

WORLD 5
AFTER FOUR YEARS OF EXILE,
NAWAZ RETURNS HOME

MONEY 6
OMAN NEW CHOICE FOR
INDIAN WEDDINGS

SPORT 7
WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM GETS
ANOTHER CHANCE TO QUALIFY

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

NEW DELHI, SUNDAY OCTOBER 22, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹4



sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



US, UK side with Canada

PTI ■ LONDON/WASHINGTON

The UK and the US have expressed concerns over the departure of 41 Canadian diplomats from India, with Britain saying it disagrees with the Indian Government decisions which it believes is behind their exit amid an ongoing standoff between India and Canada over the killing of a Sikh separatist.

While a statement from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the move impacted the effective functioning of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the US State Department stressed that resolving differences requires diplomats on the ground.

The separate statements came after Canada said it had withdrawn 41 diplomats following an alleged Indian threat to unilaterally revoke their status amid strained bilateral relations over Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's claims of Indian agents being involved in the June murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian Sikh.

In New Delhi, the External Affairs Ministry has strongly rejected the allegation and also refuted any violation of the Vienna Convention in relation to the Canadian diplomats' exit.

"We reject any attempt to portray the implementation of parity as a violation of international norms," the MEA statement said.

In London, the FCDO statement pointed out that "resolv-



ing differences requires communication and diplomats in respective capitals."

"We do not agree with the decisions taken by the Indian government that have resulted in a number of Canadian diplomats departing India," it said. "We expect all states to uphold their obligations under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The unilateral removal of the privileges and immunities that provide for the safety and security of diplomats is not consistent with the principles of the Vienna Convention. We continue to encourage India to engage with Canada on its independent investigation into the death of Hardeep Singh Nijjar," it said. The UK's statement followed the US government also backing Canada over the standoff.

US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said: "We are concerned by the departure of Canadian diplomats from India, in response to the Indian government's demand of Canada to significantly reduce its diplomatic presence in India. Resolving differences requires diplomats on the ground."

"We have urged the Indian government not to insist upon a reduction in Canada's diplomatic presence and to cooperate in the ongoing Canadian investigation."

The MEA on Friday rejected all attempts to portray the implementation of diplomatic parity as a violation of international norms.

"The state of our bilateral relations, the much higher number of Canadian diplomats in India, and their continued interfer-

ence in our internal affairs warrant a parity in mutual diplomatic presence in New Delhi and Ottawa," the External Affairs Ministry said. The row was triggered following Trudeau's statement in the Canadian Parliament last month that its security forces were "actively pursuing credible allegations" linking Indian government agents to the murder of Khalistan Tiger Force leader and wanted terrorist in India Hardeep Singh Nijjar, an allegation strongly rejected by the External Affairs Ministry as "absurd and motivated".

On Friday, Trudeau told reporters in a televised press conference that the Indian government is making it "unbelievably difficult" for life as usual to continue for millions of people in India and in Canada.

India steps closer to human space flight

PTI/PNS ■ SRIHARIKOTA/NEW DELHI

India on Saturday successfully completed the first unmanned test flight in its ambitious human space flight mission Gaganyaan, less than two hours after the launch was aborted with just four seconds to go for the lift-off.

Following the successful launch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a post on X, said, "This launch takes us one step closer to realising India's first human space flight program, Gaganyaan. My best wishes to our scientists at ISRO."

After some tense moments following a system monitoring anomaly and two weather-related holds, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said scientists simulated an abort situation for the Crew Escape System (CES) to carry the Crew Module (CM) out of the test vehicle TV-D1.

The module to test the safety of crew in emergency situations descended using parachutes for a splashdown into the Bay of Bengal with planned precision, the space agency said.

ISRO chief S Somanath said the crew module has been fully recovered from the sea and it has been brought to Chennai port.

"Eastern Naval Command units recovered the Crew Module — a path paved by



ISRO's TV-D1 test flight of Mission Gaganyaan lifts off from Satish Dhawan Space Station in Sriharikota on Saturday

recovering the module from the waters, about 10 km from the coast of Sriharikota. The successful key test in the country's manned space programme was greeted with cheers at ISRO's Mission Control Centre (MCC) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The test essentially involved launching the empty CM into outer space, bringing the module back to earth and recovering it from the sea after touchdown.

The Test Vehicle mission is a significant milestone for the overall Gaganyaan programme as a nearly complete system was integrated for a flight test. Saturday's flight was the first of the two abort missions planned to test the safety mechanisms that will allow the Gaganyaan crew to leave the spacecraft in an emergency. It came close to two months after the successful soft landing of India's unmanned moon mission Chandrayaan-3 on August 23.

"I am very happy to announce the successful accomplishment of the TV-D1 mission. The purpose of the mission was to demonstrate the crew escape system for the Gaganyaan programme through a test vehicle demonstration in which the vehicle has gone up to Mach 1 and above, which is the speed of sound and initiated an abort condition for the CES to function," a beaming Somanath said from the MCC.

Egypt opens border, aids Gaza

AP ■ RAFAH (GAZA STRIP)

The border crossing between Egypt and Gaza opened on Saturday to let a trickle of desperately needed aid into the besieged Palestinian territory for the first time since Israel sealed it off following Hamas' bloody rampage two weeks ago.

Just 20 trucks were allowed in, an amount that aid workers said was insufficient to address the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza. More than 200 trucks carrying roughly 3,000 tonnes of aid have been positioned near the crossing for days.

Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians,

half of whom have fled their homes, are rationing food and drinking dirty water. Hospitals say they are running low on medical supplies and fuel for emergency generators amid a territory-wide power blackout.

Israel is still launching waves of airstrikes across Gaza that have destroyed entire neighbourhoods, as Palestinian militants fire rocket barrages into Israel. The opening came after more than a week of high-level diplomacy by various mediators, including visits to the region by US President Joe Biden and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Israel had insisted that nothing would enter Gaza

until Hamas released all of the captives from its October 7 attack on southern Israel.

Late on Friday, Hamas released an American woman and her teenage daughter, the first captives to be freed.

It was not immediately clear if there was a connection between the release and the aid deliveries. Israel says Hamas is still holding at least 210 captives. On Saturday morning, an Associated Press reporter on the Palestinian side of Rafah saw the 20 trucks heading north to Deir al-Balah, a quiet farming town where many evacuees from the north have sought shelter. Hundreds of foreign passport holders at

Rafah hoping to escape the conflict were not allowed to leave. The trucks were carrying 44,000 bottles of drinking water from the UN's children's agency — enough for 22,000 people for a single day, it said. "This first, limited water will save lives, but the needs are immediate and immense," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

The WHO said four of the 20 trucks that crossed through Rafah were carrying medical supplies, including essential supplies for 300,000 people for three months, trauma medicine and supplies for 1,200 people, and 235 portable trauma bags for first responders.

India's first and only
Made from Ash

With the strength of Lemon & Neem
Patanjali Dishwash Bar & Liquid

Removes tough grease
Soft on hands

BUY 3 GET 1 FREE
NEW
SCRUB PAD Worth ₹ 10/-

Power, pelf corrupt all

Indian politics is full of stories about feisty women who have forged their paths through adversity, ascending to the pinnacle of power through sheer grit and determination. You can look at the likes of BSP supremo Mayawati, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Smriti Irani, the late Sushma Swaraj, to name just a few.

pioneer Analysis

few fellow travelers in this adventure of chasing chaos. Arvind Kejriwal started off as a self-proclaimed anarchist, then ditched the very people



who enabled him to reach the levels of extreme anarchism and repositioned his trajectory to now be sitting pretty as a national party with government members in two States. Mahua Moitra failed exactly on that count. Her diatribe against Gautam Adani made all the right noises but she was the only one shouting. Even her party supremo Mamata Banerjee, best friends with RIL

chairman Mukesh Ambani didn't back her in this anti Adani campaign. Her parliamentary colleague, Derek O'Brien, never at a loss of words on any subject, has been surprisingly quiet in this entire Adani-Mahua saga.

When Ms Moitra openly showed her rage against CISE personnel at an airport in the

danced away during durga pooja last year during Sindoor Khela in Kolkata, everyone compared her to Sushmita Sen in the much-acclaimed OTT series Arya. But then she turned her focus on Gautam Adani's business, or the alleged lack of business ethics associated with the Adani group.

That is where her attempt to consistently position herself as "Badass victim" got converted into a villainous role.

We may have sent a Chandrayaan to the moon, but when it comes to political leaders and women in particular, a "party animal" will not ever get the gravitas a neta always aspires to achieve.

What Ms Moitra has done in her present battle against the BJP and Adani enterprise is to expose her vulnerability and complete lack of understanding of high stakes political battles.

The first day the story broke of lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai sending a written complaint to the Lok Sabha Speaker and the CBI director, she dismissed it as jealousy of an ex. Till date no woman politician has ever come out so openly about her own state of personal relationships, marital or otherwise.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her former husband are on two sides of political divide, but you will never hear from her on what she thinks of her former husband.

Continued on Page 2

Cong fields Gehlot, Pilot; BJP goes with Raje in Rajasthan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR/BHOPAL

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia, former Deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot and Rajasthan Assembly Speaker CP Joshi were amongst the leaders who were nominated by their respective parties, Congress and BJP, on Saturday for the State elections scheduled next month. Congress released its first list of 33 candidates for the Rajasthan assembly elections, fielding Gehlot from Sardarpura and Pilot from Tonk. BJP named 83 more candidates for the Rajasthan Assembly polls, including former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje from

her traditional Jhalrapatan seat. BJP also released a fifth list of 92 candidates for the next month's MP assembly polls dropping sitting Indore-3 MLA Akash Vijayvargiya, son of the party stalwart Kailash Vijayvargiya who is in the fray from the Indore-1 segment. Fifty incumbent MLAs have been given tickets while nine have not been renominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has also not named any MP in the second list. Of the 83 candidates, 10 are women. Three leaders who rebelled against Gehlot with Pilot in 2020 made it to the list — Indraj Singh Gurjar from Virat Nagar, Mukesh Bhakhar from Ladnun, and Ramniwas Gawariya from Parbatsar.

Congress has given tickets to five ministers, 28 sitting MLAs and an independent candidate who won the 2018 Rajasthan assembly elections. Congress is yet to declare candidates on a majority of seats. Its Central Election Committee will meet on Sunday to finalise names for more seats. The polls to the 200-member assembly will be held on November 25. The party has fielded Archana Sharma from Malviya Nagar and Pushpendra Bharadwaj from Sangaran. Both of them had lost the last elections. Lalit Kumar Yadav, who lost the elections on a BSP ticket from Mundawar, and Vivek Dhakhar, who had contested unsuccessfully on a Congress ticket from Mandalgarh, have



also been given tickets. Ramila Khadiya, who had contested as an independent candidate and won, has been fielded by the party from Kushalgarh seat. Speaker C P Joshi will contest from his Nathdwara assembly seat and Congress state unit president Govind Singh Dotsara from Lachhmangarh. Former minister Harish Chaudhary will contest from

BJP has so far named 124 candidates for the November 25 polls to the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly. Some of the supporters of Raje, including two former state ministers, have also been given tickets. The saffron party has decided to field Narpal Singh Rajvi from Chittorgarh after its earlier decision to deny the five-term MLA, who is the son-in-law of BJP stalwart Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, renomination from his Vidhyadhar Nagar seat. This triggered a backlash from a section of party workers. The BJP leadership's about turn on Rajvi's candidature is being seen as a damage-control exercise after the latter reacted angrily and cited his family

legacy to hit out at the party. The names also include Vishwaraj Singh Mewar, a descendent of Maharana Pratap Singh, who joined the party recently. He has been fielded from Nathdwara, which was won by veteran Congress leader C P Joshi in 2018. Former state BJP chief Satish Poonia has been fielded from Amber, the seat he currently represents in the Assembly. Rajendra Rathore, the BJP's leader in the Assembly, has also been given a ticket. However, his constituency has been changed from Churu to Taranagar. Rajasthan has never re-elected a government since 1998, alternating between the Congress and the BJP. For the Madhya Pradesh, BJP has fielded Rakesh Golu Shukla

from the Indore-3 constituency in place of Akash Vijayvargiya. Several sitting MLAs are dropped by the BJP in the latest list. The ruling party has so far declared 228 out of 230 candidates for the forthcoming elections except for the Guna and Vidisha seats. The latest list includes the names of 12 women candidates, including former state ministers Maya Singh and Archana Chitnis from the Gwalior East and Burhanpur assembly segments, respectively. Incumbent minister Usha Thakur is renominated from Mhow seat. The single phase polling for 230 seats will be held on November 17 and counting of votes will be taken up on December 3.

Lakhs of devotees descend on Kolkata roads to celebrate Maha Saptami

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Lakhs of people descended on the streets on 'Maha Saptami' to see beautiful idols of Goddess Durga and her children and the exquisite artwork in different pandals on Saturday. In the metropolis beautifully decorated pandals — either replicas of landmarks or portraying some social issues — turned into the hub of activities as long serpentine lines were seen outside them to appreciate the artwork and pray before the idol of the goddess.



He said on 'Saptami', it took about one hour for the revellers to reach the pandal during the morning hours to appreciate the giant chandelier and beautiful decorations resembling Mysore Palace. Once the dusk descended the crowd swelled twice as the illumination on the adjacent waterbody — resembling animation cartoons — came alive at College Square. Large crowds gathered to have a glimpse of the 'sabeki' (traditional) idols of the goddess at Baghbazar and Maddox Square in two parts of the city — with musical performances happening at the later pandal.

At Belur Math near the city, thousands of devotees gathered to have a glimpse of the goddess. Large crowds were seen before the Burma Shel pandal at Sodepur, Harry Potter Jadunagari at Sukhchar in North 24 Parganas and ITI More pandal at Kalyani in Nadia districts among other crowd-puller pandals in the districts. To the accompaniment of 'dhak' (traditional drum), puja committee members took the 'kala bou' depicted as the wife of Lord Ganesh draped in a white saree to nearby waterbodies.

Pujas were held in households like the Sabarna Roy Choudhury family, Sovabazar Rajbari, Sukiya Street Srimani Bari, Hatkhola Dutta Bari, Chhatubabu Latubabu Bari among others. NGOs took elderly citizens of different old age homes to landmark puja pandals to give them a taste of the festivities, and the latest changes in decorations during the day. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wished the people of the state on the occasion of Maha Saptami. Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari also wished the people on the occasion.

Khattar meets families of people hit by Nuh violence

PTI ■ NUH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Saturday met those affected by the July 31 communal violence here. Khattar also offered prayers at the Nalsheshwar Mahadev temple in Nalhar village, where a procession led by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) had been attacked.

Six people were killed in the communal violence, most of them during the attack. A Muslim cleric was killed in adjoining Gurugram. "Every citizen condemns such incidents and these events should never have occurred," the chief minister said at Badkali Chowk where he visited an oil mill that was set afire during the riots. "Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the district administration and the government to restore law and order promptly." "Thanks to the collective efforts of everyone, the situation has returned to normal," he told reporters. He met the family of Shakti Singh, 35, a resident of Bhadas village who lost his life in the Nuh violence and offered his condolences. Khattar assured Singh's fami-



ly of the government's support and issued directions to the district administration to make arrangements for the education of Singh's children. He said the government had called for applications on the 'E-kshatipoorti' portal for those who suffered losses in this violence. "Compensation is still pending for some individuals, and a decision on this matter will be made soon. Investigations are also underway to determine the insurance claims for certain damaged vehicles," he said. Khattar laid the foundation stone of the Yagyashala at the Gurukul in Bhadas village and also interacted with locals. Meanwhile, on the occasion of police commemoration day, the Haryana Chief Minister paid tributes to the police per-

PM nod to Naidu's appointment as nominated member of Gandhi Peace Prize jury: Reddy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the appointment of former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu as a nominated member in the existing jury of the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize, according to Union minister G Kishan Reddy. The Union culture minister shared this information in a letter sent by him to Naidu. The ministry officials released a copy of the letter to the media on Saturday. Prime Minister Modi heads the jury of the prize. The Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by government of India in 1995, on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute to the ideals espoused by the Mahatma. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender. It carries an amount of ₹1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft or handloom item.

'E-scooter injuries up 70 per cent among teens, helmet use must'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As electric scooters become an increasingly popular mode of transportation across countries including India, new research led by an Indian-origin scientist finds a 71 per cent increase in injuries reported in children and teens aged 18 and younger, with limited use of helmets resulting in the head as the most injured body part. Over the two-year study period, US emergency departments reported 13,557 injuries related to e-scooters within the pediatric population. India is yet to conduct any survey on the accidents involving e-scooters and bikes. As per the said study, the number of injuries increased 71 per cent, from 5,012 in 2020 com-

pared with 8,545 in 2021. The most common primary diagnosis was fracture, and the most injured body part was the head. "As more and more children and adolescents turn to using electric scooters, it is critical that physicians, policymakers, and researchers work together to develop safe riding practices and proper infrastructure such as the enforcement of helmet use during rides and the institution of more bike and scooter lanes," said Radhika Gupta, medical student at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Among cases in which helmet use was reported, only 32 per cent reported wearing a helmet at the time of injury.

Ministry: Must for OTT platforms to display anti-tobacco warnings on screen



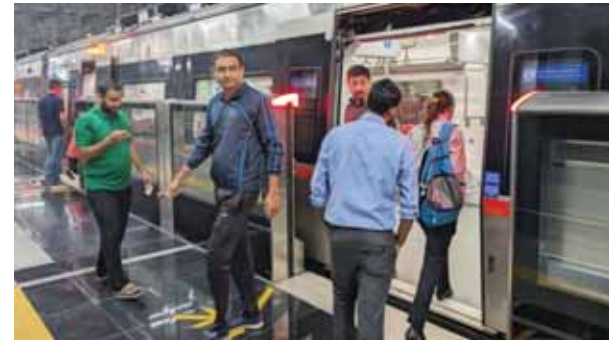
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Saturday warned of action against online streaming platforms in case of non-compliance to incorporate anti-tobacco warnings in their content under OTT Rules 2023. The Ministry termed as "false, misleading and based on misrepresented facts" a media report that recently claimed that the Union Government has reached "an uneasy compromise" with OTT (over-the-top) streaming services on adding smoking warnings to their content. "The report further claims that some platforms have chosen less intrusive warnings as a result of such an agreement. "The media report is not factually correct and does not reflect the correct picture of the Union Government's commitment towards improving public health as one of its priority duties," the ministry said in a statement. Considering public health as a priority issue, the government has extended the COTP (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products) film rules to OTT platforms also. The OTT Rules 2023 became operative from September 1, 2023. Under these rules, now all OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar, Jio Cinema, Sony LIV, ALTBalaji, Voot, etc. have to display anti-tobacco health spots, anti-tobacco health warnings as a prominent static message and audio-visual disclaimer on the ill-effects of tobacco use as prescribed in the rules.

RRTS ridership to cross 10,000 mark on day 1

STAFF REPORTER ■ SAHIBABAD

Services on a priority section of India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor began on Saturday and the ridership is expected to cross the 10,000-mark on day one, a senior official of the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) said. The much-anticipated commencement of commercial operations on the 17-km section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor began amid excitement among passengers. The inaugural 'Namoh Bharat' train journey kicked off at 6 am, and the services received an "overwhelming response" from commuters, some of whom had arrived as early as 4.30 am, eager to be a part of this historic journey, even from nearby areas like Muradnagar and from far-off areas in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, a senior official of the NCRTC said. Vinay Kumar Singh, Managing



Director of NCRTC also took a ride on the inaugural day of the 'Namoh Bharat' train services. He welcomed the first set of passengers of India's first 'Namoh Bharat' train in the morning, and also interacted with them at platforms and in coaches, officials said. The first set of passengers have also been acknowledged as the 'First Rider' and a certificate been provided, they said. 'Namoh Bharat' trains are equipped with hi-tech features and a number of passenger amenities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

on Friday inaugurated this section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor by unveiling a plaque at its Sahibabad station and also took a ride in a train. Passenger services will go on till 11 pm, and October 21 being a weekend, the numbers are expected to swell further till the end of revenue services, the officials said. It is expected that the 'Namoh Bharat' train ridership can "easily cross the 10,000-mark on the very first day of the services, as per the last update," the NCRTC said in a statement in

the evening. Since morning, passengers were excited and some of them even danced in the aisles inside coaches, expressing their sheer joy and excitement of being the riders of India's first 'Namoh Bharat' train. Families and friends also had gathered, clicked pictures, took selfies, and captured videos, all eager to be a part of this historic moment, the NCRTC officials said. India's first semi-high-speed regional rail service seeks to redefine travel in the region with swift speed and latest technology. The priority section, between Sahibabad and Duhai Depot, has five stations — Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldhar, Duhai and Duhai Depot. The segment from Duhai to Duhai Depot is a spur from the main corridor. Travellers from all walks of life including women, senior citizens, and children were among the first set of passengers, the NCRTC said. "More crowd was seen at Sahibabad and Duhai Depot stations, and besides those who

came just to experience the ride, many office-goers were also among the passengers on day one. A family came with many of their members, old and young, all the way from Kailash Colony in Delhi to take a ride from Sahibabad station," a senior official of the NCRTC said. A one-way journey from Sahibabad to Duhai Depot station on the priority section of this RRTS corridor will cost ₹50, while the fare for the same route will be ₹100 in a premium-class coach. To provide last-mile connectivity to passengers, the NCRTC has ensured availability of electric auto-rickshaws under RRTS feeder services, by roping in service providers stations, the statement. The DTC has also started an AC electric bus service from Anand Vihar to Sahibabad station with a frequency of 20 minutes. According to the schedule, the first AC electric bus will depart from Anand Vihar ISBT at 6.20 am, while the last one do so at 9.35 pm.

Power, pelf corrupt all

From Page 1 A couple of days later, when Darshan Hiranandani submitted an affidavit confirming all allegations levelled against her by Jai Dehadrai, she still didn't know how to react. So, she questioned why the affidavit was on a white paper. She wondered whether "Modi" had put a gun to Hiranandani's head for this "confession". A day

later, a notarised copy of Hiranandani's affidavit appeared in public domain, duly signed by Hiranandani himself in the presence of the Consul General of Dubai. To make matters worse, the lawyer representing Mohua Mitra in the Delhi High court made the cardinal mistake of looking for a settlement with Dehadrai. That too found its way in public domain courtesy Jai himself. So Now Ms Moitra has nowhere to run, if she did offer her parliamentary login. To a foreign individual asking straight parliamentary questions, it shows her in an extremely poor light. Someone who doesn't value the very Parliament she represents. To find a way out of this hole is going to be a real tough battle for Ms Moitra. The motor will clearly be missing from the motormouth that Ms Moitra had created for herself.

Delhi Government proposes to create knowledge economy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has proposed the 'Industrial and Economic Development Policy 2023-33' to create a knowledge-based economy through high-tech industrial development and services sector and make the national capital a "24-hour city". Industries department officials on Saturday said that comments have been invited from the shareholders on the policy white paper till November 20. The proposed policy envisions making Delhi a globally competitive urban economy through the promotion of night economy, plug-and-play facilities, startups and new eco-

nomics activities. The mission of the government through the policy will be to promote the services sector and knowledge-based economy, hi-tech industrial and economic development, stated the white paper. The policy objectives will be implemented in a timely and transparent manner while creating an accountable governance mechanism. The policy will be operational for 10 years after its notification, it stated. "The concept of a '24-hour city' for Delhi will be promoted through the model shops and establishments (regulation of employment and conditions of services) Act 2015, as well as

the formulation of a suitable night-time economy policy," said the policy white paper. Nodes, precincts, or circuits will be identified for continuing work, cultural activity, and entertainment at night to attract tourists and locals. This will improve economic yield by extending the utilization of workspaces and safety in the city by promoting a vibrant nightlife, it said. The night-time economy refers to the mix of business, leisure, social and cultural activities, and related activities including food, beverages and entertainment-focused core activities such as restaurants, cafes, pubs, theatres, festivals, markets, and live music.

Hotel owner, eight-year-old son, stabbed to death in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A hotel owner in his 30s and his eight-year-old son were stabbed to death in their sleep in their house in central Delhi's Paharganj area, police said on Saturday. The body of the two was discovered Saturday afternoon when the hotel owner's wife and daughter came to check on them failing to get a response after several calls on the man's mobile phone, police said. The victims were identified as Anuj Singh and his son Raunak. "Their bodies were discovered on the first floor of the building, where Anuj used to stay with his family. His neck was

slit and there were multiple stab wounds on his body. The body was lying on the bed," a police officer said. His son was lying on the floor in a pool of blood, he said. The house was ransacked and some valuables were suspected to be missing, the officer said. DCP (Central) SK Sain said a case of murder is registered at Nabi Karim Police Station and an investigation has been launched into the killings. "A man from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, identified as Sonu, who was hired as a hotel staff, is our prime suspect as he was staying on the second floor of the building and has been missing since morning," Sain said.

Kumaun University Nainital (Uttarakhand)
Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Confidential Printing
Kumaun University, Nainital (KU) invites sealed tenders from competent & reputed security printing companies/ firms for different works relating to printing and processing of confidential paper for University examinations for session 2023-24. Tender document, terms and conditions are available at university's official website www.kuonline.ac.in. Interested parties may send their tenders in strict confidence so as to reach P.O. Box No. 14, Head Post Office, Mallital, Nainital - 263001 (Uttarakhand) latest by 31.10.2023 upto 1700 Hrs. Registrar date: 21/10/23

City readies to deal with 'very poor' air quality

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) forecasted that Delhi's air quality is likely to deteriorate and fall into the "very poor" category on October 23 and 24 due to unfavorable meteorological and climatic conditions, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) invoked Stage 2 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). They directed authorities in the National Capital Region to increase parking fees to discourage private transport and to enhance CNG or electric bus and metro services. Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 15.8 degrees Celsius on

Saturday, three notches below the season's average, while the city registered air quality in the "poor" category. The sub-committee for operationalisation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM) met on Saturday to take stock of air quality scenario of Delhi-NCR. At a meeting to review the air quality situation in the Delhi-NCR, the CAQM a statutory body responsible for proactively implementing GRAP, said forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) suggest Delhi's overall air quality is likely to dip and enter the 'very poor' category on October 23 and 24, owing to unfavourable meteorological and climatic conditions.

els at 161 and PM 2.5 levels at 82. Accordingly, the Sub-Committee for operationalisation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM) met on Saturday to take stock of air quality scenario of Delhi-NCR. At a meeting to review the air quality situation in the Delhi-NCR, the CAQM a statutory body responsible for proactively implementing GRAP, said forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) suggest Delhi's overall air quality is likely to dip and enter the 'very poor' category on October 23 and 24, owing to unfavourable meteorological and climatic conditions.



The panel therefore decided to invoke the measures under Stage II of GRAP in the entire NCR in addition to steps already taken under Stage I. "All actions as envisaged under Stage-II be implemented in right earnest by all the agencies concerned in NCR with immediate effect, in addition to all Stage-I actions of GRAP already in force," it said in an order. The CAQM also advised to carry out mechanical/vacuum sweeping and water sprinkling of the identified roads on a daily basis and to ensure water sprinkling along with use of dust suppressants (at least every

alternate day, during non-peak hours) on roads to arrest road dust especially at hotspots, heavy traffic corridors, vulnerable areas and proper disposal of dust collected in designated sites/landfills. The CAQM reiterated its October 31 deadline for National Capital Region (NCR) states to phase out older buses running below the BS-VI benchmark. It stated that from November 1 onwards, only electric, CNG-run and BS-VI buses will be allowed to ply within the NCR districts or to and from Delhi. According to data from Central Pollution Control Board, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium recorded an AQI of 190 which falls in moderate category. CRRI Mathura Road station recorded moderate air quality with AQI of 152. ITO station recorded an AQI of

191 which falls in moderate category. Mandir Marg station recorded moderate air quality with an AQI of 176. Poor air quality was recorded in areas like Burari with AQI at 275, Dwarka Sector-8 recorded 251 AQI, Jahangirpuri recorded 263 AQI, Rohini recorded 247 AQI while Wazirpur station recorded an AQI of 235. Anand Vihar station also recorded poor air quality with an AQI of 239 according to CPCB. GRAP categorises actions into four stages: Stage I - 'Poor' (AQI 201-300); Stage II - 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400); Stage III - 'Severe' (AQI 401-450); and Stage IV - 'Severe Plus' (AQI >450). Authorities are also tasked with enforcing a complete ban on the use of coal and firewood in 'tandoors' at hotels, restaur-

ants and open eateries, along with taking punitive action against polluting industrial units and thermal power plants within 300 kilometres of Delhi. Ensuring the proper implementation of guidelines for dust mitigation at construction and demolition project sites and sound environmental management of resulting waste is also part of Stage I. Stage II measures involve increasing parking fees to discourage private transport and enhancing CNG or electric bus and metro services by introducing additional fleets and increasing service frequency. Under Stage III, BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers are prohibited from operating in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, and Gautam Buddh Nagar.

NGT seeks report from authorities over poor air



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices and sought action-taken reports from several authorities, including the Delhi Chief Secretary, Union Environment Ministry and MCD, in a matter regarding the deteriorating air quality in the national Capital. The NGT issued the notices while hearing a matter where it had initiated suo motu (on its own) proceedings based on media reports on the deterioration in Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) and violations of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), under which stricter measures are taken to curb air pollution during winter. Noting the reports, a bench of Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel said despite action taken by the authorities, the problem of air pollution is

aggravating in Delhi and the residents are facing various health problems due to it. "We deem it proper to implead the following authorities in the matter -- chief secretary, Delhi, member-secretary, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), member-secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). Let notice be issued to the aforesaid respondents," the tribunal said in an order passed on Friday. It directed them to file action-taken reports on controlling air pollution from different sources in Delhi in accordance with the GRAP to maintain the AQI in an acceptable range to safeguard public health in view of the winter season ahead. The matter has been listed on November 8 for further proceedings.

Green body issues notices to CPCB, Punjab Chief Secy over stubble fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Voicing concern over burning of crop residue that causes air pollution in the national Capital, the National Green Tribunal has issued notices to the Punjab Chief Secretary and member secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The NGT was hearing a petition it had initiated on its own (suo motu) following a media report highlighting a rise in farm fire incidents in Punjab. The report said stubble burning in the state around autumn was among the "biggest contributors" to pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR). A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel noted a report by the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) which detailed the comparative data of three years on stubble burning incidents along with the names of hotspot districts known for farm fire incidents. "Effective implementation of various measures is the key for controlling stubble burning in the state," the bench said on Friday. It said the state author-



ities, including PPCB officials, needed to identify the worst-affected areas within the hotspot districts where remedial measures should be focussed. "The period when the stubble burning takes place is mainly between September 15 to November 30. Hence, during this period, the concerned authorities are required to be vigilant in identifying the violators, and in taking remedial measures, including imposition of penalty," the bench said. The green panel also took on record a report by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas which tabulated the actual count of incidents of stubble burning in 2022 and the targets for reducing them during the current year. Underscoring that to achieve the targets, an "effective on-ground action" was required, the tribunal directed the PPCB to prepare and place on record an area-wise crop residue management plan. "We also deem it proper to issue notice to the Chief Secretary and Member Secretary, CPCB," the tribunal said and sought action taken reports from the PPCB and CAQM. The matter has been listed on November 8 for further hearing.

'Cleaning of Yamuna far from satisfactory'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has observed the cleaning of Yamuna "is far from satisfactory." The NGT also observed that the reports filed by agencies, including the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), the Delhi government and others, were "deficient" on various issues, including not providing the details of the drains being discharged in the river, monitoring the functioning of the sewage treatment plants (STPs) and restoration of the river's floodplains and wetlands. A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted that based on the tribunal's earlier directions, the Delhi government, DJB, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Haryana had filed status reports about the river. The bench, also comprising Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel, said the reports were "deficient" on various issues, including details of the drains discharging both treated and untreated wastewater in the river and the quantity and quality of the discharged wastewater. Also, there was no mention of the STPs that had been con-



structed, upgraded and currently operational along with the capacity of the existing STPs, the bench had said in an order passed on October 17. It noted the report failed to mention the steps taken for utilisation of the treated wastewater for agriculture, horticulture, construction activities, dust mitigation and other non-contact purposes and measures for rejuvenation and restoration of the river floodplain and the associated wetlands. "Details of those areas or colonies which have so far not been covered in the above scheme (sewage network system) shall be furnished indicating timelines for laying

ACB gets nod for probe against 10 officials of Hedgewar Hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Vigilance (DoV) has given a green signal to the Delhi Police Anti Corruption Branch (ACB) to initiate a probe against 10 officials of Hedgewar Hospital, run by the Delhi Government under prevention of corruption act in a 10 year old case. The case was registered in 2014 on a complaint of Rajesh Karla, Medical Superintendent of Dr Hedgewar hospital, regarding inflated bills submitted by a private pharmacy company involving staff of the hospital. The case was transferred to the Delhi police Anti Corruption Branch in 2022 and the ACB got approval to probe the matter in October 2023. "The Directorate of Vigilance endorses the proposal of the Anti-Corruption Branch for



carrying out an investigation by ACB against the offices/officials of Hedgewar Hospital, Delhi. The case is fit for permission u/s 17A Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 for conducting investigation," the DoV said. The DoV said during the investigation, it was found that the staff of Dr. Hedgewar Hospital was involved in the commission of offence pertaining to clearance of bills of the pharmacy company. It was also revealed that that pharmacy company gave cheques of Rs. 1,41,00,000/- to settle the excess payment made to them out of which a cheque of Rs.91 Lakhs

were cleared and cheque of ₹50 lakhs got dishonored. Hence, the above FIR was registered in Police Station Farsh Bazar, Shandara District. The DoV said in this case the complaint was filed by Dr. Rajesh Kalra (MS), on the basis of discrepancies noticed/raised by Manoj Kumar Chauhan (DA) and Dr. Yogesh Kumar Kataria (Pharmacist) who were the government officials/public servants which shows the authenticity/genuineness of the allegation in the complaint. The name of the accused officials had come out during the course of investigation after lodging FIR on Dt. 14.07.2014 which indicates the strong/clear involvement of the officials in the commission of offence pertaining to clearing the bills of the pharmacy company, and is the matter of concern.

Man held for Swiss woman's murder

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a woman was found murdered near an MCD-run school, the Delhi Police on Saturday arrested a man in connection with the murder of a 30-year-old Swiss woman, whose body was recovered from West Delhi's Tilak Nagar area. The hands and legs of the body were tied with metal chains, while its upper portion was covered with a black plastic bag, police said. According to police, the accused, identified as Gurpreet Singh (30), was arrested from his house in Janakpuri where he resides with his parents and sister. The accused has claimed that she came to meet him from Switzerland after they got acquainted through a dating app and that he allegedly strangled her to death following a quarrel. The police, however, said they



are yet to verify the sequence of events and other details as no identity proof of the woman has been recovered so far. Delhi Police officials claimed that ₹2.10 crore cash was recovered from his house after which the Income Tax department was also informed. According to a police officer, the suspect was arrested based

on CCTV footage in which he was seen sitting in a white colour Hyundai Santro car which was used for dumping the body. The body of the woman, who was believed to be in her early 30s, was found near the Municipal Corporation of Delhi school on Friday morning with its upper part covered

with a black garbage disposal plastic bag. The victim's limbs were tied with metal chains. Gurpreet had bought the car earlier this month for Rs 2 lakh from a second-hand car dealer in the name of another woman resident of Janakpuri, police said. "It is suspected that the accused wanted to mislead the police, that's why he bought the car in someone else's name," said a police officer. The woman told the police that she was not aware that the car was bought by Gurpreet using her residence proof. Police recovered the car from Janakpuri late Friday night and subsequently nabbed the accused from his house. Police said Gurpreet was continuously changing his statement and tried to mislead the police with several versions. Gurpreet told the police that he befriended the woman through a dating app a few years ago. She would often talk to him over the phone and on October

11 she came from Switzerland to Delhi to meet Gurpreet. She stayed with Gurpreet, but two days ago they had a quarrel over an issue following which he strangled her to death, the police said quoting Gurpreet. He told the police that he tied her hands and legs with chains and kept the body in the car. The body was lying in the car, but when the foul smell started emanating, he dumped it in Tilak Nagar near the MCD school. Police said Gurpreet's family owns several properties nearby and the recovery of the large amount of cash from his possession was also being investigated. The police have not found anyone who could identify the woman except Gurpreet. "We have also questioned Gurpreet's family members," said an official. Police said Gurpreet's questioning and further investigation were still on.

Iconic Gole Market to be redeveloped as museum

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The iconic Gole Market will be conserved and redeveloped as a museum. Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday launched the project of "Conservation and Restoration of main Gole Market building as a museum and redevelopment of surrounding areas including, construction of service block and subway". Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi was also present. The restoration work will include removing encroachments, providing public facilities and handicap accessibility and reinstating the original fenestration and entrance archways. The museum will be

connected to Doctor Lane and Bhai Veer Singh Marg via an underpass. The restoration and renovation of the historic and iconic Gole Market was pending since 2006. The move comes nearly two months after New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) finalised the agency for the restoration and development of the structure as a museum during a meeting on August 23. The project will cost Rs 21.6 crore. After launching the projects aimed at restoration and rejuvenation of the iconic Gole Market, Saxena said the originality of the historic structure will not be tampered with while carrying out the restoration works. He further said it will be the

first of its kind museum in the country dedicated to women achievers of the country, in different spheres. The museum will showcase the contributions made by women of India in Art, Literature, Culture, Social Sector, Medicine, Science & Technology and especially their role in the struggle for independence. Immediately after taking over, Saxena had visited the site and promised to take up its restoration and rejuvenation. Many meetings down the line, it was felt that the restoration would require conserving the building through retrofitting. Saxena hoped that the heritage site will evolve as a central place for visitors in the coming days.



A subway and a dedicated parking space will also be part of the Gole Market project, to facilitate the visitors to the Museum, he added. The LG along with the Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, Meenakshi Lekhi also visited the construction site of Jai Prakash Narain (JPN) Library at Udyan Marg. According to New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) official, the council will try to complete the work in 12 months from the date of awarding the tender. Occupying a nodal position at the intersection of Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, Peshwa Road and Ramakrishna Mission Marg, within a kilometre from

Connaught Place, this urban landmark was initially designed by the British to serve the basic needs of the residential areas in the locality. Shops were accordingly set up for milk, vegetables, food-grains and other general items. Over the years, government apathy in its maintenance has caused numerous problems. Its external renders and plasters, reinforced brick concrete and architectural detailing have deteriorated while vegetation growth, water seepage, timber deterioration and thoughtless additions and material incompatibility have taken the sheen off the iconic structure. Speaking about the redevelopment of the JPN Library Complex, the Lt Governor informed that the facility will

be converted into an ultra-modern, world class library. To be developed by NDMC, in the heart of New Delhi, the JPN Library will house more than 30000 books with a seating capacity of 200. The JPN Library will have a total area of 2250 sq.mtrs over three-stories of 755 Sq.mtrs each and will be constructed at a cost of ₹6.81 crore. While CPWD has provided an amount of ₹2.16 crore for the Library, the balance amount will be borne by NDMC. The fully air-conditioned Library building will also have an Auditorium on the ground floor and will be disabled friendly. On the occasion, chairman NDMC, and other senior officers of NDMC were present.

Leaders laud scientists for Gaganyaan test flight feat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh and Congress president Malliarjun Kharge on Saturday hailed the successful launch of the Gaganyaan's TV-D1 test flight.

Hailing the achievement, Modi said the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successful launch of a test vehicle as part of its Gaganyaan mission takes India a step closer to realising its first human space flight programme.

In a post on X, he said, "This launch takes us one step closer

to realising India's first human space flight programme, Gaganyaan. My best wishes to our scientists at ISRO."

Overcoming initial hiccups, including a monitoring anomaly, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday successfully launched a test vehicle with payloads related to the country's ambitious human space flight programme, Gaganyaan. Scientists simulated an abort situation for the Crew Escape System (CES) to carry the Crew Module out of the test vehicle, TV-D1, as they made a splash into the Bay of Bengal with planned precision, setting off jubilation among ISRO sci-

entists at the Mission Control Center.

"After the successful launch of the Chandrayaan-3, our nation is ready to take its next giant stride in the realm of space. Today the @isro launched #Gaganyaan's TV-D1 Test Flight into space scripting another remarkable space odyssey," Home Minister Shah said.

"My heartfelt congratulations to our scientists and our citizens on this momentous occasion of success and fulfilment," Shah said in a post on X.

The Gaganyaan programme aims to send humans into space on a Low Earth Orbit of 400 km for three days and bring them back safely to Earth.



The test vehicle mission was aimed at studying the safety of the crew module and crew escape system in bringing astronauts back to Earth in the eventual mission.

Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said the successful test flight of the abort mission of the Gaganyaan project has set the stage for the remaining qualification tests and unmanned missions, which would lead to India's first human spaceflight.

"Well begun is half done," said Singh, who is also the Minister of State for Space, as he congratulated ISRO on the success of the test vehicle development flight 1 (TV-D1) at the Sriharikota spaceport.

"Today's event has paved the way for a series of tests of systems and procedures with the aim to ultimately launch an Indian astronaut in Space, possibly around the year 2025,"

Singh said in a statement. Human safety is of paramount importance in the Gaganyaan mission, said the Minister, adding that the test flight this morning validated the capability to move the crew to safety in case of adverse conditions soon after the launch.

"Today's exercise tested the performance of the Crew Escape System on the Crew Module of the Gaganyaan mission. Basically, it tested the safety mechanism that will allow the crew of the Gaganyaan mission to escape the spacecraft in case the mission is aborted due to a malfunction," Singh said.

Crew Module (CM) is the habitable space with earth-like environment in space for the

crew. Service Module will be used for providing necessary support to the crew module while in orbit, he said.

Kharge congratulated the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for successfully conducting the test vehicle mission ahead of the human space flight programme.

In a post on X, Kharge said the country's human space flight programme has been in the works since 2007 and expressed happiness that it is moving towards achieving its goal. "Our best wishes to all the scientists, space engineers, crew and researchers at ISRO for the success of Gaganyaan test flight mission (TV-D1)," he said.

65 per cent fall in terrorism incidents in N-E: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Saturday there has been a 65 per cent fall in incidents of terrorism, Left Wing Extremism and insurgency in the Northeast.

He also asserted that the country's "three hotspots — LWE (Left Wing Extremism-hit states), the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir — are becoming peaceful."

The Narendra Modi Government has made strict laws while maintaining a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, the Home Minister told a gathering after paying homage to martyrs on Police Commemoration Day at the National Police Memorial.

On October 21, 1959, 10 policemen died in the line of duty during an ambush laid by heavily armed Chinese troops at the Hot Springs in Ladakh.



Since then, every year October 21 is observed to honour these martyrs and all other police personnel who died in the line of duty.

On the occasion of Police Commemoration Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded police personnel for their

dedication and for guiding citizens through challenges.

In a post on X, Modi said, "We laud the relentless dedication of our police personnel. They are pillars of great support, guiding citizens through challenges and ensuring safety."

Their unwavering commitment to service embodies the true spirit of heroism. A heartfelt tribute to all the personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice," he said.

Meanwhile, Shah said the government has also worked towards making the best anti-terrorism force in the world by

setting up the "Police Technology Mission" for modernisation of the police force, he said. He said the Modi Government has introduced three Bills in Parliament for a comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system.

The three legislations will replace 150-year-old laws and guarantee all due Constitutional rights to every citizen, the minister said and added that the proposed laws will also reflect Indianness.

He said Modi has laid stress on ending pendency of cases in courts.

"There has been a 65 per cent fall in terror, Left Wing Extremism and insurgency incidents in the Northeast from their peak levels in the last decade due to the efforts and achievements of brave police personnel," Shah said.

He said whether it is to combat terrorists, stop crime, maintain law and order while facing a crowd, protect citizens during disasters and accidents or be on the front line during difficult times such as the Covid-19 pandemic, police personnel have proved themselves in every situation.

Shah said internal as well as

border security of any country is not possible without a vigilant police system.

Referring to the role played by police personnel in a disaster, he said in the past, through the NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), personnel of different police forces have earned a name across the world in disaster management.

"No matter how big the disaster is, when NDRF personnel reach there, people get confidence that now there is no problem as the NDRF has arrived," he said.

Shah said the Modi government is working towards improving several schemes being run for the welfare of police personnel by making changes in them from time to time.

The Modi Government is dedicated to the welfare of all personnel and is concerned for their safety, he said.

Paying tributes to 36,250 police personnel, who laid down their lives while serving the nation since independence, he said this police memorial is not just a symbol but a recognition of the sacrifice and dedication of police personnel towards nation building.

Study: Midlife adoption of DASH may improve women's cognitive function

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



It goes without saying that a healthy diet is good for health. However, a new study has suggested that a mid-life lifestyle modification — adoption of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, or DASH diet — may improve cognitive function later in life for women, who make up more than two-thirds of those diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the most prevalent form of dementia.

It said that women with diets during middle age designed to lower blood pressure were about 17 per cent less likely to report memory loss and other signs of cognitive decline decades later.

Led by researchers from NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the new findings suggest that a mid-life lifestyle modification — adoption of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, or DASH diet — may improve cognitive function later in life for women, who make up more than two-thirds of those diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the most prevalent form of dementia.

The findings, published online in the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia, have implications for Alzheimer's patients whose number is expected to more than double by 2060.

"Subjective complaints about daily cognitive performance are early predictors of more serious neurocognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's," said Yu Chen, PhD, MPH, professor in the Department of Population Health and senior author of the study.

"With more than 30 years of follow-up, we found that the stronger the adherence to a DASH diet in midlife, the less likely women are to report cognitive issues much later in life."

The DASH diet includes a high consumption of plant-based foods that are rich in potassium, calcium, and magnesium and limits saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar. Longstanding research shows that high blood pressure, particularly in midlife, is a risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia.

The investigators analysed data from 5,116 of the more than 14,000 women enrolled in the NYU Women's Health Study, one of the longest running studies of its kind that examines the impact of lifestyle and other factors on the development of the most common cancers among women, as well as other chronic conditions.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the public at large that the Property Being Plot No. L-96, measuring 250 sq. Yards, part of Kharsa No. 59/241 situated at Village Hastal Colony Known as Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, was rightfully owned by Mr. Jaswinder Singh and Mr. Jagjit Singh vide GPA, ATS, and Will dated 18/03/1997. Unfortunately, Mr. Jagjit Singh died on 18/07/2016, after his demise, I namely Mr. Harpreet Singh has become the owner of share of my father, Late Mr. Jagjit Singh being his only legal heir. Further I have executed an Relinquishment deed bearing No. 8679, Volume No.430, Pages 65 to 69, Book No.1 dated 26/04/2019 in favour of Mrs Nandinder Kaur in respect of the above mentioned property.

I, Sadiq Iqbal, W/o. Javed Akhtar, R/o. A-189, 4th floor, Abul Fazal Enclave-II, Shaheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name after marriage as Sadiq Javed for all future purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

PD(185)A

Sd/- Registrar

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform general public that Mr. Chittur V Ananthakrishnan Aiyer & Mrs. Santosh Ananthakrishnan Aiyer are the unequivocal owner of the Residential Unit bearing No. 02 (super built-up area 3794.62 Sq.Ft) on Second Floor, Tower-T2-1, alongwith one no. Open covered reserved car parking space bearing no. 26 in Upper Basement, project known as "Vipul Gardens", situated in Suncliff, Sector-54, Gurgaon, (Haryana). This legal ownership was established through a Conveyance Deed dated 26.03.2007, Doc No. 26979. Above said owner has misplaced the Original Conveyance Deed dated 26.03.2007 Doc. No. 26979. SRO-Gurgaonexecuted by Mrs. Uddar Gagan Properties Pvt. Ltd., Mrs. Vipul Ltd. (formerly known as Mrs. Vipul Infrastructure Developers Ltd.) & others in favour of Mr. Chittur V. Ananthakrishnan Aiyer & Mrs. Santosh Ananthakrishnan Aiyer. Original Apartment deed dated 06.11.2007 doc. No. 16142 executed Mr. Chittur V. Ananthakrishnan Aiyer & Mrs. Santosh Ananthakrishnan Aiyer. Anyone who finds the above-mentioned documents, kindly handover the same to the Manager of KotakMahindra Bank Limited. Mr. Chittur V. Ananthakrishnan Aiyer and Mrs. Santosh Ananthakrishnan Aiyer are intending to sell the said property to Mr. Sahej Mogan who is mortgaging the said property with Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 10 days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-3101683/4562809; e-mail: accounts@vnmn.in

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot

VACANCIES

Online applications are invited w.e.f 25/10/2023 to 15/11/2023 from eligible candidates through University website i.e www.bfuhis.ac.in for the recruitment of 83 recruitment of 83 Ophthalmic Officer under Deptt. of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Punjab. For eligibility, terms & conditions & other information visit university website i.e www.bfuhis.ac.in.

Sd/- Registrar

nil/12/167/2023/29081 Dated CHD : 10/20/2023

Modi sets 6 months for saturation of welfare schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of six months to ensure the full saturation of his government's welfare schemes, official sources said on Saturday.

The Government, they said, will launch a mega drive, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, across all 2.7 lakh panchayats in the country to reach out to beneficiaries and enrol them.

The sources said the exercise will begin after Diwali next month and continue for several weeks. Specially fitted 'raths' will reach the beneficiaries across the country, they added. In a recent Cabinet meeting, Modi exhorted his colleagues to work harder and ensure that deserving beneficiaries

who have still not got the benefits of welfare schemes are reached out to faster, they said. During a meeting with top officials, he underlined the need to expedite the saturation of welfare schemes.

"He said he wants all his schemes to reach full saturation

in the next six months," a source said.

The drive will ensure the saturation of schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen), National Rural Livelihood Mission, PM KISAN, Fasal Bima Yojana, Poshan Abhiyan, Ujjwala

Jojana, Ayushman Bharat, Janashadhi Yojana and the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, besides skill development schemes and the recently launched Vishwakarma Yojana, they said.

Modi has repeatedly stressed the need for saturation of welfare schemes, asserting that such an approach also rules out any discrimination and takes welfare initiatives to every deserving citizen.

The saturation drive comes as the ruling BJP gears up for the Lok Sabha polls, likely to be held in April-May next year, under the leadership of Modi who will seek a third straight term after leading the party to two back-to-back big wins in the general elections in 2014 and 2019.

Addressing a gathering at an event to mark the foundation day of the Scindia School in Gwalior, Modi said his government's emphasis was on welfare measures to curb poverty.

He told members of the audience to hand-hold at least one poverty-stricken family. One should not rest until each and every poor person is covered under welfare schemes, including those for cooking gas, housing, bank accounts and health insurance, Modi said.

"It is necessary to rid India of poverty. Following this path, over 13.5 crore people have been lifted out of poverty. Following this path, India will remove poverty and become developed too," said the Prime Minister.

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.	Amit Choudhary/ Priyanka/ LBHIS00005229885	House No.80 PPIID No.152C793U620, Kharsa No.558/1, 562/1, 568 to 574 Situated At Gali No-11 Jawahar Nagartehsil & Dist Hisar, Haryana/ October 18, 2023	April 26, 2023 Rs. 26,10,446/-	Delhi/ Gurgaon/ Hisar

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 21, 2023 Place: Delhi/NCR (Gurgaon) Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

The following borrowers/ have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Number/ & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Anurag Shukla/ Richa Pandey (LBLLUC00006052205) & C/o Om Prakash Narayan Shukla, Babhani Saray Khargapur Imilia Gonda, Uttar Pradesh Gonda- 271204	House Comprised On Kharsa No.408, Ward Saheed Bhagat Singh, Vill Amrai, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	03/10/2023 Rs. 18,04,243/-	04/05/ 2023
2.	Shivam Shanker/ Jyoti (LBMRT00002354718) & 256 L Blak Shastri Nagar, South Uttar Pradesh Meerut- 250002	Fiat No.10/B/17/304 Second Floor F Block, Shahstri Nagar Meerut Uttar Pradesh	25/09/2023 Rs. 2,72,390/-	28/07/ 2023
3.	Vipin Kumar/ Yogendra Kumar (LBMRT00002416509) & House No.162, Ka Mandhaiya Jatan, Piliakhuva Hapur, Near Candi Mandir, Piliakhuva Ghaziabad- 201002	House No.774 Kharsa No.2123, 2124 Or 2317/ 2, Shiv Nagar Hapur Uttarpradesh- 245406	02/09/2023 Rs. 6,58,315/-	06/03/ 2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : October 21, 2023 Place : Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Danish Ali finds fault with procedures of Parliament committees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Lok Sabha MP Danish Ali has written to Speaker Om Birla flagging alleged violation of parliamentary procedures by two committees.

Referring to his notice of breach of privilege against BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri for using defamatory language against him in the Lok Sabha, Ali said the established procedure requires that the complainant member is called before the Privileges Committee first and then the accused member.

In his letter, the sources said, the BSP leader claimed that in contravention of norms, the member who is accused of making unparliamentary remarks against him appears to have been called first.

He claimed that as the complainant, the committee is yet to call him to put forth his stand.

Ali requested Birla to direct officials to call him first before the Privileges Committee to give evidence against Bidhuri, the sources said.

Bidhuri made the controversial remarks against Ali during a discussion on the success of Chandrayaan-3 in the Lok Sabha last month.

On the other hand, Ali said, the Ethics Committee appears to have followed the proper procedure by first calling BJP MP Nishikant Dubey to give oral evidence against TMC member Mahua Moitra in the 'cash-for-query' scam. Ali is a member of the Ethics Committee.

He, however, lamented that the committee chairman spoke with the media about the receipt of the affidavit filed by businessman Darshan Hiranandani, saying it was against rules.

Rajnath launches project Udbhav to make Army 'future ready'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday launched a project 'Udbhav' that aims to promote indigenous discourse in the Army by integrating India's ancient strategic acumen into contemporary military domain with a focus on making the force 'future ready.'

He also inaugurated the first edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival in Delhi to celebrate India's rich military culture and heritage, especially to showcase the 'unmatched bravery' of the armed forces in the security of the nation.

Giving details about project 'Udbhav', the defence ministry said it is designed to weave a strategic vocabulary and conceptual framework that is deeply embedded in India's philosophical and cultural heritage.

"It sets the stage for a robust, progressive and future-ready Indian Army that not only resonates with the nation's historical military sagacity but is also attuned to the demands and dynamics of contemporary warfare and diplomacy," the defence ministry said.

"The project signals a series of in-depth research, discussions, studies, and engagements to delve into and disseminate the rich, varied and often under-explored treasures of India's strategic thought and military history," it said in a statement.

It said the present-day military concepts, prevalent globally, have been largely shaped by the research and doctrines of western armies and they do not wholly suffice the unique, localised requirements and the rich cultural-strategic legacy of the Indian Army.

"Through the project, the Indian Army acknowledges that the nation is a treasure trove of ancient texts and manuscripts that delineate sophisticated, varied and contextual-

ly rich strategies in statecraft, warfare and diplomacy," the ministry said.

"This project is a significant leap towards evolving new, indigenously-resonant military concepts, building upon and enhancing existing strategies while intertwining them with the rich, diverse tactical and strategic wisdom encapsulated in historical documents," it said. Project 'Udbhav' is a joint collaboration of the Indian Army and the United Service Institution of India.

The ministry said the Indian Military Heritage Festival aims to celebrate India's rich military culture and heritage, which has evolved over the centuries, through conversations, art, dance, drama, story-telling and exhibitions.

After four years of self-imposed exile in UK, Nawaz Sharif returns home

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif returned home on Saturday on a special flight after a four-year self-imposed exile in the UK to head his party and try to secure a record fourth term in the general elections expected to be held in January. Wearing a light blue kurta pyjama, a maroon muffler and a black coat, the 73-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo flew in from Dubai to Islamabad on the 'Umeed-e-Pakistan' chartered plane at around 1:30 pm local time. On his arrival, Sharif's legal team met him and took his signature on some legal documents to be submitted to the Islamabad High Court as part of the bail process approved by the court on October 19. Authorities at the airport also took his biometrics. The PML-N supremo's legal team includes former law minister Azam Tatar. Later he left for Lahore in the same flight to address a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan, the site where the All-India Muslim League passed the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940 - the first official call for a separate and independent homeland for the Muslims of British India. The PML-N leaders are gathering at the venue to welcome him alongside a large number of party workers and supporters. His flight to Lahore from Islamabad was delayed by nearly an hour after a leader of his party accompanying him fell



sick and had to be deboarded. His party has been trying to paint his homecoming as a hope for Pakistan. About 150 PML-N supporters, who were onboard the special flight from Dubai to Islamabad, kept on chanting slogans throughout the flight. Sharif was calm during the flight and apparently read the notes for his address in Lahore in the evening. Speaking to reporters at

Dubai airport, the three-time former prime minister deplored the "very chaotic" situation in Pakistan and expressed confidence that his party was "competent" to take the cash-strapped country out of the present crisis. "When I remember Pakistan back then, I get hurt, we had said goodbye to the International Monetary Fund, electricity was cheap, the rupee was stable, there was employment, roti cost Rs 4, a poor family's child went to school and medicines were also cheap," Sharif said only the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) can decide when polls will be held, adding that it was the only competent authority and a fair election commission. The ECP is yet to fix a date for the elections but in the past said that polls would be held by January end. "Whatever date the ECP

announces, everyone will [abide by it]. My priority is whatever the ECP says. Pakistan has a fair ECP today and I feel it will make the best decision with regards to the election. Lamenting the treatment meted out to him in the past, he said he was the person who had gone through 150 court hearings. "Not just me but also my daughter. She even got a clean chit. She had to get it. She didn't have a position during my government, not even an office." He said fake cases were not just filed against his family including former prime minister and his brother Shehbaz Sharif but also ex-interior minister Rana Sanaullah Khan and PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi. "I even said before leaving that I leave everything to Allah (God) and I still continue doing that."

'Coward fugitive returning under judicial asylum'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Calling former premier Nawaz Sharif a "national criminal", his immediate successor Imran Khan's party on Saturday said the state has buried shame, modesty, law and justice with its own hands by paving the way for the "coward fugitive" to return home under "judicial asylum". Sharif, 73, returned home on a special flight from Dubai, ending a four-year self-imposed exile in the UK, to head his party and try to secure a record fourth term in the general elections expected to be held in January. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) reacted strongly to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo's return to the country, saying the "coward fugitive is returning under judicial asylum".

In a statement on Saturday, a PTI spokesperson said "state has buried shame, modesty, law and justice with its own hands" to pave the way for "national criminal's return" to the country from London. Ahead of Sharif's arrival, his legal team approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC), which on Thursday granted him a protective bail until October 24 in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia corruption cases. Also, an anti-corruption court in Pakistan suspended his arrest warrant in the Toshakhana vehicles case. Sharif has been prime minister three times but was ousted in 2017 and given a lifetime disqualification from politics after being convicted of corruption. Referring to the ouster of the Imran Khan-led government in April 2022, the PTI spokesperson said after the regime change

conspiracy, the state elements after ridiculing the Constitution and democracy "tied the country and the nation in the chains of dictatorship and thrown it to the corrupt wolves". The statement further said that incarcerated PTI chairman Khan launched a political struggle against the nexus between the criminals and the state 27 years ago. It said that the nation is standing against thieves, mafia and plunderers under the leadership of Khan. "The nation is ready to 'welcome' its criminal who has been 'adopted' by the state," the PTI spokesperson said, adding that the people will hold accountable the criminals who have robbed the nation from generation to generation. The statement also reiterated the demand that an immediate holding of transparent, free and fair elections can steer the country out of crisis.

Release of two US hostages by Hamas welcomed

AP ■ ILLINOIS



In this photo provided by the Government of Israel, Judith Raanan (right) and her 17-year-old daughter Natalie are escorted by Israeli soldiers and Gal Hirsch, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's special coordinator for returning the hostages, as they return to Israel from captivity in the Gaza Strip on Friday. AP/PTI

US President Joe Biden joined others on Friday in welcoming the stunning news from Israel that Hamas had freed an American woman and her teenage daughter it had held hostage in Gaza for two weeks. An Israeli army spokesman said the two Americans, Judith Raanan and her 17-year-old daughter Natalie, were out of the Gaza Strip and with the Israeli military. Hamas said Friday it released them for humanitarian reasons in an agreement with the Qatari government. They were the first hostages to be released since Hamas militants, according to Israel, abducted roughly 200 people during their Oct. 7 rampage. "I am overjoyed that they will soon be reunited with their family, who has been wracked with fear," Biden said in Washington. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which transported the freed Americans from Gaza to Israel, said their release offered "a sliver of hope" for those still being held. Judith and Natalie Raanan had been on a trip from their home in the Chicago suburb of Evanston to Israel to celebrate the Jewish holidays, according to family members. They were in Nahal Oz, near Gaza, on October 7 for Simchat Torah, a festive Jewish holiday, when Hamas and other militants stormed into southern Israeli towns, killing hundreds of people and abducting others. Their family had heard nothing from them since the attack and were later told by US

and Israeli officials that they were being held in Gaza. Natalie's brother Ben has said previously. "The news that Judith and Natalie have been released from the hands of Hamas is overwhelming. It brings us a tremendous amount of gratitude to the Almighty, to God, for this incredible miracle," Meir Hecht, Judith Raanan's rabbi, said at a press conference outside his home in Evanston, Illinois, on Friday afternoon. "At the same time we hold our pain very deep," said Hecht, who called for the other hostages to be released as soon as possible. "We need to continue beseeching whoever we can and however we can, and praying for their release." Judith came regularly to Meir's congregation and felt like "part of our family," the rabbi said. Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker and US Sen. Tammy Duckworth expressed relief at news of the Raanans' release while asking people to remember other families whose relatives were abducted. "After being held against their will for nearly two weeks, they are now safe and receiving necessary medical treatment," Pritzker said of Natalie and Judith. "I cannot wait to welcome them back home after demonstrating immense strength and bravery in the face of unthinkable terror." Qatar said it would continue its dialogue with Israel and Hamas in hopes of winning the release of all hostages "with the ultimate aim of de-escalating the current crisis and restoring peace." Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Israel was continuing to work to return hostages and find the missing, and its goals had not changed. "We are continuing the war against Hamas and ready for the next stage of the war," he said.

MISSILE COMPONENTS TO PAK US curbs on 3 Chinese firms

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has imposed sanctions on three China-based companies for supplying missile-applicable items for Pakistan's ballistic missile programme, the State Department said. In the designation, the US State Department said on Friday that the sanctions were being imposed as part of the global nonproliferation regime. "Today, we are designating three entities pursuant to Executive Order 13382, which targets proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. These three entities, based in the People's Republic of China (PRC), have worked to supply missile-applicable items to Pakistan's ballistic missile programme," the State Department said in a statement. China, an all-weather ally of Pakistan, has been the main supplier of arms and defence equipment to Islamabad's military modernisation programme. The three companies include General Technology Limited, Beijing Luo Luo Technology Development Co Ltd., and Changzhou Utek Composite Company Ltd. They were sanctioned for having engaged or attempted to engage, in activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a risk of materially contributing to, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or their

means of delivery (including missiles capable of delivering such weapons), including any efforts to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use such items, by Pakistan. General Technology Limited has worked to supply brazing materials, which are used to join components in ballistic missile rocket engines, and in the production of combustion chambers. Beijing Luo Luo Technology Development Co Ltd. has worked to supply mandrels and other machinery, which can be used in the production of solid propellant rocket motors and can be controlled by the Missile Technology Control Regime. Changzhou Utek Composite Company Ltd. has worked since 2019 to supply D-glass glass fibre, quartz fabric, and high silica cloth, all of which have applications in missile systems. Today's actions demonstrate that the United States will continue to act against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, and associated procurement activities of concern, wherever they occur, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said. The United States is committed to strengthening the global nonproliferation regime by taking action to disrupt procurement networks supporting proliferation activities of concern, the US said.

Iran likely to face more sanctions

AP ■ TALLAHASSEE

Florida lawmakers will return for a special session to impose additional sanctions against Iran, express support for Israel and provide additional security to protect Jewish institutions in Florida, House and Senate leaders announced Friday. The session will also take up issues like hurricane relief, property insurance and providing more money for special needs students. Presidential candidate and Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis supports bringing lawmakers back to the Capitol to address the issues rather than wait for the January start of the annual session. "Following the horrific atrocities committed by Iranian-backed terrorist group Hamas against Israel, I am calling on the Florida Legislature to act swiftly to ensure our state does not send a penny to the Iranian terror state," DeSantis said in a news release. The four-day session will begin November 6. The special session was called because Iran supports Hamas militants who attacked Israel two weeks ago, though no government worldwide has offered direct evidence supporting that Iran orchestrated the attack. Florida already has sanctions against companies that directly do business with Iran and six other "countries of concern," including Cuba, China and Russia. The US federal government has imposed sanctions against Iran for decades.

Palestinian protestors march in London

AP ■ LONDON

Thousands of Palestinian demonstrators marched in London and other cities on Saturday to demand Israel stop its bombardment of Gaza, as the Israel-Hamas war entered its third week and its ripples spread around the globe. On the day a trickle of aid entered Gaza, where more than 1 million people have had to leave their homes because of the conflict, protesters gathered in the rain at Marble Arch near London's Hyde Park before marching to the government district, Whitehall. Waving Palestinian flags, participants called for an end to Israel's blockade and airstrikes launched in the wake of a brutal incursion into southern Israel by the Hamas militant group that controls Gaza. British authorities have urged demonstrators to be mindful of the pain and anxiety felt by the Jewish community. London's Metropolitan Police force says it has seen a 13-fold upsurge in reports of antisemitic offenses in October compared to last year. Reports of anti-Muslim crimes have more than doubled. Police said there were "pockets of disorder and some instances of hate speech" during protests, but "the majority of the protest activity has been lawful and has taken place without incident". In Australia, thousands marched through central Sydney on Saturday, shouting "Shame, shame Israel" and "Palestine will never die". Authorities in Gaza say more than 4,300 people have been killed in the territory since the latest war began.

More than 1,400 people have been killed in Israel, mostly civilians slain during Hamas' deadly incursion on October 7. Israel continued to bombard targets in Gaza on Saturday ahead of an expected ground offensive. A small measure of relief came when 20 trucks carrying humanitarian aid were allowed to enter Gaza across the southern Rafah border crossing with Egypt. The war sparked protests across the Arab world and beyond on Friday, including in the occupied West Bank, where Palestinians burned tires and threw stones at Israeli military checkpoints. Israeli security forces responded firing tear gas and live rounds. Crowds gathered in Israel's northern neighbour Lebanon; in Iraq at the country's border crossing with Jordan; in Jordan

itself; in cities and towns across Egypt; in Turkey's capital Ankara and its most populous city of Istanbul; and in Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and South Africa. In New York, hundreds of protesters from Muslim, Jewish and other groups marched to US Sen. Kristen Gillibrand's Manhattan office, many shouting "cease fire now". Police later arrested dozens of protesters who blocked Third Avenue outside Gillibrand's office by sitting in the road. Brooklyn-based Rabbi Miriam Grossman told the crowd she knows many people grieving the loss of family members killed in the Hamas attack or have friends and family taken hostage. Yet Grossman said she also knows many Palestinians "living in terror" as they lose contact with loved

ones in Gaza. In Mexico City, dozens gathered outside the Israeli Embassy on Friday evening, lighting candles and chanting "Free Palestine". Pro-Israel demonstrations and vigils have also been held around the world, many focused on securing the return of hostages captured by Hamas. Rome's Jewish community on Friday remembered the more than 200 people believed held by Hamas by setting a long Shabbat table for them outside the capital's main synagogue and empty chairs for each of the hostages. On the backs of each chair was a flyer featuring the name, age and photo of each missing person. On the table were candles, wine and loaves of challah, the braided bread typically eaten during the Friday night meal.

ICC headquarters heightens security after espionage cyber-attack

PTI ■ LONDON

The International Criminal Court (ICC) headquartered at The Hague in the Netherlands has heightened its online security after detecting a serious cyber security incident five weeks ago, which it revealed was an act of espionage. In a statement on Friday the ICC said that as soon as the incident was confirmed by its alert mechanism, steps were taken to mitigate its effects by initiating an immediate incident response with the support of the Netherlands as the "host state" and exter-

nal cyber security experts. This included forensic analysis of the incident, its causes and its impact, and initial mitigating measures. "The evidence available thus far indicates a targeted and sophisticated attack with the objective of espionage," the ICC said. "The attack can therefore be interpreted as a serious attempt to undermine the court's mandate. Based on the forensic analysis carried out, the court has already taken and will continue to take all necessary steps to address any compromise to data belonging to individuals, organisations

and States. Should evidence be found that specific data entrusted to the court has been compromised, those affected would be contacted immediately and directly by the court," it said. The ICC said that with the information currently available it is not possible to confirm who is responsible for the attack but the Dutch law enforcement authorities are currently conducting a criminal investigation. As a result of the attack, the court is reinforcing its risk management framework and identifying actions and procedures to be ready to

respond to any potential repercussions from the cyber-attack including any potential security risk to victims and witnesses, court officials and the court's operations, the ICC said. "As part of broader assessment into potential actions by threat actors, the court has also identified that disinformation campaigns targeting the ICC and its officials may be anticipated to be launched in an effort to tarnish the ICC image and delegitimise its activities. The court is also accelerating a number of existing initiatives aimed at enhancing digital security," it said.

US man charged with hate crime for punching Sikh

PTI ■ NEW YORK

A 26-year-old man has been arrested and charged with a hate crime in the US for attacking a Sikh teenager on a bus here for wearing a turban, according to media reports. Police on Thursday arrested Christopher Philippeaux, who was conditionally released by parole in July 2021 after serving more than two years in prison, and charged him with a hate crime after the incident on the bus near 118th Street and Liberty Avenue in Queens on October 15, CBS News reported. According to police, Philippeaux approached the 19-year-old Sikh boy on the New York City MTA bus and said, "We don't wear that in this country," referring to his turban. He also asked the teen to take his mask off. The suspect then punched the victim in his face, back and in the back of his head, causing cuts and pain, according to police. Police said the man also tried to remove the turban from the head of the teen before getting off the bus and running along Liberty Avenue. Records show Philippeaux was conditionally released by parole in July 2021 after serving more than two years in state prison for a Manhattan attempted robbery conviction, New York Daily News said. He has other arrests, most recently for obstructing government administration in Brooklyn last month, police said. It appears that the case has been sealed, it said.

Oman emerging as new choice for Indian destination weddings

PTI ■ MUSCAT

There has been an almost two-fold rise in the number of Indian weddings that took place across various star-category properties located across Oman this year, compared to the corresponding period last year, officials said. A representative of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman said Oman officials began communicating with Indian wedding planners many years ago to promote the Sultanate as a potential location for Indian couples looking to experience the warmth and beauty of the country as a wedding destination.

"Oman is closer and has better airline connectivity to India than other preferred destinations by Indian couples. It is also the perfect location for visitors coming from Europe and other parts of the world to attend Indian weddings," says Arjun Chadha, Country Manager India, Buzz Travel Tourism. "Salalah, with its natural topography, global hospitality brands and seamless infrastructure, is among the most sought-after destinations perfectly suited for unique weddings," Chadha told PTI in Muscat. Among the coveted wed-

ding locations are Alila Jabal Akhdar, nestled in one of the region's highest mountains, and Alila Hinu Bay, a beach property. They offer an awe-inspiring romantic backdrop in terms of nature. Alila Hinu Bay, a 45-minute drive from Salalah airport, offers its guests a true Arabian Nights' experience in the old coastal town of Mirbat. Hanadi Jawhari, marketing and communication manager of Alila Hinu Bay said, "With its sophisticated design, the property carries a heavy influence of Omani architecture paired with its minimalist aesthetics that perfectly blend with the local climate and cul-

ture, including the spectacular Omani archway corridor creating a regal feel." "Many couples choose Oman for their wedding as it is a unique destination that offers warm hospitality and luxury that matches the Indian taste," she said. Puneet Singh, General Manager of Alila Jabal Akhdar Resort said, "Jabal Akhdar caters to two main sets of clientele. During winter, which spans from September to April, we welcome European guests who typically spend a few days in Muscat, a day in the desert, and a few days in the mountains. "In winter, the weather

here is fantastic, making outdoor activities like hiking, exploring trails, and engaging in our signature activity, via Ferrata, very popular. Some guests simply unwind, relax, and enjoy our spa, pool, and dining options," Singh said. Among the many attractions in Oman is Muscat's oldest Muttrah fort, dating back to the 16th century. For the adrenalin-guzzled tourist, there is the option of snorkelling in the colourful coral reefs of the Daymaniyat Islands or camping under the stars in the Sharqiya Sands. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of

Oman conducted a four-city roadshow in India this year, starting with Delhi and concluding in Mumbai after similar shows in Jaipur and Kolkata. Chadha said the roadshow got an overwhelming response from the Indian travel trade. Oman's rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and thrilling adventure activities make it an attractive destination for Indian travellers, he said. With the growing interest in offbeat and experiential travel, Oman offers a perfect blend of tradition and modernity that captivates the hearts of our travellers, he said.

Wisps of frankincense smoke wafted through the bazaar as one plunged through the crowded Muttrah Souq of Muscat. The Frankincense is an integral part of Oman's culture and heritage. This aromatic resin is mostly used in incense and perfume and obtained from the bark of Boswellia genus trees. The Museum of the Land of Frankincense at Al Baled in Salalah borders the ruins of Al Baled Archaeological Park. Visitors can discover how trade with Frankincense and maritime strength ensured that the region flourished in the 12th century.

'Bharat Tex 2024 Expo to position India as global textiles powerhouse'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharat Tex 2024 Expo, to be held from February 26-29 next year, will position India as a truly "global textiles powerhouse", Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

The mega event has been conceptualised as the biggest textile fair in the world in terms of exhibition area, showcasing India's capabilities as a reliable supplier of textile products spanning the entire value chain under one roof. It will be held in the newly inaugurated Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi complexes.

Addressing a curtain raiser event for the Expo, the Union Minister for Textiles and Commerce and Industry shared that "Bharat Mandapam or Yashobhoomi will actually give a great fillip to our effort to make India a global destination in the textiles sector".

Goyal expressed confidence that going forward, "Bharat Tex Expo is going to position India as truly a global textiles powerhouse".

He asserted that there is no better showcase than the Bharat Tex 2024 to show to the world that India has arrived, adding that this event will go down in posterity as the one that tilted



the scales and brought the world to recognise India as a truly global player in the textiles sector.

"Our contribution to international trade may be small today but this is going to be the event that will set the benchmark for the future that will show to the world our true capabilities and strengths, our capacity to provide large scale of supplies, to have a large variety and ecosystem," Goyal said, adding that will an exhibition area spread

across 2,00,000 meters, it will be the world's largest textiles exhibition.

"For our weavers, for our craftsmen, for our handicraft sector, for our handloom sector, this truly can become a very good way to showcase what is possible," said the minister.

He hoped that by the time the Bharat Tex Expo event draws near, the 'Handmade in India' can also become a vibrant website with a large number of

stakeholders connected to it. With innovation, collaboration, and the Make in India spirit at its core, this expo is the embodiment of India's 5F vision - Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign, making products not just for India but for the entire world, Goyal said, adding that India is not afraid of global competition now.

He exhorted the industry to build its brands that are globally recognised and simultane-

ously build India as a brand. Goyal expressed the hope that the marquee event, Bharat Tex 2024 Expo, would propel the industry's growth and showcase India's potential as a mature, competitive global sourcing destination in the global textile industry.

He asked the organizers to make the fair compelling and engaging for the visitors. Besides, the Minister also launched the website of Kasturi Cotton Bharat.

"This website provides a digital platform for necessary information and updates on this initiative and highlights the registration process for winners to produce Kasturi Cotton Bharat Brand and its processes that make the branded Indian cotton unique," an official statement said.

The Kasturi Cotton Bharat is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Textiles, the Cotton Corporation of India, Trade Bodies & Industry to work on the principle of self-regulation by owning complete responsibility of Branding, Traceability and Certification of Indian Cotton to enhance its competitiveness in the global market and create a sustainable ecosystem for all stakeholders involved.

Speaking on the occasion, the

Minister remarked that "with the Kasturi Cotton Bharat Initiative, we are not just launching a brand, we are sharing India's rich heritage with the world. Let's weave a future that echoes our past.

In an era of global competition, this initiative will strategically position Indian cotton on the world map for its quality standards and commitment to best practices, said the Shri Piyush Goyal.

Besides an exhibition showcase featuring over 2,000 exhibitors from over 40 countries, the event will also feature knowledge sessions, conferences, CEO roundtables as well as B2B & G2G meetings. Designer as well as brand exhibitions, fashion shows, sustainability workshops and expert talks shall be the other highlights of the event.

Bharat Tex 2024 is being planned as a consolidated and unique platform to position and showcase India's entire textile value chain and also highlight strengths in fashion, traditional crafts and sustainability initiatives.

The event is an industry led initiative and is proposed to be organised jointly by the 12 Textile related Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and other industry bodies.



50,000 square feet of space freed under special campaign: Mines Ministry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The mines ministry on Saturday said 50,000 square feet of space has been freed under a special campaign and a revenue of ₹1.47 crore has been generated from scrap disposal.

The ministry and its subordinate organisations have utilised the Special Campaign 3.0 for disposal of pending matters and emphasized on giving back to nature through creative and innovative ways, the ministry said in a release.

"Within the first three weeks of the campaign, the ministry has been ranked amongst the top ten for reviewing old physical

files/records. It has achieved 100 per cent in easing of rules, processes, disposal of public grievances, inter-ministerial references and references received from state governments. Besides, 75 per cent of the targeted cleanliness campaigns have already been completed," it said.

The mines ministry has set targets for disposal of pending matters and stressed on giving back to nature through creative and innovative ways under the campaign.

Bird feeders and water pots have been installed, gardens with medicinal plants created, school girls have been sensitised about menstrual hygiene, it said.

'Yes Bank Q2 net profit jumps 48 per cent'

PTI ■ PTI

Yes Bank on Saturday reported an over 47 per cent increase in its net profit at ₹228.64 crore in the September quarter on a lower base, and also indicated that it is witnessing higher delinquencies in unsecured loans.

The city-headquartered private sector lender had reported a post-tax profit of ₹160.41 crore in the year-ago period, but the same was ₹347 crore in the quarter-ago period.

Its core net interest income was ₹1,925 crore for the reporting quarter despite an 11.2 per cent loan growth, and the management attributed the fall to a 0.30 percentage point compression in the net interest margins (NIM) to 2.3 per cent. The bank got a 0.20 percentage point impact on the NIMs from the repricing of past deposits on elevated interest rates and another 0.35-0.40 percentage point drag came from shortfalls in the priority sector lending targets, where in the money is deposited in low-yielding Rural Infrastructure Development Fund.

Its managing director and chief executive Prashant Kumar said that the bank is at the "near end" of the slip on the NIMs front and is aiming at expanding the number hereon.

The hit on the deposit repricing will not be witnessed again, while on the PSL part, where it is struggling to meet the sub-targets on lending to small and marginal farming segment, it is looking at purchasing PSL certificates from the market, organic expansion of loan books.

Kumar said the bank is also on the lookout to buy a microlender but does not have anything to disclose on the matter as yet.



The bank is aiming for a 15 per cent loan book growth and an 18 per cent expansion in deposits for FY24, Kumar said. When asked about the RBI's worries about unsecured loans like credit cards and personal loans, Kumar said the bank has witnessed increased delinquencies on the portfolio recently, especially in the assets which are overdue for over 30 days but are yet to slip into non-performing assets.

The gross NPAs from the unsecured loans stood at 2.1 per cent, which is higher than the retail NPAs of 1.4 per cent and the overall 2 per cent for the bank.

Kumar said the bank has taken a call on being cautious on retail assets growth strategy, given the higher stress on the unsecured loans and reaching an optimum level of 48 per cent contribution of retail in the overall assets mix.

In the September quarter, two-thirds of the fresh slippages of ₹1,200 crore were from the retail loans, Kumar said, adding that the corporate loans which had come to haunt the bank in the past are behaving well.

The overall provisions came at ₹505 crore as against ₹583 crore in the year-ago period and Kumar added that the bank is maintaining its guidance on the overall credit costs.

HIMUDA gets green signal to acquire land for Mountain City

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Housing and Urban Development Authority (HIMUDA) has received approval from its board to acquire land to establish a new township Mountain City, near Jubbar-Hatti Airport in the suburbs of Shimla, to decongest the state capital.

This project is likely to invigorate economic activities and employment in the area while creating an ultra-modern city with state-of-the-art infrastruc-

ture, incorporating advanced seismic technology. The estimated cost of this project is approximately ₹1,373 crore, a statement issued here said.

Extending a generous hand to allottees across the state who had encountered disputes concerning payment dues, the Board of Directors approved a one-time settlement (OTS) policy, offering these individuals an opportunity to settle their long-pending payment dues at a significantly reduced rate.



This policy will not only ease the financial burden on the public but also provide HIMUDA with consolidated resources that can be reinvested in further activities for the greater good of the public.

Directions were also issued to make a provision to regularise the attics of buildings under the One Time Settlement Policy and also to make its policy in accordance with the decision taken by the state government regarding the attic.

Presiding over the 52nd meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) of HIMUDA, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu also emphasised the importance of adopting the latest construction techniques and leveraging information technology platforms to enhance its presence and service to the public.

Additionally, the adoption of electronic measurement books (e-MBs) was recommended to streamline record-keeping and reduce the dependence on physical docu-

mentation. It was also directed to speed up the tendering process through the e-tendering system as per the latest guidelines from the government.

Sukhu said HIMUDA should work in a competitive manner, take innovative initiatives in its projects, improve the sizes of flats and make these more user-friendly.

He also directed officials to organise exposure visits for the employees and take effective steps for capacity building.

Oman emerging as new choice for Indian destination weddings

PTI ■ MUSCAT

There has been an almost two-fold rise in the number of Indian weddings that took place across various star-category properties located across Oman this year, compared to the corresponding period last year, officials said.

A representative of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman said Omani officials began communicating with Indian wedding planners many years ago to promote the Sultanate as a potential location for Indian couples looking to experience the warmth and beauty of the country as a wedding destination.

"Oman is closer and has better airline connectivity to India than other preferred destinations by Indian couples. It is also the perfect location for visitors coming from Europe and other parts of the world to attend Indian weddings," says Arjun Chadha, Country Manager India, Buzz Travel Tourism.

"Salalah, with its natural topography, global hospitality brands and seamless infrastructure, is among the most sought-after destinations perfectly suited for unique weddings," Chadha told PTI in Muscat.

Among the coveted wedding loca-



tions are Alila Jabal Akhdar, nestled in one of the region's highest mountains, and Alila Hinu Bay, a beach property. They offer an awe-inspiring romantic backdrop in terms of nature.

Alila Hinu Bay, a 45-minute drive from Salalah airport, offers its guests a true 'Arabian Nights' experience in the old coastal town of Mirbat.

Hanadi Jawhari, marketing and communication manager of Alila Hinu Bay said, "With its sophisticated design, the property carries a heavy influence of Omani architecture paired with its minimalist aesthetics that perfectly blend with the local climate and culture, including the

spectacular Omani archway corridor creating a regal feel."

"Many couples choose Oman for their wedding as it is a unique destination that offers warm hospitality and luxury that matches the Indian taste," she said.

Puneet Singh, General Manager of Alila Jabal Akhdar Resort said, "Jabal Akhdar caters to two main sets of clientele. During winter, which spans from September to April, we welcome European guests who typically spend a few days in Muscat, a day in the desert, and a few days in the mountains.

"In winter, the weather here is fantastic, making outdoor activities like hiking, exploring trails, and engaging in our signature activity, via Ferrata, very popular. Some guests simply unwind, relax, and enjoy our spa, pool, and dining options," Singh said.

Among the many attractions in Oman is Muscat's oldest Muttrah fort, dating back to the 16th century.

For the adrenalin-guzzled tourist, there is the option of snorkelling in the colourful coral reefs of the Daymaniyat Islands or camping under the stars in the Sharqiya Sands.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman con-

ducted a four-city roadshow in India this year, starting with Delhi and concluding in Mumbai after similar shows in Jaipur and Kolkata.

Chadha said the roadshow got an overwhelming response from the Indian travel trade. Oman's rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and thrilling adventure activities make it an attractive destination for Indian travellers, he said.

With the growing interest in off-beat and experiential travel, Oman offers a perfect blend of tradition and modernity that captivates the hearts of our travellers, he said.

Wisps of frankincense smoke wafted through the bazaar as one plunged through the crowded Mutrah Souq of Muscat.

The Frankincense is an integral part of Oman's culture and heritage. This aromatic resin is mostly used in incense and perfume and obtained from the bark of Boswellia genus trees.

The Museum of the Land of Frankincense at Al Baled in Salalah borders the ruins of Al Baled Archaeological Park.

Visitors can discover how trade with Frankincense and maritime strength ensured that the region flourished in the 12th century.



L&T signs pact with IIT Indore for research in renewable energy management

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Saturday said it has inked a pact with IIT Indore to undertake joint research and development projects in various areas like renewable energy management and control software.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by the digital energy solutions arm of L&T Construction's power transmission and distribution business.

The agreement was signed "to explore and work on activities through the framework set-up across various avenues of engagement. This initiative will drive industry-academia collaboration to advance research and development in renewable energy integration and control technologies," the company said in a statement.

Through this engagement, L&T's smart grid solution centre of excellence will be established to collaborate with the students' learning and experience programme at IIT Indore.

International banker Ashok to head Kotak Mahindra Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Ashok Vaswani as the bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) for a period of three years.

Vaswani, who has worked with Barclays in the recent past, will succeed Uday Kotak who quit as MD of the bank effective

September 1.

At present, Vaswani is President of Pagaya Technologies Ltd - a US-Israeli AI Fintech. He is also on the Board of the London Stock Exchange Group, the SP Jain Institute of Global Management, UK and supports various philanthropic organisations, including Pratham, and Lend-A-Hand.

The appointment is subject to shareholders' approval, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a state-

ment.

Vaswani has a proven track record spanning three-and-a-half decades, initially at Citigroup and more recently, at Barclays, of building and growing global businesses at scale, nurturing winning teams, establishing transformational partnerships, leveraging forward-leaning technology, with a compelling business vision to deliver strong bottom-line growth, it said.

Interim MD & CEO Kotak



Mahindra Bank Dipak Gupta said, "Ashok brings with him values and experience that align with Kotak's vision to transform into a tech-enabled, customer-centric financial institution for the future."

Founder director of the bank Uday Kotak said Ashok is a world-class leader and banker with digital and customer focus. I am proud that we bring a "Global Indian" home to build Kotak and India of tomorrow."

Kotak was set to retire from his executive role in December. However, it was cut short four months ahead of schedule. His early exit from the country's fourth-largest bank was cited as a personal reason.

This came as the Reserve Bank of India capped the tenure of a managing director and chief executive officer at 15 years in private sector banks. This is due to the RBI's norms on leadership appointment which was reviewed after the Yes Bank

debacle.

Kotak, whose holding in the bank stands at 26 per cent, has become a non-executive director of the bank.

Commenting on the appointment, Vaswani said, "We will ensure that Kotak Mahindra Bank plays a meaningful role in India's journey to being one of the top 3 economies in the world in the next 5 years, delivering shareholder value. At a personal level, I am delighted to come back home."

All Blacks crush Argentina 44-6 to reach world cup

AP ■ PARIS

New Zealand bulldozed through Argentina 44-6 on Friday to reach the Rugby World Cup final for a record fifth time. The All Blacks will bid for a record fourth title against defending champion South Africa or England, who play their semifinal on Saturday. Going into the semifinal, there was a question mark whether the All Blacks could back up physically and mentally their astonishing herculean effort to topple Ireland last weekend. It didn't take long to show they were as up for the semifinal in which they started as the firm favorite as they were for the quarterfinal in which they were the heavy underdogs. "I am incredibly proud of the way we backed it up tonight," New Zealand coach Ian Foster said. "It is really satisfying, but now all the pressure of the final comes."

tackles, but made 121 of them in the first half when they missed only 10. That exhausted the Pumas, who threw everything at the All Blacks but were virtually out of the contest by halftime at 20-6 behind. "Our forwards did an outstanding job - set-piece, maul time, earned a few penalties, got a bit of dominance and it kept a lot of pressure on the Argentinians," All Blacks captain Sam Cane said. "We knew they're a team that will fight for everything and they wouldn't go away. So that ability to keep piling on points was pleasing." As the game opened up more in the second spell, the All Blacks showed off their ruthlessness by building attacks and battering the Pumas to the point of fatigue. They led 39-6 going into the last quarter, when they added only a hat trick try for Jordan. Jordan could have had a fourth try in the match but Richie Mo'unga ignored the overlap and chose to go on his own and was wrapped up. No matter, Jordan has a tournament-leading eight tries, matching the single tournament record set by Jonah Lomu in 1995, Bryan Habana in 2007 and Julian Savea in 2015. And Jordan has



one more match to go. The most lopsided semifinal result since 1987 when eventual champion New Zealand beat Wales 49-6 started with an early penalty for Argentina's Emiliano Boffelli after they wasted 14 phases in the first two minutes. New Zealand scored its first try after 11 minutes. A kickable penalty was kicked to the corner, the All Blacks hammered

the Pumas and narrowed their defense, and Mo'unga's double miss-out pass allowed Jordan to stroll over. Minutes later, the Pumas were going nowhere after 10 phases when wing Mark Tele'a stripped Pumas scrumhalf Gonzalo Bertranou. Rieko Ioane and Mo'unga counterattacked and Jordie Barrett ended up rolling across the tryline. The Pumas hit back with a 12-

phase move that netted Boffelli's second penalty kick but Mo'unga's penalty made it 15-6 and flanker Shannon Frizell walked over for the third try on halftime. At the end of 12 phases and way past 40 minutes, Tele'a broke through five tackles and Smith and Mo'unga set up Frizell. Mo'unga's conversion attempt hit the left post. Two minutes into the new

half, another powerful All Blacks scrum allowed Smith to dummy opposite Bertranou, step inside winger Mateo Carreras and score their fourth try. Another 18 phases by the All Blacks including a Mo'unga break finished with Frizell burrowing over for their fifth try. The All Blacks then strung another 11 phases, at the end of which Tele'a dragged in four defenders and Jordan had another walk-in try, his second. Hooker Julian Montoya, the Argentine captain, also paid tribute to New Zealand's ruthless efficiency. "The scrums were completely dominant on us. Every opportunity they have they score," he said. "Awesome team." The only downer for New Zealand was Scott Barrett's yellow card with 15 minutes left for a cynical ruck foul and yet their discipline was still impressive. They conceded three penalties in the first half, seven in the match. Even with Scott Barrett in the sin-bin, they expertly worked a lineout move in which Ardie Savea's inside pass put Jordan in a huge gap on halfway. He collected his own chip ahead and earned the hat trick.



Beach soccer to debut in upcoming National Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The upcoming National Games will see a new sport in beach soccer, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Saturday. Notably, the AIFF hosted the inaugural Men's National Beach Soccer Championships in Surat's Dumas Beach earlier this year, which has proved to be a game-changer. The top seven sides from the National Championships, along with hosts Goa, will be competing for the title at the games. The eight teams have been clubbed into two groups with Group A comprising Kerala, Delhi, Jharkhand and Lakshadweep and Group B consisting of Punjab, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Goa. Meanwhile, Bruno Coutinho, who is currently the head coach of Goa's beach soccer team,

expressed his surprise at the sport's inclusion in the games. "I was really surprised to see that beach soccer has been included in the National Games for the first time," he told the AIFF. "Previously, it was just normal football, but now they have not only included beach soccer, but beach handball as well, so it will be interesting." AIFF Grassroots Committee chairperson Mulrajsinh Chudasama, who is also the tournament director for the games, has said that the sport will be a huge success. "I am confident that this is going to be a huge success. There are some challenges ahead. This is the high tide time in Goa, but the organisers have done well by putting up sand-bags on the beach so that the FoP (field of play) doesn't get affected."



India looks for another medal drag in Para Asian Games

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Tokyo Paralympics gold medalists Avani Lekhara and Sumit Antil will be leading India's biggest-ever contingent as the country aims for a record medal haul in the Para Asian Games, which commence here on Sunday, a fortnight after the able-bodied athletes achieved historic success at the same venue. Star shooter Avani, who won a gold and a bronze medal in Tokyo Paralympics, and javelin thrower Antil, who also clinched a yellow metal in the Japanese capital in 2021, will be among a host of Indian medal contenders in the continental showpiece, which will continue till October 28. Another para shooter Manish Narwal as well as shuttlers Pramod Bhagat and Krishna Nagar, who all won gold in the Tokyo Paralympics, will be among the 313 Indian athletes at the Hangzhou Para Asian Games, the most in any edition. India is participating in 17 out of the 22 sports in the Hangzhou Para Asian Games. The country is fielding athletes for the first time in rowing, canoeing, lawn bowl, taekwondo and blind football. Nearly 4,000 athletes from 43

countries will be competing across 22 sports in 566 gold-medal events in the Para Games. The Para Asian Games were originally scheduled to take place from October 9-15, 2022 but were postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. China, who have topped the medals table by an overwhelming margin in every edition so far, are fielding 439 athletes. The host country won a whopping 319 medals (172 gold, 88 silver, 59 bronze) in the 2018 edition. The first Para Asian Games was held in 2010 in Guangzhou, China, where India had finished 15th with 14 medals, including one gold. In the 2014 and 2018 editions, India had finished 15th and ninth respectively, and this time, the country would be looking to move up the medals table, taking inspirations from the unprecedented success achieved by their able-bodied counterparts. With 51 of the 54 athletes who took part in the Tokyo Paralympics competing in Hangzhou, India is hoping for its best-ever medal haul here. India won 72 medals (15 gold, 24 silver, 33 bronze) in 2018 Para Asian Games, the best so far.

Lewis and George trying to avoid drama to finish F1

AP ■ AUSTIN (TEXAS)

The image was striking: Lewis Hamilton walking away from his damaged car after a wreck he caused while Mercedes teammate George Russell zoomed by in the background in the Qatar desert. For Hamilton, a seven-time Formula One champion, it was the worst moment in a mostly frustrating season. He is third in the drivers' standings heading into this week's United States Grand Prix and has again watched rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull already drive away to the championship. Compounding the season's issues has been some added competition from the other British driver across the Mercedes garage. Russell is a

distant eighth in the driver's standings but has been a constant in Hamilton's rearview mirrors of late. They narrowly avoided a crash in Japan before disaster struck in Qatar, where Hamilton's first lap, first turn collision with Russell ended Hamilton's race. Russell recovered to finish fourth, while Hamilton's stroll from his wrecked car across the track was a safety violation that drew a stern reprimand and fine from the FIA. "Move forward," Hamilton said this week. "The great thing about our sport is that there is always another day to get back on the horse and so that's just been pushing, moving forward... There's nothing I can do about the past, there's definitely things I can learn from, which I have."



The smash-up with Russell was eerily reminiscent of Hamilton's clash with teammate Nico Rosberg in 2016 in a season-long duel for the championship. Rosberg eventually won it to claim his only F1 championship. And, it was frustrating for Mercedes Team Principal Toto Wolff. The crash cost Hamilton

valuable points in his chase to pass Red Bull's Sergio Perez for second in the driver's championship, and Mercedes' bid to hold off Ferrari for second in the team standings. "The last round in Qatar was a case of what might have been. As a team, you never want to see your cars collide. It was frustrating to leave a lot of

points on the table," Wolff said. In the moments after the crash, Hamilton blamed Russell, only to quickly offer an apology after watching a replay of the incident in which Hamilton took "100% responsibility." Hamilton has insisted "The relationship is not broken." "I don't have any problems with George. We have a great relationship and we always talk about things," Hamilton said. Hamilton has a legacy of success at the Circuit of the Americas, where he won five times between 2012 and 2019, but hasn't won since. Hamilton finished second to Verstappen each of the last two years. He will start Sunday's race from third, while Verstappen lost the pole position for exceeding track limits and will start sixth.

"Maybe, with Red Bull not in the top three, maybe that makes it a closer battle because they often disappear off into this distance," Hamilton said. Wolff is back at the track and keeping an eye on his drivers. He missed the races in Japan due to knee surgery to fix a lingering problem from an old bicycle accident. Wolff was plugged in with the team by remote setup for the races he missed and could communicate with the garage, but he said he left the race management and handling the drivers' emotions, to staff on the ground. "You listen, you don't look into the faces and see what's going on emotionally and what's going on around you," Wolff said. "Sometimes, you need these moments to recalibrate."

Buhai, Lee tie for third-round lead at the LPGA

AP ■ SEOUL (SOUTH KOREA)

Former Women's British Open champion F Ashleigh Buhai shot a 3-under 69 Saturday to move into a share of the third-round lead at the LPGA South Korea tournament. Buhai and Minjee Lee, who shot 71, had 12-under totals of 204 on the Seowon Valley Country Club course outside Seoul. Defending champion Lydia Ko, a South Korean-born New Zealander, shot 69 and was a stroke behind and tied for third with American Alison Lee, who shot 67. Celine Boutier, who won the Scottish Open and the LPGA major Evian Championship back to back in August, had the lead briefly on the back nine but bogeys on 17 and 18 left her with a 68 and she was tied for fifth with American Lauren Coughlin (67), two strokes behind the leaders. No. 1-ranked Lilia Vu shot a 74 Saturday and was well back at 3-over. The South Korea tournament is the second of four in the LPGA Tour's Asian swing. Angel Yin, who shot 71 Saturday and is four strokes off the lead, won the LPGA Shanghai event last week.

Women's hockey team gets another chance to qualify

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian women's hockey team failed to book an automatic berth for 2024 Paris Olympics after finishing third in the Hangzhou Asian Games but it will get another chance to make the cut as the country is hosting the qualifying tournament in Ranchi next year. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has moved the Women's Olympic Qualifiers to Ranchi from Changzhou in China which earned a direct Paris Games berth by winning the Asian Games gold in Hangzhou earlier this month. The Paris Olympics qualifying tournament will be held at Marang Gompke Jaipal Singh AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand, from January 13 to 19 next year. Apart from India, seven countries will take part in the qualifying tournament from which the top three will confirm their berth in next year's Olympics. The other three FIH Olympic Qualifiers will be played in Muscat, Oman (men's: January 15-21, 2024) and Valencia, Spain

(women's and men's: January 13-21, 2024). India had lost 0-4 to hosts China in the Hangzhou Asian Games women's hockey semifinals and eventually settled for a bronze medal after beating Japan 2-1. Speaking about Ranchi hosting the Olympic Qualifiers, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said, "This is a huge event for our players, and we are thrilled that it will take place on our home turf as the support from Indian fans will undoubtedly fuel our players' determination to secure their spot in the Paris 2024 Olympics." Indian team captain Savita Punia said, "Ranchi hosting the Olympic Qualifiers is fantastic news as it will motivate us more than ever to seal a berth for the Paris 2024 Olympics in the presence of all the Indian hockey fans who have been supporting us through thick and thin." The Indian team clinched the bronze medal in the recently-concluded 19th Asian Games Hangzhou after a 2-1 triumph over Japan and the victory has boosted their confidence as they look to secure a spot in the Paris Olympics.

Focus on pistol shooters to earn Olympic quota places

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian shooters, especially pistol exponents, will have their task cut out when they compete in the Asian Championships in Changwon, Korea from Sunday with an aim to secure 2024 Paris Olympics quota places and also carry forward their sterling performance at the recently-concluded Hangzhou Asian Games. Indian shooters have so far won seven Paris quota slots for the country but none in the pistol category and the focus will firmly be on the likes of Manu Bhaker, Esha Singh, Rhythm Sangwan, Palak, Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu and Shiva Narwal, among others to end the drought. With 24 Olympic quota places up for grabs across 12 events, India has the opportunity to cross the 15 slots it booked for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but it's easier said than done, as powerhouses China, Japan and South Korea, among others will also be in the fray to grab the slots for Paris. However, with India returning with a best-ever haul of 22 medals, including seven gold, from the Asian Games, the contingent would be geared up for the competition, though the Changwon event could turn out to be a far more competitive tournament than even the quadrennial showpiece, given that Olympic berths are at stake. While the pistol shooters will definitely be under the spotlight in both the men's and women's section -- and with their army of national coaches, including Samaresh Jung



and Ronajk Pandit -- the championships will also give another opportunity to the likes of 10m air rifle marksman Divyansh Singh Panwar, trap marksman Prithviraj Tondaiman, Kynan Chenai and Zorawar Singh Sandhu to secure Paris berths. For long the National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) policy to drop shooters who have already qualified for the Olympics, or make them compete for Ranking Points Only (RPO) in Olympic qualification tournaments, has resulted in many of them cooling their heels post securing the Games berths in the big championships that matter. The likes of 10m air rifle world champion shooter Rudranksh Patil, trap shooter Bhowneesh Mendiratta, world record holder in 50m rifle 3-positions Sift Kaur Samra and women's trap shooter Rajeshwari Kumari, among others will be shooting in the RPO category, which rules them out from competing in the Finals of their respective events even if they become eligible to compete in the title round based on their scores.

Sindhu loses to Marin in ill-tempered semis

PTI ■ ODENSE (DENMARK)

Struggling Indian shuttler SPV Sindhu lost to her old nemesis Carolina Marin of Spain in three games in an ill-tempered semifinal of the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament, which saw both players receive yellow cards for verbal exchanges, here on Saturday. Sindhu, who has been struggling the whole season, lost 18-21, 21-19, 7-21 in the match that lasted one hour and 13 minutes. This was Sindhu's fifth loss on the trot against Marin who had beaten the Indian in that memorable 2016 Rio Olympics final as well as

the 2018 World Championships summit clash. World number 12 Sindhu and Marin, currently ranked sixth, had earlier talked about good camaraderie between them but they showed none of it on the court on Saturday. Both were warned verbally by the umpire multiple times before being shown yellow cards in the deciding game. The umpire initially called both the players to tone down their celebrations after winning points. But Marin continued to scream and celebrate while Sindhu was warned twice for taking longer time in receiving serve. Marin was warned twice for



loud celebrations after taking the first game 21-18. In the decider after Sindhu won the second game, the umpire warned the Indian to be ready

to receive serve quickly. At that point, Sindhu was heard saying you allowed her to shout, so you ask her and then I will be ready. Just after that, the shuttle fell on Sindhu's court and both reached to pick it, leading to another verbal altercation. The chair umpire called both the players and flashed yellow cards to them. Marin was also told not to pick shuttle from Sindhu's side. In the first game, the two were locked 3-3 and then 7-7. Moments of brilliance were followed by odd errors from both as the score read 18-18. The Spaniard then unleashed a body smash and grabbed two

games points when Sindhu's backhand hit the net and followed it with a powerful smash to earn the bragging rights. Sindhu, who had famously hugged Marin after the Rio Olympics final defeat, had a solid strength to the second game, leading 6-2. The Indian zoomed 10-3 ahead as she showed better control at the net, while Marin was too erratic. After the interval, Marin took the initiative and soon the rallies got shorter and faster with the Spaniard producing the winners with solid net-play. Sindhu ended a stretch of seven straight points after winning a fast exchange to maintain the

12-10 lead. Sindhu then had four game points at 20-16. Marin saved three before Sindhu sealed it with a smash to take the match to the decider. It was Marin who took the initiative in the decider, moving to 3-0 and then 8-2. Marin was 14-3 up and around that time both were shown yellow cards for engaging in a verbal duel. The incident seemed to rattle Sindhu as nothing went her way and it was one way traffic. Soon, Marin ended Sindhu's misery after having 13 match points. Sindhu had also reached the semifinals at the Arctic Open Super 500 last week in Finland.



KLAASEN'S ONSLAUGHT FIRES SOUTH AFRICA TO 399/7



Earlier at the start, Reece Topley got one to swing and pitch on length, enticing Quinton de Kock to go for a drive. England's appeal was turned down but replays confirmed De Kock getting a thick edge on the fourth ball of the game as South Africa lost their most experienced player in these conditions without much contribution.

However, England had to manage without Topley as the tall left-arm quick left the field despite trying to manage an injury to his finger.

Van der Dussen led South Africa's recovery from the early blow and after taking some time to find his feet - 13 balls to get off the mark - Hendricks played some spectacular shots too.

The powerplay yielded 59 runs for South Africa who welcomed England's express pace bowler Wood with a flurry of fours in his first over.

Joe Root's (0/48) bowling workload increased given Topley joined the field only before the 30th over.

The South Africans were happy with the developments given Root not posing any real threat and when the off-spinner came around the wicket, Hendricks smacked him for two outstanding sixes over cover to keep marching on.

But Adil Rashid (2/61) struck twice in the middle overs to keep England in the hunt. A slow, tossed up delivery had van der Dussen mis-hitting in the air and caught by Jonny Bairstow and not much later, he had Hendricks chopping on to be dismissed a few short of his second ODI century in five years.



Sadeera's 91 helps Sri Lanka defeat Netherlands

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Sadeera Samarawickrama displayed unwavering composure in his unbeaten half-century as he guided Sri Lanka to a clinical five-wicket win over the Netherlands and secure their first victory in this World Cup, here on Saturday.

South African-born Sybrand Engelbrecht (70) and Logan van Beek (59) led a remarkable recovery with maiden half-centuries to help the Netherlands post a fighting 262 after they opted to bat.

In reply, Dutch off-spinner Aryan Dutt (3/44) snared Kusal Perera (5) and skipper Kusal Mendis (8) inside the powerplay, but Sri Lanka never lost sight of the target on a dry and spinning Ekana pitch with Samarawickrama anchoring their chase without taking any risks.

Lending solidity to the middle-order, Samarawickrama, who slammed a maiden ODI hundred against Pakistan earlier, got to a well-deserved half-century -- his sixth in ODIs -- in 53 balls en route to his unbeaten knock of 91 to seal Sri Lanka's chase with 10 balls to spare.

This was bottom-placed Sri Lanka's first win after enduring three losses on the trot in the 10-team showpiece event. Pathum Nissanka (54; 52b) came up with a third straight half-century to set it up before Samarawickrama and Charith Asalanka took the chase away from the Netherlands in a 77-run fourth-wicket stand.

For the Dutch bowlers, the execution was missing unlike their upset win over South Africa at Dharamsala three days back.

They either strayed on the leg, or bowled wide on the off-stump even as the Lankan batters were happy to take singles and twos to keep the required run-rate near the five-run mark.

The left-handed Asalanka hit two boundaries and the only six of the innings when he broke the shackles and stepped out to punish Dutt.

Just when the Lankan duo of Samarawickrama and Asalanka was in cruise mode, Dutt broke the partnership cleaning up the left-hander in his last over that also pumped up the Dutch camp.

But without any scoreboard pressure -- 82 required off 104 balls -- the seasoned Dhananjaya de Silva played sensibly, rotating the strike to give the well-set Samarawickrama more opportunities. The duo, however, failed to complete the chase as De Silva got out in the 47th over after being bowled by Colin Ackermann.

But there were no further mishaps and it was Dushan Hemantha who hit the winning runs, hitting Acerkmann for a boundary in the penultimate over.

Earlier, the 35-year-old Engelbrecht, who had retired from all forms of cricket after playing for Cape Cobras in South Africa in 2016 only to be back playing for the Netherlands, was at his best during a gritty 82-ball 70.

Engelbrecht, who came in at No 7, hit one six and four fours in his knock and shared a 130-run partnership with No 8 batter Logan van Beek. Van Beek also secured a maiden fifty as the pair turned the tide for the Dutch after they were reeling at 91 for six in the 22nd over. Comeback man Kasun Rajitha (4/50) and their in-form left-arm pacer Dilshan Madushanka (4/49) were the pick of the Lankan bowlers but they lacked support at the other end as the Dutchmen made rapid progress following their seventh-wicket partnership.

Fifteen years after a young Engelbrecht in Proteas colours took a flying catch to dismiss Virat Kohli in India's U-19 World Cup triumph in 2008, the Dutch all-rounder is living a dream.

Playing top-tier cricket did not seem realistic for Engelbrecht as he slipped into oblivion while pursuing his MBA.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Heinrich Klaasen produced a hundred of the highest quality in extremely humid conditions to fire South Africa to 399 for seven, their highest total in World Cup contest against England, here on Saturday.

Klaasen resurrected South Africa with his third century of the year and overall fourth, hammering 109 off just 67

balls while Marco Jansen smashed terrific 75 not out (42 balls, 3x4s, 6x6s). South Africa stumbled in the middle overs after Reeza Hendricks (85 off 75 balls, 9x4s, 3x6s) and Rassie van der Dussen (60 off 61 balls, 8x4s) ensured a strong platform, leaving Klaasen with the challenge to do the heavy-lifting in the final 15 overs, even though he was well supported by Jansen.

Klaasen and Jansen together pulled South Africa from the danger of being restricted to an at-par total.

While Klaasen had four sixes and 12 fours to show for his stupendous effort, Jansen also used long handle to a good effect, getting half a dozen maximums apart from three fours.

Klaasen regularly needed fluid intake during his innings but even while cramping up a bit

didn't leave the pitch unlike a few English bowlers, who found the heat unbearable. And even if he would have wanted to celebrate such a monumental knock more than he did - a gesture towards the sky - Klaasen did not have much left in his tank when he smacked Mark Wood (7-0-76-0) for a six and a four to complete his ton in the 47th over.

Klaasen and Jansen added 151 runs for the sixth wicket off just

77 balls, which is now a record for South Africa against England in ODIs as well as in World Cup history.

With Temba Bavuma falling ill and Quinton de Kock (4) falling early, South Africa needed a special batting effort and their batters ensured that. The wheels came off for England as total of 143 runs were scored off the final 10 overs whereas the last five produced as many as 84.

Dravid hints at playing Surya and Shami against New Zealand

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Hardik Pandya's absence does upset the balance of the Indian playing eleven but head coach Rahul Dravid dropped good enough hints about Mohammed Shami and Suryakumar Yadav being in contention without confirming the preferred combination for the World Cup game against New Zealand on Sunday.

Pandya has injured his left ankle while bowling during the previous match against Bangladesh in Pune and is currently under supervision of BCCI medical team at National Cricket Academy.

"Obviously, he (Hardik) is an important player for us, so we will have to work around that and see what is the best combination that we can come up with. We will have to see what works best for these conditions and these wickets. But probably might not have the kind of balance that we probably used in the first four games," Dravid was very practical in his thought-process.

Why Shami has a good chance of playing?

That Shami could come into the picture was clear when he termed Shardul being looked as

the fourth seamer in the set-up where Pandya was ahead in the pecking order.

Dravid didn't disclose the playing XI and Hardik's possible replacement but hinted that besides Shami, Ravichandran Ashwin is also an option.

"Obviously, the three seamers, having someone like Shami sitting out there and bringing him in this game is a great option. In some cases, there is Ashwin who has obviously been sitting out, who has great quality as well. So, there are two or three combinations we could use considering this till Hardik gets back," he added. Dravid is someone who is not even known to reveal simplest of open and shut team combinations, even when he used to be a captain. Typically, he said that all options are being explored but one could read between the lines.

"We certainly can go with, obviously, the three fast bowlers or the three spinners. With that kind of combination, we still could play Ash (Ashwin) and move Jadeja up," he said.

"Many different, different permutations and combinations. I wouldn't want to give too much away. I mean, we are pretty clear on what our playing 11 is tomorrow.

After big ton, Warner credits IPL for success in ODIs

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Opener David Warner, who set up a crucial World Cup win for Australia with a whirlwind century, credited the IPL for working as a learning platform where he perfected the art of pacing an ODI innings.

Warner's 163 off 124 and his 259-run association with fellow centurion Mitchell Marsh helped Australia score a 62-run win over Pakistan, and the result has lifted them to fourth on the table.

"I've established early on in my career that 50 overs is a long time. I look to try and get to 35



overs and then from there, try and put my foot down if I'm still in.

"I think that's where in T20 cricket, I've learned a little bit as well to change my gears, especially in IPL. I learned a lot when I was playing for Sunrisers that you're able to have a lot more time than you think," Warner said during the

post-match media conference on Friday. A glance at Warner's knock at the Chinnaswamy Stadium will give one a better idea. The left-hander brought his initial 50 in 41 balls, the next fifty came in 44 balls and the final 63 runs cascaded in a mere 39 balls.

"Having played Test cricket, you can change your gears quite easily. So, in the first 10, two new balls, you got to respect that. But then if you get away, you can be 50 off the first 10.

"Then from there, you set the platform for yourself and that's the energy you feed off. If you give yourself time at the back

end, you can actually score big," Warner explained.

The 36-year-old has taken a special liking against the Asian side, scoring four successive ODI hundreds, besides making a triple hundred at Adelaide in 2019.

No magic potion against Pakistan

Warner said he did not have any magic potion against Pakistan.

"I think sometimes you just match up well against certain teams. Sometimes you're going to put away the good balls. But I think you just keep backing yourself. I don't really look at any stats.

Pakistan Woes: Need good spinners to perform well

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

It can only happen with a Pakistan team. In the same match, its bowlers can bowl an eye-popping 152 dot balls and yet end up conceding a massive 367 runs in 50 overs.

It happened against Australia in a World Cup match on Friday when there was no 'bad' element in Pakistan's bowling. There was only 'good' and 'ugly' facets -- the two extremes that has gone on to define Pakistan cricket since time immemorial. There are no half measures for

Pakistan. At one end, they pegged Australia for what was worth half the total number of overs and at the other end, they were hammered for 29 fours and 19 sixes.

And, this was after their bowling department's leader Shaheen Shah Afridi produced the best individual bowling figures of this edition -- 5 for 54.

It is now well documented that Naseem Shah's absence is hurting the team badly but even then, Haris Rauf's lack of game awareness and not having spinners of international quality



have affected the team's performance.

Rauf, for example, hasn't got a hang of Indian tracks where he is either bowling too full or too short -- the latter in most cases -- which has hurt the team like no end.

Rauf has been hit for 11 sixes in four games and that is more than two sixes per game, which isn't a great piece of statistic for a tear-away quick who is supposed to intimidate the batters.

He went for 24 in his first over against Australia and 3/83 in 8 overs aren't numbers that he

would like to remember.

Legendary Wasim Akram, who is an expert on Pakistani show 'Pavilion', made a telling comment about Rauf.

"Rauf till he doesn't play domestic cricket, he will have problems in ODIs. In T20, you can survive as it is only four overs and you expect batters to attack. But you learn ODI bowling when you play domestic (red ball) cricket. I want to see Rauf bowl six balls back of length (three quarter) on stumps," Akram said on the show. There were problems aplenty for the Pakistani bowlers,

with regards to planning.

With the side boundaries being 62 or 63m, the best length is fuller and mostly on block-hole which is expected from a fast bowler, who has a whippy slinging action.

The straight boundary at Chinnaswamy Stadium is 72m and yorker length deliveries wouldn't be easy to hit straight. But Rauf kept on pegging it on shorter side and gave enough width to Mitchell Marsh and David Warner to play horizontal bat shot on both sides of the wicket.

It's starting all over again for dominant India

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Flying into the quaint hilly terrain without their balancing figure Hardik Pandya, a frighteningly dominant India's World Cup campaign will start all over again with Sunday's blockbuster clash against an ambitious New Zealand.

A freak ankle injury had ruled Pandya out of the big game against the Kiwis who are eyeing their maiden triumph, even as the hosts desperately look to break their long trophy jinx in ICC tournaments.

With the flamboyant all-rounder not in picture, India

have been forced to disturb a combination that has brought them four convincing wins on the trot, leaving the opponents worried and exploring ways to stop the rampaging hosts.

Against the New Zealanders, the Indians will take to the field after having done a bit of rejigging of their combination and re-evaluation of strategies.

Pandya's injury has disturbed the balance of the side as India doesn't have a like-for-like replacement for him. These thoughts must have crossed the minds of the men who matter the moment Pandya sustained the injury to his left ankle while

trying to stop the ball on his follow-through during their match against Bangladesh in Pune.

The star all-rounder has been advised rest and hasn't travel to Dharamsala. Currently under the assessment of the BCCI medical team, Pandya is expected to join the squad in Lucknow before the match against England next week.

In the current scenario, seamer Mohammed Shami, who hasn't played a match so far in the World Cup, is a certainty in the playing XI as the pitch here is expected to favour the fast bowlers to some extent.



And to bolster the batting, Suryakumar Yadav instantly comes into the mix. But it remains to be seen who is the other player India would replace in their bid to get the balance right.

Given the situation, the mediocre Shardul Thakur should get the boot as Shami would be better suited merely because of his pace and swing in these conditions.

Ravichandran Ashwin, too, provides an option for India with both bat and ball but it remains to be seen whether his off-spin would be effective here.

The Indian batting has been doing extremely well with the likes of Rohit, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, and Shubman Gill all scoring runs.

Young Gill would look to make his presence felt one more time after his half-century against Bangladesh.

In bowling, the Indians have fared well with Jasprit Bumrah leading the attack from the front with the new ball and Kuldeep Yadav decimating sides with his guile in the middle overs.

Mohammed Siraj, too, have lived up to the expectations, and if included, Shami would

provide the extra sting to the pace unit.

Going purely by records, New Zealand hold an edge over India in the World Cup. It is going to be one of India's biggest challenge so far in the tournament as New Zealand is a side against which the Men In Blue have struggled in the past editions of the marquee event. India and New Zealand have faced each other nine times in the ODI World Cup. Of these games, India have won only three times while New Zealand have come out victorious on five occasions, with one match being abandoned.

provide the extra sting to the pace unit.

Going purely by records, New Zealand hold an edge over India in the World Cup. It is going to be one of India's biggest challenge so far in the tournament as New Zealand is a side against which the Men In Blue have struggled in the past editions of the marquee event. India and New Zealand have faced each other nine times in the ODI World Cup. Of these games, India have won only three times while New Zealand have come out victorious on five occasions, with one match being abandoned.

"The times may have changed, but the people are still the same. We're still looking for love, and that will always be our struggle as human beings"
—Halle Berry



In the heart of the bustling Noida district of Uttar Pradesh, nestled within the quiet embrace of Nithari village, a tragedy unfolded that would forever scar the souls of its residents. The wails of the families

inhabiting this close-knit community have echoed for nearly two decades, resounding not only in the alleys of this village but also throughout the nation's conscience. The haunting question that lingers in the air, "Who killed our children?" pierces the heart, and the State can no longer ignore their cry for justice.

The recent acquittal of Moninder Singh Pandher and his helper, Surinder Koli, by a two-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court in two of the 2006 Nithari murder cases has sent shockwaves through the nation. The court's scathing assessment of the investigation as "botched up" and its criticism of the violation of basic norms in evidence collection has shattered the hope that the victims' families had clung to for so long. Pandher, who has already been cleared in four other cases, is now set to be a free man.

The court's verdict has shaken the very foundation of justice, as it points out the "casual and perfunctory manner" in which crucial aspects of arrest, recovery, and confession were handled. But beyond the legal intricacies, the heart of this story lies in the innocent lives that were lost, the agony of the families left behind, and the persistent cry for answers.

Between 2005 and 2006, Nithari was transformed from a haven of innocence to a realm of dread and despair. It all began on a fateful June 20, 2005, when an 8-year-old girl, full of youthful energy and dreams, ventured near a water tank to play. Her laughter filled the air that day, but it was a laughter never heard again as she mysteriously disappeared, plunging her family into an agonising nightmare.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, as more children inexplicably vanished near that ominous water tank, seemingly vanishing into thin air. The parents' desperate cries for their children's return went unanswered, and the village's collective fear deepened. Nithari, once a place of laughter and innocence, had now become a shadowed realm haunted by whispered tales of ghostly apparitions near the tank.

The local police, grappling with the inexplicable nature of these disappearances, embarked on extensive investigations. Their pursuit of answers led them across multiple states and cities, from the bustling streets of Mumbai to the serene landscapes of Bihar and the heart of the nation, Delhi. Despite their relentless efforts, no substantial leads emerged, and the veil of darkness shrouding Nithari remained.

But a glimmer of hope finally pierced through the gloom, emanating from the call details of a missing 21-year-old woman named Payal. She had journeyed to Nithari from the distant town of Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand in search of employment. These call details unveiled a connection that sent shivers down spines, a connection to Moninder Singh Pandher, a resident of the enigmatic D5 Kothi in Nithari village.

At first, Pandher attempted to conceal his involvement by claiming that Payal had been seeking employment from him. But the truth, like a relentless spectre, could not be evaded any longer. The police discovered Payal's mobile phone in Pandher's possession, and, under the weight of irrefutable evidence, she finally admitted to the horrors that had transpired. She confessed to her own murder and the nightmarish disposal of her lifeless body into a nearby drain.

This shocking revelation set in motion a chilling sequence of discoveries that would forever scar the village of Nithari. In December 2006, the Noida Police made a gut-wrenching revelation as they found the remains of approximately 19 girls and children in the same accursed drain. It was a macabre tableau of death, a haunting testament to the fact that these unthinkable horrors had been perpetrated by the sinister hands of Surendra Koli, a servant in the employ of Moninder Singh Pandher.

The grief-stricken parents, who had once been filled with dreams and hopes for their children, have spent years on an unrelenting quest for

justice. Their pain is collective, and their stories are a symphony of sorrow. Many of them, in the face of this unspeakable tragedy, abandoned the place they once called home. They returned to their native villages, leaving behind a ghost town where laughter had once danced in the air.

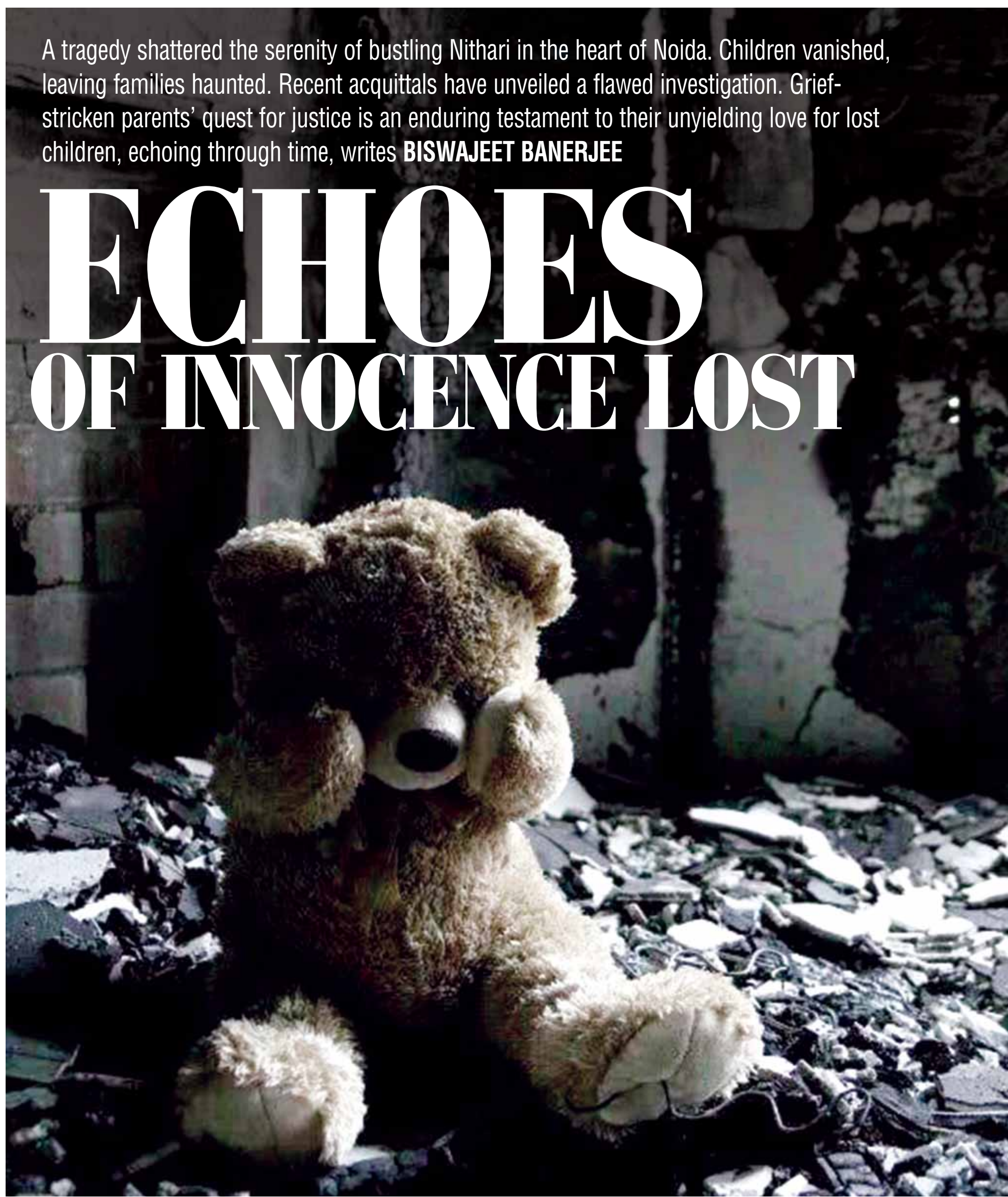
Now, the wound reopens, and the pain intensifies as the unexpected verdict of acquittal reverberates through the village. Sunita, a mother who lost her beloved daughter, Jyoti, in the Nithari incident, raises her voice in anguished plea, "With folded hands, I request Modi ji and Yogi ji that those brutes should only be hanged. They should not be acquitted." Sunita's heartache is a reflection of the collective anguish shared by 19 parents who lost their sons and daughters in that dark chapter of Nithari.

Most of these families had been lured by the prospect of employment, and their dreams had been built upon fragile foundations on the periphery of Nithari village. The calamity shattered their hopes, scattering them like leaves in the wind. Today, only a handful of families remain.

In the wake of the convicts'

A tragedy shattered the serenity of bustling Nithari in the heart of Noida. Children vanished, leaving families haunted. Recent acquittals have unveiled a flawed investigation. Grief-stricken parents' quest for justice is an enduring testament to their unyielding love for lost children, echoing through time, writes **BISWAJEET BANERJEE**

ECHOES OF INNOCENCE LOST



THE NITHARI CASE, WITH ALL ITS COMPLEXITIES AND LEGAL INTRICACIES, IS NOT JUST ANOTHER LEGAL BATTLE. IT IS A TRAGIC SAGA THAT HAS SCARRED A



COMMUNITY, A HEART-WRENCHING TALE OF INNOCENCE LOST AND FAMILIES TORN APART. THE PAIN OF NITHARI REMAINS, ECHOING THROUGH THE YEARS, AND THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE CONTINUES, UNRELENTING AND

UNDYING, BECAUSE THE CRY OF "WHO KILLED OUR CHILDREN?" CANNOT, AND WILL NOT, BE IGNORED

shocking acquittal, the village is a cauldron of seething emotions. Ram Kishan, a labourer in Noida, expresses his agony through actions. He arrives at the dreaded D5 Kothi, gathers bricks from the road, and hurls them at the house. He, too, is a victim of the Nithari incident, a man who lost his precious 3-year-old son.

His boy had vanished while playing near the water tank, his innocent laughter silenced forever. Days later, the discovery of his son's skeleton in the drain, marked by the presence of his tiny slippers and scattered clothing, delivered the crushing blow of reality.

As one of the legal representatives of the victims questions, "I am not able to understand that if these criminals will not be hanged, then who will?" The pursuit of justice, a journey spanning nearly two decades, now seems uncertain.

Pappu, another victim of the Nithari incident, echoes the sentiments of a community in mourning. "I have lost my daughter in this incident. I am upset after the High Court's decision. I will continue the fight for justice," he declares, his voice choked with sorrow.

The CBI took over the investigation from UP Police in January 2007 and filed charges against Koli in 16 cases and against Pandher in one case under the immoral trafficking Act.

As Nithari village grapples with the painful acquittal of the accused, the community remains steadfast in their quest for justice. It is a battle that transcends time, a plea that refuses to be silenced. These families, bound by grief and united by a common tragedy, demand that justice be served. In a world that moves on, their pain remains undiminished, an unwavering testament to their love for the children they lost in the Nithari tragedy.

The Nithari case, with all its complexities and legal intricacies, is not just another legal battle. It is a tragic saga that has scarred a community, a heart-wrenching tale of innocence lost and families torn apart. The pain of Nithari remains, echoing through the years, and the fight for justice continues, unrelenting and undying, because the cry of "Who killed our children?" cannot, and will not, be ignored.

(Writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow)

TIME TO CLOSE TREATMENT GAPS IN MENTAL DISORDERS

Adolescent suicides, behavioural addictions, substance use, anxiety disorders and emerging serious psychosis...mental health crisis is rampant. But patient-centred care and accessibility in mental healthcare remains a challenge, as was also found by a team of psychiatrists mapping such facilities in Faridabad. **ARCHANA JYOTI** reports

A lone district hospital in Haryana's Faridabad, which is just a few kilometers away from the national capital does not have inpatient Department (IPD) services for those suffering with mental health illness. Reason is lack of space. As a result, the patients with seriously mental illness are referred to the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), Delhi, according to a study published in the latest issue of Journal of Indian Psychiatry.

On the day, the authors of the study—a team of doctors from the AIIMS-Delhi and Safdarjung Hospitals- visited the district hospital they found that in a case of an emergency, the patient was treated in a general ward bed and referred to IHBAS after the initial stabilization of the patient.

"Same is the situation in 16 private clinics/hospitals providing mental health services," they found after visiting all the health facilities providing mental health services and interviewing the mental health service providers.

The well-known psychiatrists were conducting the said study on mental health care facilities and human resources in the sector in the district.

Giving details of their experience in the first of its kind study, "Mapping of mental health care facilities and psychiatrists in a North Indian district of India" the doctors found glaring gaps in the mental health services.

They had mapped mental health care facilities using "Google my maps" application.

The team included Dr Aninda Debnath from Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, Dr Harshal Ramesh Salve, Dr Rajesh Sagar and Dr Shashi Kant from AIIMS-Delhi, the country's premier health research institution.

They recorded that overall 3,671 patients had visited the private facilities in a month, which means over 100 patients on an average every day, thus indicating urgent health care need requiring at the doorsteps of the patients.

The highlight of the survey was acute shortage of mental health doctors in the private as well as government healthcare facilities.

As per survey, there were a total of 16 psychiatrists in the



district, giving a density of 0.88 per lakh population. "Only two of them were providing services in public health facilities, and the remaining were providing services in private facilities."

Most psychiatrists were concentrated in the urban area. In the rural area, there were only two psychiatrists. The ratio of psychiatrists per lakh population was 1.1 psychiatrists in urban area compared to 0.54 in rural Faridabad. The number of mental health care facilities was 24. This included PHCs and a CHC where doctors were trained under District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) were available, as well as multiple clinics that were served by the few psychiatrists in private practice, said the study.

Five of these facilities were in rural while remaining 19 in urban region of the district. "Geographical clustering of mental health facilities was observed more in urban areas (8.7 per 100 Km) compared to rural areas (0.95 per 100 Km) of district Faridabad." It showed that there was a

scarcity of psychiatric manpower and facilities in the district with a distinct urban skew.

As per various reports, since 1990, the proportional contribution of mental disorders to India's total disease burden has nearly doubled, but the number of psychiatrists has not increased proportionately. So Faridabad was also not exception. Also, another challenge in the sector was that even as the number of psychiatrists has increased, the distribution is not uniform across the country, which explains the large variation of the number of psychiatrists in different geographical areas. The disparity in the distribution of doctors, including psychiatrists, between rural and urban areas is not an isolated phenomenon. Similar trends can be observed among other medical professionals as well.

No private mental health care facilities were present in rural Faridabad. This was also mainly or was the reason for poor health seeking behavior in rural areas than in urban areas. The financial constraints faced

by individuals residing in rural areas often restrict their ability to access and afford private health care services.

"Consequently, the establishment and sustainability of private medical facilities may be hindered in these areas. Other major barriers in seeking help in rural areas are low literacy, sociocultural barriers, traditional and religious beliefs, stigma, and discrimination associated with mental illness," said the study.

Also, the utilization of government facilities in PHCs was observed to be poor compared to other facilities. It could be attributed to various factors, one of which was the limited number of doctors trained in treating common mental disorders.

For example, at the time of study, only four doctors at three PHCs and a CHC had received training. Another contributing factor may have been the poor knowledge among the population regarding the availability of mental health services at the PHCs and overall.

In the cases of DH and SDH as well, a higher proportion of

individuals sought care from private practitioners. One of the reasons for this preference may have been the personal negative experiences of unsatisfactory care, which included issues such as the absence or interruption in the continuous availability of medicines and a lack of continuity of care.

Such experiences had an adverse impact on the reputation of the health care facility within the community, making others cautious about seeking care from that particular facility.

Another area of concern that was highlighted in the study was that about the government hospitals there was no guarantee that patients could seek consultations from the same doctor of their choice, with whom they had developed trust.

"This lack of continuity in care may have also contributed to the increased preference for private health care sectors" felt the doctors.

The epidemiological situation and available health service systems show that providing mental health services in rural areas is a challenging task.

Suggestions for Improving the Mental Healthcare System as highlighted in the study

Addressing the scarcity of mental health professionals requires a multi-faceted approach, say the authors. Task shifting, also referred to as task sharing, is a valuable strategy in addressing the scarcity of mental health professionals.

It involves assigning certain responsibilities to individuals who may have less training or specialized training. By adopting task shifting, we can effectively tackle the limited availability of human resources for mental health.

"This approach proves crucial in ensuring that adequate care and support are provided to individuals in need, even in resource-constrained settings."

"Training of medical officers to manage CMDs can be a useful task shifting strategy," said the study.

To strengthen the human resources for mental health, it is crucial to continuously develop a skilled workforce. Training programs should not only focus on initial education but also include ongoing in-service training, such as continuing education. Clinical psychiatry rotations with proportionate time allocations and exclusive examinations (theory and clinical) to assess the achievement of learning objectives can be implemented in the medical education curriculum. Adding post-graduation seats is another solution. The recent initiative of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Science to reserve MD seats for states with grossly inadequate psychiatry human resources (North-eastern states, Uttarakhand, and Chhattisgarh) is a commendable step.

Training of medical officers under DMHP, rigorous training of medical students, and increasing PG seats are some of the ways out to address this problem. This will also address the inequity in mental health services in urban and rural areas.

Estimates suggest that close to 60 to 70 million people i.e. 15% of the population in India suffer from common and severe mental disorders. This figure encompasses many disorders, including depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, substance use disorders etc.

HEALTH BRIEFS

AIIMS SPECIALIST DR NEERJA BHATLA GETS TOP WHO ANTI-CANCER AWARD

Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS Delhi Dr Neerja Bhatla has received the prestigious 2023 award of WHO IARC (International Agency for Research in Cancer) for Women in Cancer Research. She received the award from Director IARC Dr Elisabete Weiderpass. Dr Bhatla is the first woman doctor from



DR NEERJA BHATLA

India to grace as Chairperson FIGO Gynaecology Oncology Committee.

UNDP, LSR COLLEGE DISCUSS MENTAL HEALTH WELL-BEING OF YOUTH



To raise awareness, promote dialogue, and advocate for improved and unbiased mental health support for the youth, UNDP India and Delhi-based Lady Sri Ram College for Women organized a discussion on the well-being among young people recently.

The panel discussion, titled "Mind Matters: A Mental Health Conversation" featured UNDP India's Youth Champion and Actor, Sanjana Sanghi, UNDP Resident Representative in India, Shoko Noda among others from the field of mental health.

Speaking at her alma mater, Sanjana said, "When we encounter pressures of life, be it your college or your working life, it is important to realise that workaholicism is not the answer.

"Being inspired and driven is key, but knowing where to draw the line is equally important. We take pride in putting ourselves through the rigours of life at the cost of our mental health. I think it is important to understand that balance is key."

Over 300 students from the Lady Sri Ram College joined the discussion and engaged actively with the panellists on issues of identity, stigma, mental health resources and psycho-social support.

Noda reminded young people that mental health is a basic human right for all people. "People - especially the youth - should not be scared to speak openly about mental health. It is your right to be protected from mental health risks, your right to good quality care, and to inclusion in the community," said Noda.

'7,500 PLUS DAILY STEPS BEFORE SURGERY CAN CUT DOWN POSTOPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS'

According to a study, people who recorded more walking activity prior to surgery, regardless of complexity of the operation or their health status, showed 51 per cent reduced odds for postoperative complications than less active patients. The odds of experiencing a complication within 30 days after surgery were less if patients took more than

7,500 steps per day prior to surgery than if they recorded fewer than 7,500 steps. Postoperative complications typically occur in about 30 per cent of patients, and about half of all complications occur after the patient leaves the hospital, said the study presented at the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Clinical Congress 2023.

Doctors should heal themselves for the mankind

For a doctor who endures the responsibility of caring for other people, it is necessary to heal himself or herself before being able to do it for others, **DR RC JILOHA** says as he dwells on a slew of battles that a medico face at various fronts during his/her lifetime

As we celebrated the World Mental Health Day on 10th October 2023, a news report of a cardiology professor at GB Pant Hospital, New Delhi committing suicide startled the health professionals to take a look at their own health. Though becoming a doctor is a great privilege adorned with humility and bestowed the noble responsibility of looking after the suffering of others. From medical college to residency and from trainees to specialists/super-specialists, doctors have had a certain job security and most of them eventually earn decently well. They know better how to stay fit and healthy; they are expected to live longer. Yet, the life expectancy of doctors is 59 years as compared to 67.9 years of an average person in India.

Medical profession is a stressful profession because it requires a doctor to take critical decisions in a matter of seconds during an emergency in the wake of a suddenly esca-

lated responsibility as a clinician. An error of judgement can prove fatal and the professional has to always stay on his/her toes to avert such events. No doubt, doctors receive an extensive training to deal with the situations, the persistent work pressure and stress affects their physical and mental health. Long working hours and stress related to patient care often leaves them with no time to address their own personal problems which, if unresolved, interfere with their professional performance. They are at an enhanced risk of enduring mental health challenges and the consequent possibility of suffering various health problems.

The medical profession tops the list of occupations with the highest suicide rate among doctors. The reason untimely loss of human lives in doctors is the greater knowledge pertinent to effective and lethal suicidal means. According to a prevalence study 27.7% resident doctors suffer from



DR RC JILOHA

depression, and 36.6% from anxiety. Many doctors hesitate to get treatment from fellow physicians, more so for mental health issues. If the doctors suffering from depression receive immediate treatment and confidential hospitalization, the death ratio can be decreased substantially. Healers, after all, too need healing.

Other reasons for early deaths include cardiac problems and cancer. Heart diseases and cancers among doctors are swiftly rising, as per the Indian Medical Association. In its



10-year-long study on 10,000 doctors, it found 282 doctors dying during the period, of which 25% died due to cancer, 2% by infection, and 1% by suicide. Desk-bound jobs, inactive lifestyle, lack of exercise, and obesity are the primary risk factors for heart diseases in addition to stress found to be the major contrib-

utor of early deaths. Working with private and public healthcare service providers, doctors have to keep up with the consistent pressure of building patient-base, providing quality care to everyone, being almost infallible, compromising their work ethics and living with a lack of work-life balance.

Although the risk of heart diseases increases with age, doctors often avoid having a regular medical check-up and tend to rely on self-diagnosis and treatment. In the study group, those who died never had a periodic health checkup during their life-time. Cancer is another important cause of premature death among doc-

tors. Working in a setting with exposure to diverse carcinogens (ionizing radiations) can fuel the possible occurrence of thyroid and ovary cancers.

The work-related musculoskeletal disorders due to spending long hours using the operating microscope cause health concerns like strain, backache, neck pain, carpal-tunnel syndrome, etc. and compromises the quality of life. Confidentiality issues and reservations pertinent to a particular therapy or treatment effectiveness, often prevent doctors from seeking professional help.

A healthy work-life balance needs to be promoted, especially for residents-in-training and women doctors. Having greater knowledge and a better understanding of mental and physical health issues, doctors must not undermine their own well-being for the sake of their profession or other causes.

The nobility of the profession can only be restored if healthcare is not reduced to a commercial

commodity and doctors' compassion and empathy is preserved by providing them their due space in the profession.

A healthy lifestyle including sound sleep, regular exercises, and physical activity to prevent conditions like obesity, should be adopted by the doctors in order to serve their patients better. Regular medical check-ups and timely treatments are necessary. Avoiding treatment for mental health issues only worsens the problem. Looking after one's self is a duty every doctor owes to himself/herself. For a doctor who endures the responsibility of caring for other people, it is necessary to heal himself or herself before being able to do it for others. The practice of helping others requires great strength, knowledge, and experience. But the wisdom lies in implementing the knowledge and experience to your own self, too.

(The writer is a retired professor of psychiatry from the University of Delhi and Jamia Hamdard. Views are personal)

China's Road reshaping geopolitical landscape

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), one of the most significant and widely discussed global projects of Chinese President Xi Jinping, marks its tenth anniversary this month. Initially known as One Belt One Road (OBOR) at its inception, it is also referred to as the New Silk Road. It is hailed as one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects ever conceived by any nation in the world to date.

China's colossal plan may potentially reshape the global governance order in the days to come. Despite the prevailing power consolidation in the West, China's financial resources, strategic capabilities, and diplomatic ventures will have a far-reaching impact worldwide. Its global outreach and advocacy for building an open and inclusive world, in opposition to the dominance of the US and the West, have already become evident in all global forums and institutions.

The origins of this project trace back to the year 2013. In that very year, Xi Jinping, the newly appointed President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), publicly introduced the idea during his visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia.

However, before Xi's announcement, he was likely influenced by a seminal work titled "Marching West," authored by Wang Jisi. Wang Jisi, the founding President of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies and a Professor at Peking University, published this work in October 2012. He was widely recognised as one of the most prominent and influential scholars in international relations in China. He astutely pointed out that the time had come for China to shift its focus towards the West, namely its Central Asian neighbours and West Asia.

He argued that China should redirect its attention away from its eastern neighbours and its key US allies such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. By the end of 2012, when Xi succeeded Hu Jintao, he had envisioned the creation of an alternative market for China, aiming to propel the country's development agenda to new heights and position his nation as the world's leading economy.

Simply put, the primary objective behind the Belt and Road Initiative is to leverage China's economic strength to expand and fortify the country's geopolitical influence, particularly countering the United States' dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and globally. However, three main objectives



underpin the emergence of the BRI.

First, it aims to establish a secure maritime route for China's international trade due to its rivalry with the US. China's major sea trade routes pass through the Malacca Strait, located off the coast of Singapore, a staunch US ally. China also seeks to foster interdependence among participating countries to enhance its economic and political interests in the region. This can be likened to the historic Marshall Plan initiated after the Second World War, with the key distinction being that Beijing provides funds to other countries primarily based on shared economic interests.

Second, China learned a valuable lesson from the 2008 financial crisis in Asia. While it initially managed the crisis well, its market suffered significantly later on. Consequently, China aims to create an alternative market for the extensive state-owned enterprises outside of China.

Third, the BRI is also geared towards improving the economic conditions of the provinces in Central China, often referred to as South Central China, which includes regions like Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and sometimes Jiangxi.

Given that these provinces have lagged behind, the Xi administration is specifically focusing on stimulating their economic growth.

For the past two decades, China's political and economic ascent has unmistakably signalled an epochal change. Since its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, the world has witnessed a dramatic shift in global trade and the exchange of goods between nations. However, for a world that has been unipolar, largely dominated by the US since the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the rise of China's economic influence has emerged as a paramount challenge for the West.

With a revitalised Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi's China is poised to introduce a series of new programmes to rebalance and even reset the global governance order. However, for America, it entails a process of adaptation and making room for a rising global powerhouse in China. As this adjustment is not occurring seamlessly, the tension between these two giants is palpably public today.

The predicament for the US leadership lies in not perceiving China through the lenses of changing global power

dynamics, regional transformation, and the evolving identity of China. The BRI effectively challenges the economic and political equation that has been established by the global liberal order led by the US since the conclusion of the Second World War. China's significant entry into the globalised world market, underpinned by a robust authoritarian system, has compelled the US, the EU, the Russian Federation, and India to reconsider their global strategies in order to navigate and endure in a geopolitical landscape where American influence is rapidly waning.

To a considerable extent, the extensive expansion of the BRI, despite its drawbacks, demonstrates today that China is capable of attempting to construct an alternative world order. For now, there exists an Asian nation that is decidedly unyielding to the dictates of Washington. The long-discussed and widely espoused values and credentials of democracy and human rights hold little sway over China's communists.

For a considerable time, the US has sought to curb China's expansion and assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the Obama Administration ini-

tiated the "Pivot to Asia" strategy, Washington has allocated billions to engage with nations in Asia. This strategy aims to establish deeper connections with more countries in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia, in order to compete with and contain China's escalating assertiveness and expansion. President Trump furthered these efforts by enacting the BUILD Act, aligning with the same objective.

In 2021, President Joe Biden, in collaboration with the G-7 nations, introduced the Build Back Better World Initiative (B3W), an ambitious infrastructure plan designed to counterbalance the BRI. Just a year later, it was rebranded as the "Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment". In September 2023, the EU and the US jointly announced an ambitious endeavor to construct an economic corridor connecting Europe with West Asia and India via rail and sea. This initiative, known as the "Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment", has the potential to augment trade between India and Europe by up to 40 per cent and facilitate improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

However, with the current escalation of the Israel-Hamas

conflict, the potential reconciliation between Israel and Saudi Arabia may face significant challenges.

What are other countries doing to counter China's gargantuan expansion in the Asian continent? India has distanced itself from the BRI, asserting that it is China's long-term strategy to dominate Asia. China's famous "String of Pearls" strategy involves offering debts to India's neighbours in order to encircle it from key points. Japan has already committed over \$300 billion to building infrastructure projects throughout Asia. In 2017, India and Japan jointly announced the Asia Africa Growth Corridor project, aiming to develop and connect ports from Myanmar to East Africa.

Over two-thirds of European nations have become part of the BRI, making it challenging for the EU to counter China with a unified voice. In 2018, French President Macron said the BRI could turn participating nations into "vassal states". In 2021, the EU unveiled its "Global Gateway" project, a \$300 billion infrastructure initiative to counter the BRI.

Russia is a partner in the BRI, but it has concerns that the

Chinese mega project could disrupt its "Eurasian Economic Union".

Despite this, Russia's proximity to China is likely to grow due to its current conflict with Ukraine and the US-led opposition to the Putin regime.

So far, China has invested nearly \$1 trillion to gain and expand global influence through the BRI. President Xi, while celebrating the BRI's 10th anniversary, announced new plans to usher in another "Golden Decade" to achieve modernisation for all nations and to build an open and inclusive world. To enhance connectivity in an open economy, Xi has unveiled eight major steps to elevate Belt and Road cooperation to a new stage of higher quality and higher-level development. He also emphasised the pursuit of global modernisation for peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation, and prosperity for all. To date, more than 150 countries and three international institutions have entered into BRI cooperation agreements.

It is worth noting that the BRI is currently extending from the Eurasian continent to distant African and Latin American nations. China is committed to expediting the high-quality development of the China-Europe Railway Express. Additionally, China will construct new logistics corridors across the Eurasian continent, supported by rail and road transportation. China intends to enter into more free-trade agreements and investment treaties with numerous nations, while removing all restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

Xi also pledged further dedication to green development, scientific and technological innovation, people-to-people exchanges, integrity-based Belt and Road cooperation, and institution-building for global Belt and Road cooperation.

The path traveled by Xi thus far has been fraught with hurdles. The challenges and uncertainties arising from his initiatives, especially the BRI, pose long-term obstacles not only for China but for all of Asia. While many regard Xi as a reincarnation of Chairman Mao Zedong, the founder of the People's Republic of China, he must exercise caution as the world he faces is vastly different from the one Mao encountered.

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

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to expand China's geopolitical influence through infrastructure and economic development. It challenges US dominance, reshaping global governance. Nations have varied responses, with India distancing, Japan investing, and the EU countering. Russia navigates partnership. Xi Jinping commits to a 'Golden Decade' for BRI's modernisation. Challenges and uncertainties persist, emphasising the vastly transformed world from Chairman Mao's era.



MAKHAN SAINIK

PERSPECTIVE

India at the crossroads on LGBTQ+ rights

India stands at a historic juncture on LGBTQ+ rights. The Supreme Court has confronted the Special Marriage Act, 1954, weighing discrimination based on 'sex' versus 'sexual orientation'. Global comparisons prompt reflection on the path to inclusivity, challenging preconceptions and redefining human rights, writes **Sonal Gupta**

On October 17, 2023, as the sun painted the sky with promise, India stood on the cusp of history, poised to engrave its destiny in the annals of human rights and equality.

In the Supreme Court, anticipation hung heavy as a monumental verdict approached — a decision that would resonate internationally and touch the hearts of those yearning for unfettered love. This was no ordinary legal battle; it was a profound test of India's resolve to embrace love, honour diversity, and nurture a society where love transcends bias, regardless of sexual orientation.

Central to this challenge was the Special Marriage Act of 1954, an Indian law recognising unions solely between male and female. This legislation effectively marginalises same-sex couples, conveying a stark message that love is bound by limits even in the world's largest democracy.

LGBTQIA+ community and its allies rallied fervently, advocating for inclusivity and emphasising the necessity of safeguarding fundamental human rights, free from the constraints of gender and sexual orientation.

In a crucial 3:2 majority ruling, the Supreme Court recognised a significant legal gap in India regarding LGBTQIA+ marriage rights. The Indian Constitution, guardian of equality, appeared silent on sexual orientation-based discrimination in intimate matters. Despite progress in the Navtej Singh Johar and Ors vs Union of India case (2018), ensuring privacy rights for the queer community, a vital question lingered: What about marriage rights and their associated privileges?

Delving into the judgment on same-sex marriage in India exposes a compelling dilemma: discrimination based on "sex" versus "sexual orientation". Are they truly equivalent? Chief

Justice of India DY Chandrachud, a vocal proponent of marriage equality, interpreted "sex" in Article 15 of the Indian Constitution to encompass sexual orientation. He argued that the state's refusal of marriage based on sexual orientation violated Article 15. He envisioned a future where the right to marry was universal, transcending barriers of gender identity and sexual orientation. His vision encompassed various aspects of life, from official documents to medical consultations, jail visitation rights, and legal repercussions.

The CJ emphasised that "homosexuality isn't an urban elitist concept," deserving equal respect and acknowledgment.

However, Justice Ravindra Bhat, leading the majority opinion, charted a distinct course. He asserted that the right to marry was not absolute, bound by statutes. Upholding the sacred principle of separation of powers, he believed the court should not



craft a convoluted legal framework, fearing unforeseen repercussions. Instead, he advocated for a state-led, thorough assessment of policies and entitlements, urging the formation of a high-powered committee to engage stakeholders and scrutinise the situation. His position stressed the need for a meticulous policy evolution grounded in research and thoughtful delib-

eration, aiming to lay the foundation for societal transformation.

In this pivotal moment, nations like South Africa, Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, and Portugal stand as beacons of inclusivity, having embedded a firm ban on sexual orientation-based discrimination in their constitutions. They recognise the crucial duty of ensuring equal rights and privileges, not

merely as a matter of political will, but as a constitutional imperative.

Conversely, the United States, Canada, and Australia have advanced the legalisation of same-sex marriage through judicial interpretation or parliamentary legislation. The landmark Obergefell vs Hodges decision in the United States in June 2015, affirming the right of same-sex couples to marry by interpreting the nuances of the Fourteenth Amendment, exemplified a profound understanding of the intricate interplay of life, liberty, and equality within the legal framework.

In this global context, it prompts one to wonder: Could India have interpreted marriage equality within its Constitutional framework, akin to the US Fourteenth Amendment? The Indian Constitution, notably in Articles 14 and 21, upholds principles of equality, liberty, and life.

However, respecting the

separation of powers, the Indian judiciary refrained from infringing on legislative prerogatives. Instead, they advised the state to devise policies affording homosexuals the benefits of marital unions, rather than directly interpreting the Constitution to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and grant them marital rights in the absence of specific legislation.

As we navigate this intricate terrain, a fundamental question emerges: Can relationships between homosexuals be termed as "civil unions" to access marital benefits, even in countries where same-sex marriage is not legalised?

Take Japan for instance, where same-sex relationships have been decriminalised since 1880, yet the nation has not officially recognised the right to same-sex marriage. Some Japanese cities do acknowledge same-sex civil unions, underscoring the intriguing issue of varying legal recogni-

tion for LGBTQIA+ relationships.

In conclusion, India's pivotal moment regarding same-sex marriage highlights a crucial phase in the nation's pursuit of equality and inclusivity. The Supreme Court's decision, recognising the legal gap, adopted a cautious, policy-centered approach, potentially paving the way for societal transformation.

Globally, diverse approaches to same-sex marriage exist, prompting contemplation on the best path for India to ensure love transcends prejudice, granting all citizens equal rights. As the world and societies evolve, India's journey toward embracing love and equality remains an ongoing narrative, challenging assumptions and expanding the horizons of human rights in the pursuit of genuine justice and inclusivity.

(The writer practises law at the Supreme Court of India)



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week unfolds as a prime time to hone in on your professional endeavors and witness the rewards of your diligence. Imbued with a harmonious blend of vitality, clarity, and inner tranquility, you stand on solid ground. A slight refinement in your articulation abilities could go a long way. Embrace precision in your undertakings and cultivate the knack to engage and persuade through your dialogues. Your actions and discourse possess the potency to motivate, making them the centerpiece of this period. Your zest and enduring vigor are your allies in navigating toward your aspirations. Sidestep over-assertiveness and impulsive judgments throughout this phase. Health isn't to be sidelined; adhering to a well-regulated nourishment regime and consistent physical activity is imperative.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Setting egos aside, you embrace humanitarian pursuits. A fresh prospect may arrive, possibly an interview or a more pivotal role. Your composure and principles remain unwavering. Now's a favorable juncture to adopt a spirited demeanor and channel your vigor toward self-enhancement. While aiding others, ease into interactions, fostering improved relations both professionally and domestically. Recognizing the detriment of temper loss, and its hindrance to controlled communication, enables adept handling of scenarios or individuals sans agitation. No need for nocturnal vigilance, as this phase is fleeting and soon you'll helm the circumstances. As the week concludes, negative vibes may prod a reaction, but sulking or despondency has no room. The essentials are unwavering faith and devotion, guiding you smoothly through this temporal stretch.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Monday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you helm the ship of fortune, navigating towards financial solidity and ample gains, thus augmenting your savings. Harmonious interactions with family and pals enhance your journey. Monetary themes captivate you, leaving you both astonished and perplexed. Amidst this, windows for merriment and leisure crack open. You adeptly juggle jovial pursuits with obligations, maintaining a pleasing equilibrium. Virtual connections with like-minded individuals globally enrich your perspective, enabling a candid expression of your preferences, undeterred by familial expectations. Work may beckon travel, blending duty with exploration. As the week concludes, a stern regimen may be imposed, clashing with your whimsical spirit. Yet, the allure of responsibility amidst enjoyment resonates well, knitting a fulfilling narrative for you.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

A cloud of melancholy and despondency may attempt to envelop you, stifling the rejuvenating breath of optimism. Your mind might become a tangled maze, largely entwined with professional and vocational contemplations. It's a juncture to reflect—have your endeavors been earnest and true? Affirmative responses herald success, potentially materializing within the week. You lay down a foundation of fortitude and steadiness in your enterprise, fostering fruitful collaborations that thrive on reciprocal comprehension, thereby reaping shared advantages. Engaging in both imaginative and pragmatic ventures promises the most favorable outcomes. As the week draws to a close, a voyage emerges on the horizon, instigated by purposeful undertakings. This expedition not only unfurls enjoyment but also the drafting of a fresh objective, poised to be gratifying in the unfolding chapters of your journey.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week is propelled by a potential overseas venture, or perhaps a significant message, contact or contract. A cache of promising developments awaits you. Unexpected opportunities, bearing positive tides, may surface unexpectedly. Those embodying meticulous and orderly traits are poised to capitalize on these prospects. Your spontaneity, imaginative flair, and keen focus fuel your drive toward innovative endeavors, leaving others in awe. The path to claim your deserving achievements seems unobstructed. Signs also point towards a joyful event within the domestic sphere, perhaps an auspicious ceremony. The welcoming of a new family member will be a cause for celebration, mirroring the abundance that surrounds you. In this time of blessings, embracing the bounties with grace is your guiding ethos.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Embracing change and relinquishing outdated notions could prove advantageous. It's a week for Capricorn individuals to practice forgiveness and contemplation. Relationship hurdles and fleeting joy might agitate you. A life alteration is on the horizon, urging a farewell to old norms and a welcome to the new. Despite the bustling nature of this week potentially causing unrest, seeking solace in spirituality and leisurely pursuits can provide respite. Delving into gardening, painting, or music, and engaging in games can be therapeutic. During challenging times, immersing in creative endeavors while awaiting higher guidance could serve well. Stress may manifest in your actions and demeanor, but seeking solace through spiritual reverence can offer relief. Steer clear of unfavorable numerals this week, and let a fresh perspective guide your actions.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Engaging in self-reflection is a potent means to gain deeper insights. Despite a recent setback in achieving a cherished aspiration, it's crucial to not harbor it within. Circumstances have momentarily swayed against your favor, a display of the universal principle of action and reaction. At times, the mere diligent effort falls short; engaging positively with others and heeding your inner voice is vital to accomplishing your aims. Midweek may find you sifting through the outcomes of your toil, albeit without fruition. The seed of embarking on a fresh entrepreneurial venture could sprout within your thoughts, yet uncertainty clouds its potential benefit. However, the veil of indecision will lift, bestowing tranquility as the week concludes. You've grasped the fundamental lesson of harmonizing facets of your professional and home life, underscoring the need for prudent financial management.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week heralds a tide of material gain, potentially through inheritance or generous gifts, enriching your coffers. A congenial dialogue with elder family members or parents is advisable. Embrace action over reaction, navigating situations with a thoughtful demeanor regardless of their provocation. Midweek, certain discussions with business or life partners are on the anvil, yet a shared understanding and common objectives will surface. Significant decisions made now are poised to bear fruit in the future. A youthful vigor or novel insight may invigorate your thoughts. Heed your intuition, as it proves instrumental in drawing conclusions. Some may embark on new ventures or assume pivotal roles laden with responsibilities, marking a promising start to ambitious undertakings.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

The week commences on a cheerful tone, brimming with prospects of travels, festivities, and leisure. You might partake in sacred ceremonies, and reconnect with distant kin, with the possibility of an aerial voyage. Embrace your fervor and sentiments as you navigate through these days. A desire for aesthetic refinement may arise, making a visit to a spa or salon appealing. Leisurely strolls amidst the crisp air and nature's splendor promise refreshment. A lingering ailment may witness amelioration, instilling a sense of healing. Favorable astral alignments may aid in legal matters, potentially resolving long-standing issues. Immerse in the joy these moments offer, you're in a blessed phase. However, remain mindful of potential snags, acknowledging that life's journey carries its share of imperfections.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Engulfed in overthinking, you find yourself at a standstill, facing restless nights. Events cascade with unexpected speed, possibly shaking your confidence and faith amidst the turmoil. Minor clashes, differing views, or unexpected romantic disloyalty at home brew emotional unrest, landing you in shaky territory. Yet, the need to lie awake is futile, as this transient phase will soon see you reclaiming control over unfolding situations. Your heightened emotions may blur the positive outlook, overlooking the ample opportunities the half-filled glass represents. Anticipate heartening news from afar to uplift your spirits. As the week nears its end, your steps will find alignment with either a tangible or spiritual path, heralding a progressive shift in your life's narrative. Embrace the forward journey with trust, leaving past grievances behind, and welcoming the unfolding chapters with hope.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Engaging in nurturing acts and fulfilling altruistic responsibilities characterizes this period. Your willingness to assist financially when approached by friends or family shines through. Now is an auspicious phase for financial engagements and altruism towards the less fortunate, aligning you on a spiritual trajectory. Midweek heralds romantic prospects; singles may find themselves entwined in amorous thoughts, possibly encountering a companion. Existing unions may find a deeper cementing of bonds, fostering emotional fulfillment. As the week concludes, a call for equilibrium in your endeavors and strategies emerges. The allure of solitude may beckon, serving as a conduit for healing and rejuvenation, aligning with the overarching theme of realizing your objectives.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Guidance from mentors helps stabilize your emotional ebbs and flows. The week kicks off with disheartenment as anticipated outcomes elude you despite earnest efforts. Initial setbacks and health concerns may breed anxiety. However, the week's midpoint ushers in glimmers of hope and joyful interludes, illuminating a path to channel your ideas creatively. Joy also blooms through interactions with children. Plans to embark on new business endeavors may germinate, though financial constraints pose challenges. Your focus shifts towards securing loans, funds, or partnerships. Assistance from a friend or relative proves invaluable, fueling your optimism and expansive thinking. A sense of ease is discovered in spiritual and devotional practices. Your emotive and imaginative essence unveils solutions, and your altruistic gestures are poised to yield bountiful returns.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Sea Green
Lucky day Wednesday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Dhyana helps unfold the best in you

It's time now to move on to "Contextual Meditation", purposely named as it begins in self-reflective mode. Here again, two tools are in use. First, an imagery to focus upon, which in Indian tradition may apparently look like a religious figurehead. For, they are purposely named as deities to make them worth reverence. In prayer mode, you get emotionally connected with the iconic figure. So, the result comes fast. The intent, however, is not to promote any religious belief. It rather serves a twofold purpose. First, it serves as a focal point for mind to dwell upon. Second, it helps induce attributes portrayed by the symbol, vital to a reasoned conduct in life, through repeated self-reflection. Those averse to the idea could improvise a symbol suited to their belief or perception.

The next tool is a mantra that resonates to the spirit underlying the imagery in focus. Both the symbol and the mantra need to be individual specific as decided by Guru. That is usually based on what specific virtue would be wanting, calling for its reinforcement. We need to appreciate that invariably all of us are born imperfect, each carrying some inherent weakness. They need to be addressed and get better empowered to ensure a smooth sail of life. Turning one's attention away from the seeming world, the seeker is supposed to recite the mantra with focus on the imagery. With time, you are in harmony with the concept and the resonating mantra. Eventually it successively leads to two states of samadhi - savikalpa and nirvikalpa - when the seeker, the dharana (concept) underlying the imagery, and the mantra become one seamless awareness. The whole landscape of mind then becomes accessible. The best in you unfolds. Now, wherever you pay attention, keeps you effortlessly focused for long to intuitively discover the truth



underlying seeming reality. Ancient India's learned masters had figured out that one's inherent trends are rooted in the thought seeds parked in memory in energy format - good as positive and bad as negative. It implies that the void in our energy construct find reflection as weakness. Accordingly, the

process was designed to takes care of both the aspects simultaneously, and hence the two tools. The imagery helps redefine the thought process, through self-reflection. The echoes generated through repeated recitation of the mantra, helps find connect with corresponding energy-source in nature. That augments its absorption level to meet up any void in our energy construct. Thus, came into place, a composite self-awareness and holistic self-healing programme. As Navaratri celebration is on, the devout are offering prayer to Goddess Durga. Let us explore what lessons Mother Goddess offers to a polarised and a divided world. Here, the legend pertaining to the making of the Mother becomes imperative. As the 'Demons' uprooted the 'Devatat' (righteous ones) from the Devaloka, in a state of desperation they sought Brahmaji's (God personified for thought) help. Brahmaji led them to Lord Vishnu (assigned to administer), who in

turn took them to Lord Shiva, the epitome of Shakti, as enormous power was needed to defeat the demons. Lord Shiva asked them all to share their individual Shakti. Their Shakti-s in togetherness turned into a huge fire, out of which emerged the all-powerful Durga. All Devatat offered their respective weapons for Mother's use. She then took on and humbled all the demons. She, however, does not do it single-handed. She is assisted by many other Goddesses, all of them originating from the mainframe of Durga herself, who, after completing their respective tasks, reverted to their source-frame. How comes the Devatat had to face humiliation at the hands of the demons? Possibly overtaken by their egotistic sense of being superior ones; they mistook themselves to be unassailable. And engrossed in their individualistic pursuits, righteous though, they would have lost their sense of alert to foresee the

impending danger. Also, they would have not cared to remain true to their collective obligations. The inevitable had to happen. The implication is that ego of even righteous beings leads to disastrous consequences. Also, we need to put in all acts together - individually and collectively - to ensure a smooth sail of life. Even otherwise, it needs to be appreciated that all existences in the world are unique, carrying varying traits. The world, therefore, remains a fertile ground for arousal of conflicting interests. If we ever lose our sense of alert, we become due for existential crisis. The Devatat would have been caught unawares during one of their unguarded moments, when they lost ground to evil forces. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com

Now you can write to us at agendapioneer@gmail.com