promising start against Australia in a World Cup match here.

Nissanka (61) and fellow opener Kushal Perera (78) gave Sri Lanka an ideal start on Monday, stitching a 125-run partnership but the island nation suffered an unexpected batting collapse, losing all 10 wickets for just 84 runs to put up a below-par 209 on the board.

The Australians grabbed the opportunity with Josh Inglis (58) and Mitchell Marsh (52) scoring half-centuries each to take their side to a five-wicket win in 35.2 overs, their first victory in three matches.

"Despite our promising start, we deeply regret not being able to sustain it, resulting in us being limited to a score of 210 runs," Nissanka said at the post-match press conference.

"On a wicket like this, I believe we should aim for a total closer to 300 runs, and this was a contributing factor for our defeat."

Nissanka's 61 off 67 balls was his second successive half-century in the tournament.

"I believe I've given my best for the team. I'm hopeful that I can contribute significantly by scoring substantial number of runs and playing substantial innings in the upcoming matches," he said.

Sri Lanka have lost three games they have played so far and need to win all their remaining six matches for a shot at the semifinals.

They next face the Netherlands here on Saturday.

"Our focus now is to learn from our mistakes and strive for strong performances in the upcoming matches. Our mental level is good. We hope to play well in these matches and win the remaining matches," Nissanka said.



Shami's role is clear still no place in 'Perfect IX'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At times, the greatest of actors don't fit the character of a particular film and in director Rohit Sharma's 70 mm World Cup panorama, Mohammed Shami is that protagonist who is missing out on a meaty role.

Unlike the 2019 World Cup campaign, the Indian team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of each squad member, leaving a world class operator like Shami on the bench for the first three games of the ODI showpiece.

With the team ticking all the boxes so far, Shami, who is among the best in the business and ended with a five wicket haul against Australia ahead of the World Cup, might just have to keep warming the bench in the coming fixtures.

Mohammed Siraj is Jasprit Bumrah's new ball partner at the moment while all-rounder Hardik Pandya is performing the role of a third pacer effectively.

Shardul Thakur, who has bowled a total of 8 overs in two games, is the fourth fast bowling option on a flat deck and if it is a spin friendly track like the one in Chennai, R Ashwin comes in to the eleven in place of Thakur to complement Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja.

There seems to be crystal clarity even on the batting front. Unlike the 2019 edition, the lead up of which saw the number four position become a



game of musical chairs, Shreyas Iyer, if he is fit, is the clear choice in that position. Even though he oozes X factor, Suryakumar Yadav has to wait for his return.

Rohit Sharma has led from the front thus far and India look the team to beat in the World Cup. However, there are a few questions that need to be

answered. Can the team rely on Hardik as the third seamer? Should Shami not play in place of Thakur as the latter has not yet been required with the bat at number 8?

Speaking to PTL, former chief selector MSK Prasad lauded the team's horses for courses approach.

"They are using horses for courses and it is working fantastically well for the team. If you see they used Ashwin in Chennai and Shardul for the other two games (in Delhi and Ahmedabad). Last game, Shardul was not required as the others did the job (he bowled only two overs)," said the former India wicketkeeper.

"Shami will come into picture if they want to rotate Siraj. Replacements are very clear right now. Sky will replace Shreyas if there is a need, Ishan will replace Gill at the top and Shardul will play if it is a flat deck. Ashwin will come in his place if it is a turning track."

Hardik lends a critical balance to the playing eleven but considering his fitness issues in the past, can he be expected to bowl 10 overs game after game as the third seamer if the need arises?

"With Hardik, you can't expect him to bowl 10 overs in every game. The job that he is doing. Of bowling 5-6 overs per game, that is good enough. Team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of every individual," added Prasad.

Want to take more wickets: Zampa

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Panned for his poor show in the opening two World Cup matches, Australia's sole front-line spinner at the World Cup Adam Zampa said that expensive figures don't bother him as he bowls to get wickets.

Australia found themselves in a precarious situation after suffering back-to-back losses against India and South Africa before notching up a five-wicket win over Sri Lanka on Monday.

Zampa, who has enjoyed a lot of success between the 2019 World Cup and the start of the ongoing edition, flattered to deceive in the opening two games, going for plenty of runs.

"I'm very good at self-reflection. I look back on the first two games and I'll probably look at the last game as one where I could have made a difference there and made it easy for those other guys," Zampa said after Australia's win.

"But yeah, the Indian game, I mean, we're under the pump defending 200 and I'm always going to be the guy who tries to get wickets. I'm not going to try and let the game peter out and let it go into nothing. So yeah, figures, whatever."

He registered figures of 0/53 and 1/70 against India and South Africa respectively for a combined figure of 1/123 in 18 overs.

"It's more about my attitude and reflecting on that too. Did I bowl the ball where I wanted it to? Did I make the right decisions? Did I put my game on the line to try and make a difference? And that's how I think about it."

"I don't really care about combined figures. It's just doing what I can to try and help win the game," Zampa added.

Against Sri Lanka too Zampa looked sluggish at the beginning, giving away 22 runs in his first three overs but he roared



back to form with a match-winning spell of 4/47.

"It took me a lot longer than I wanted to get into the game today. Bowling to set batters as well, trying to build some pressure, I just wasn't really able to do that."

"I won't make any excuses. I think I should be good enough to kind of play that role as well."

The wrist spinner revealed that he suffered "random back spasm" and had to undergo a fitness test before the game against Sri Lanka.

"I did a gym session a couple of nights ago and I don't know if you've ever had a back spasm, but I was worse for over the last

couple of days.

"I had to do a fitness test before the game today. Yeah, I felt like adrenaline was going to get me through and a bit of Panadeine Forte (medicine). It was a tough one to get through today, but as I said, one of those random ones that will wear off in the next day or so."

CUMMINS' SPELL CHANGED THE ENERGY FOR US

With Sri Lanka going strong following a 125-run opening stand between Kusal Perera and Pathum Nissanka, it was skipper Pat Cummins who stepped up, dismissing both openers before producing a direct throw to mark the end of Dunith Wellalage.

"I thought Cummins' spell in particular was a bit of a game changer for us and even his energy in the field, the run-out after the rain break, yeah, it changed the energy for us."

"He kind of led from the front. His spell changed the momen-

tum of the game. And then same as in the field, that run out, those little things can turn scores from 210 to 260, and it's game on. So, he particularly led from the front," Zampa said.

Australia flies off to Bengaluru for their next game against Pakistan on Friday.

"After the first two games, there's definitely a flat feeling in the change rooms. We all know that you could probably go from 1 to 11 and say we all could do our roles a little bit better, particularly those first two games."

"But we know, as boss (Cummins) said the other day, we get backed into a corner and guys step up and we get on a roll, then anything can happen. It's a World Cup, so get on a roll."

"Obviously, really big game against Pakistan in Bangalore, and if we can put it all together and play a good game there, you go 2 and 2 and the feeling's much better," he added.

Gurbaz reprimanded for breaching ICC's Code of Conduct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Afghanistan batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has been handed an official reprimand for breaching level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during their epic World Cup match against England.

Gurbaz was found to have breached Article 2.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match."

In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Gurbaz's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period.

The incident occurred in the 19th over of Afghanistan's innings, when after his dismissal, Gurbaz slammed his bat on the boundary rope and a chair.

Gurbaz admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Rod Tucker and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Paul Reiffel and fourth umpire Paul Wilson levelled the charge.

Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

Afghanistan had defeated England by 69 runs to create one of the biggest upsets in World cup history.

