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THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE
TANGO GOES ON

WORLD 8
UK CONDEMNS 'JIHAD' CHANTS
AT PROTEST IN LONDON

MONEY 10
US INDIA'S BIGGEST TRADING
PARTNER TILL Q2 THIS FISCAL

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'BEASTS' INDIA
FAVOURITES TO
WIN WC: TAYLOR
12 SPORT

INDIA PROVES ITS METTLE

Continues victory rally in World Cup, beats New Zealand after 20 years in ICC event

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Virat Kohli anchored another tricky chase with perfection after Mohammad Shami's sizzling five-wicket haul as India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the World Cup here on Sunday, their first win over Black Caps in an ICC event after 20 years. Shami (5/54) starred with the ball to restrict New Zealand to 273 all out despite Daryl Mitchell's gutsy 130 off 127 balls. Kohli (95 off 104) later anchored India's chase with a near blemish-free knock and shared three crucial 50-run stands with Shreyas Iyer (33), KL Rahul (27) and Ravindra Jadeja (39 not out) to guide his side home in 48 overs. With India on the cusp of victory, Kohli went for the record equalling 49th ODI hundred but much to the disappointment of a packed crowd at the HPCA stadium, he was caught in the deep. Chasing 274, Shubman Gill (26) relied on his exquisite timing to find boundaries, while Rohit Sharma (46) played the power game. Gill drove Trent Boult through extra cover and square to pick up back-to-back boundaries in the seventh over. He then flicked Matt Henry through mid-on and midwicket to bring up India's 50 in just 7.4 overs.

Rohit looked in ominous touch as he just planted his foot forward and lap-swept Henry to the backward square leg boundary and then followed it up with a six over mid-off two balls later. Rohit was lucky as he was dropped by New Zealand skipper Tom Latham behind the stumps off Mitchell Santner in the next over and he punished the left-arm spinner by tonking him over deep midwicket for a six the very next ball. But Rohit failed to cash in as he dragged a Lockie Ferguson delivery onto the stumps in the next over to end the dangerous-looking 71-run opening stand. Ferguson dealt another blow to India in his next over in the form of Gill, who was caught by Mitchell at deep third-man boundary. Kohli then took the innings forward with the help of Iyer (33 off 29) and KL Rahul (27 off 35). However, two quick wickets of Rahul and Suryakumar Yadav made things little difficult for India before Kohli bailed out the hosts with a 78-run sixth-wicket stand with Jadeja (39 not out). While Rahul fell LBW to Mitchell Santner, Surya was a victim of an unnecessary mix up with Kohli as India slumped to 191 for 5. Kohli, however, failed to match Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49



Mohammed Shami celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's batter Matthew James Henry during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match between India and New Zealand at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on Sunday

centuries as he departed in the 48th over while going for a six. His knock was studded with eight fours and two sixes. India, though, had a rare ordinary day in the field and were guilty of dropping three catches. Kuldeep Yadav (2/73) was the most expensive bowler but got the important wickets of

Tom Lathan and Glenn Phillips. Sent into bat, Mitchell and Rachin Ravindra (75 off 87 balls) rescued New Zealand after a poor start, sharing 159 runs off 152 balls for the third wicket. Jasprit Bumrah (1/45) and Mohammed Siraj (1/45), also played their part well.

The start was far from rosy for New Zealand who lost Devon Conway early. The left-hander flicked a Mohammed Siraj delivery straight to Shreyas Iyer at forward square leg in the fourth over. Introduced into the attack in the ninth over, Shami struck with his first ball of the tour-

nament by removing Will Young, who played on to an incoming delivery. Regarded as one of India's best fielders, Ravindra Jadeja dropped a sitter at point of Shami's bowling to hand Ravindra a life. Ravindra cashed in on the chance with both hands and

together with Mitchell forged a much needed partnership to stabilise the innings. The duo was particularly severe against Kuldeep Yadav, clobbering the left-arm spinner for three huge sixes straight over his head. Ravindra brought up his fifty off 56 balls, while Mitchell's half-century came in 60 deliveries. The Indians were sloppy on the field as Mitchell also got a reprieve on 69 in the 33rd over when Jasprit Bumrah dropped an easy chance at the long-off boundary. Shami finally broke the partnership in the next over when Ravindra failed to clear the long-on boundary, handing a simple catch to Shubman Gill. Ravindra's wicket hardly bothered Mitchell who continued to play aggressively, smashing the Indian bowlers with disdain as New Zealand brought up their 200 in 36.1 overs. Kuldeep, who was put under pressure for the first time in the competition, finally tasted success when he had New skipper Tom Latham LBW with a wrong one. India pulled things back significantly by picking up six wickets in the last six overs for only 30 runs. At the post-match presentation, captain Rohit Sharma was all praise of Shami for grabbing the opportunity with both

hands. "Shami took the opportunity with both hands. He's got class and so much experience and he used the conditions really well," Rohit said. "At one stage NZ put up a big partnership there. Dew came in as well. But we have to give credits to the bowlers in the back end. Good start to the tournament but job is half done." Rohit had nothing much to say on Kohli's masterful knock as the maestro has been doing it for the country time and again. "Nothing much to say about Virat. We have seen him do this for so many years. He backs himself to do the job," said the captain. "Towards the end there was a bit of pressure with a few wickets lost, but Kohli and Jadeja took us home." On his own performance, Rohit, who made 46 off 40 balls at the top of the batting order, said, "Shubman and I compliment each other quite well in the middle. Couldn't get big enough runs ourselves but happy to win." India dropped a few catches in a rare shoddy fielding show but Rohit was not too concerned about it. "Fielding is something we pride ourselves on. It wasn't as clinical as we'd like to. Couple of dropped catches but those guys are good. Jadeja is among the best in the game," he said.



Devotees flock to Kashmir Gate Durga Puja pandal on Sunday. The Durga Puja pandal in Kashmir Gate, which boasts a history spanning over a century, stands as one of the largest and most ancient such installations in the national Capital

Indian succour for Gaza

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid mounting global concerns over the plight of civilians living in Gaza, India on Sunday sent humanitarian aid to Palestine. An IAF C-17 flight carrying nearly 6.5 tonnes of medical aid and 32 tonnes of disaster relief material for the people of Palestine reached El-Arish airport in Egypt, the External Affairs Ministry said. The relief materials were sent on a day Israeli warplanes struck targets across Gaza overnight and into Sunday, as well as two airports in Syria and a mosque in the occupied West Bank allegedly used by Hamas militants, as the 2-week-old war with Hamas threatened to spiral into a broader conflict. Israel has traded fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group on a near-daily basis since the war began, and tensions are soaring in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces have battled militants in refugee camps and carried out two airstrikes in recent days. Giving details here, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "An IAF C-17 flight carrying nearly 6.5 tonnes of medical aid and 32 tonnes of disaster relief material for the people of



An IAF C-17 flight carrying medical aid and disaster relief material for the people of Palestine before departing for El-Arish airport in Egypt

Palestine departs for El-Arish airport in Egypt." The material includes essential life-saving medicines, surgical items, tents, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, sanitary utilities, water purification tablets among other necessary items, he said. The items were sent to Palestine via the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza. India's aid to Palestine comes three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 19 spoke to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. During their conversation,

Modi said India would continue sending humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. He also conveyed his condolences on the loss of civilian lives in the Gaza Strip due to the bombing at a hospital. "Shared our deep concern at the terrorism, violence and deteriorating security situation in the region. Reiterated India's long-standing principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue," Modi said after speaking to Abbas. On Thursday last, Bagchi had said in reply to a question on humanitarian assistance to

Palestinian people that India has been supporting them. "India has been supporting Palestine and Palestinian refugees through significant contributions to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). A total of USD 29.53 million has been contributed to UNRWA between 2002 and 2023," he said. "The Indian annual contribution to UNRWA was increased from USD 1.25 million to USD 5 million in 2018. India has pledged an annual contribution of USD 5 million for the next two years (FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25)," Bagchi said. Meanwhile, earlier on Sunday, Israel warned it would "increase" its attacks in Gaza's north and called on Gazans to move south out of harm's way. "For your own safety move southward. We will continue to attack in the area of Gaza City and increase attacks," Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said in a briefing to Israeli reporters. Israel started its "total siege" of Gaza after an October 7 cross-border attack on its cities by Hamas members, who killed 1,400 people. Gaza's Health Ministry has said Israel's air and missile strikes had killed at least 4,385 Palestinians, including hundreds of children.

National carrier's dedication to reuniting passengers with lost items

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The railway officials, porters, coach attendants, pantry service staff, and various others have ostensibly earned the sobriquet of "imandar rail staffers" (honest rail staffers) due to their unwavering dedication in returning over 900 lost items, which even include valuable iPhones, to the rightful passengers. So far, they have successfully achieved their challenging mission by employing various methods, unwaveringly reaching out to the bonafide owners through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more. Last week, a smile beamed across the face of a high-ranking Delhi Government official

who was reunited with his "priceless" wristwatch, which he had lost on the Patna-New Delhi Rajdhani train. "Considering the prevailing belief that items lost in public places, especially on trains, are rarely recovered, I find it difficult to adequately express the joy I experienced when, one day, I learned about New Delhi Station Manager Rakesh Kumar Sharma. "He has successfully returned lost possessions to countless passengers through social media. Upon contacting him, the railway team led by Sharma coordinated the retrieval of my watch to New Delhi Railway Station. Subsequently, diligent efforts were made to ensure that the watch was once again on my wrist," North East Delhi Seelampur SDM Sharat



Kumar told *The Pioneer*. In this case, Sharma who uses his own resources and finances to reach out to the owners even in foreign countries, contacted Patna Linen Staff and enquired about the lost article and came to know that the watch was in the custody of catering staff of Patna Rajdhani. "The watch is priceless to me as it was a gift from my mother, and I never start my day without this 'Maa Ka Pyar'. Thanks to the changing image of Indian Railways and individuals like Sharma in the service, it serves as a perfect example for all of us, including those, like me, who work in positions dealing with the public. Small things can truly bring about

change," Sharat said. Early this month a passenger, Shefali Arora of Geeta Colony in New Delhi, found a gold ring near her seat and handed it over to the RPF escorting team of the train to Mata Vaishno Devi Katra stations. Sharma used the PNR as a reference to obtain the phone number of the passenger. Ultimately, he contacted a resident of Ambala city, who had booked the ticket for his mother, to facilitate the proper documentation and handover of the jewel. Last month, a porter (coolie) Rinku Yogi found an Apple Smart Watch on the Lucknow AC Express. In line with his role of honesty, he promptly handed it over to the Station Manager on duty at New Delhi station, who then

informed Sharma. Sharma had gained popularity among the staff for his efforts in tracking down passengers and owners of lost items. This case was challenging because the porter couldn't precisely identify the coach and berth number of the watch, as it was found near the vestibule between two coaches, A4 and A5. Sharma used his ingenuity and shared a message on social media platforms, making an effort to broaden its reach. After no positive response from social media, Sharma then used the PNR number of the passengers of both coaches with the help of IRCTC officials and contacted passengers individually to find out the owner. After six days of persistent phone calls squeezed

between his work, sleep, and meals, Sharma finally managed to reach the owner. The passenger, Shubam Saini from Lucknow, was pleasantly surprised, having lost all hope of recovering his watch. Sharma has earned a name for himself by successfully tracking down approximately 925 individuals, including foreigners, on social media, primarily on Facebook. He has diligently returned their belongings that passengers had either misplaced or inadvertently left behind, either inside the train or on the platform premises. Adopting an innovative approach to locate passengers and return their valuables, Sharma initially attempts to obtain information about the passengers using their PNR details.

However, most of the time, the phone numbers listed in the passengers' details are either switched off or out of service, making it challenging to trace the passenger. Undeterred by the non-availability of the passengers, Sharma then starts searching passengers on social media networks by their names and locations based on PNR details. He has succeeded on most of the occasions in reaching out to them and informing about their belongings. "Most of the lost goods include laptops, bags, mobile phones and other personal belongings and in many cases gold ornaments. Luggage and other valuables including ornaments do form a large part of the goods that commuters leave behind mistakenly," he said.

Invoked diplomatic parity after Canada meddled in our affairs: India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the diplomatic row between the two countries festers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said here India invoked the provision of parity in Canada's diplomatic presence in the country in view of concerns over interference in New Delhi's affairs by Canadian personnel. This assertion came days after Canada withdrew 41 of its diplomats and claimed India had warned that their diplomatic immunity will be stripped if the diplomats do not leave the country. Canada also issued an advisory to its citizens in India. Jaishankar, meanwhile, also said India is likely to resume

issuance of visas to Canadians if it sees progress in the safety of Indian diplomats in Canada. The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations last month of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June. Days after Trudeau's allegations, India announced temporarily suspending issuance of visas to Canadian citizens and asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country. "If we see progress in the safety of our diplomats in Canada, we would like to resume issuance of visas there," Jaishankar said at an event while replying to a question on



India-Canada ties. On downsizing Canada's diplomatic presence in India, he said diplomatic parity is very much provided for in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. "Parity is very much provided

for by the Vienna Convention, which is the relevant international rule on this. In our case, we invoked parity because we had concerns about continuous interference in our affairs by Canadian personnel," Jaishankar said.

Canada has already withdrawn 41 of its diplomats from India. Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, announcing the return of the diplomats from India, on Thursday described New Delhi's action "contrary to international law," and in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. India has already rejected the charge. Jaishankar said the relationship between India and Canada right now is going through a difficult phase, adding that India has problems with certain segments of Canadian politics. Canada also issued a travel advisory for its citizens in India asking them "to exercise a high degree of caution due to the threat of terrorist attacks throughout the country." Brushing aside Joly's con-

vention, the External Affairs Ministry had said in New Delhi "We have seen the Statement by the Government of Canada on October 19 regarding Canadian diplomatic presence in India. The state of our bilateral relations, the much higher number of Canadian diplomats in India, and their continued interference in our internal affairs warrant a parity in mutual diplomatic presence in New Delhi and Ottawa. We have been engaged with the Canadian side on this over the last month in order to work out the details and modalities of its implementation. Our actions in implementing this parity are fully consistent with Article 11.1 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which states the fol-

lowing: "In the absence of specific agreement as to the size of the mission, the receiving State may require that the size of a mission be kept within limits considered by it to be reasonable and normal, having regard to circumstances and conditions in the receiving State and to the needs of the particular mission." MEA also said "We reject any attempt to portray the implementation of parity as a violation of international norms. The Canadian updated advisory also said "In the context of recent developments in Canada and India, there are calls for protests and some negative sentiment towards Canada in traditional media and on social media. Demonstrations, including anti-Canada protests,

could occur and Canadians may be subjected to intimidation or harassment. In Delhi and the National Capital Region, you should keep a low profile with strangers, and not share your personal information with them." The advisory also said "Exercise a high degree of caution in and around Bengaluru, Chandigarh, and Mumbai. Consular services in-person are temporarily unavailable in those cities or surrounding areas." "Petty crime, such as pick-pocketing and purse snatching, is common. Criminals may target foreigners, especially in major cities and tourist areas," the advisory read, urging citizens to be vigilant in crowded locations and not carry large sums of money.

Eradicate manual sewer cleaning in phases, SC directs Centre, States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that a large segment of India's population, involved in manual scavenging, has remained unheard and muted, in bondage and systematically trapped in inhumane conditions, the Supreme Court has directed the Centre and states to take appropriate measures, frame policies and issue directions to ensure that manual sewer cleaning is com-

pletely eradicated in a phased manner. The top court has asked the Centre to issue guidelines and directions that any sewer-cleaning work outsourced or required to be discharged by or through contractors or agencies do not require individuals to enter sewers for any purpose whatsoever. Issuing a slew of directions, a bench of Justices S Ravindra Bhat (since retired) and Aravind Kumar asked the central and



state governments to pay Rs 30 lakh as compensation to the next of kin of those who die while cleaning sewers.

"The court hereby directs the Union and the states to ensure that the compensation for sewer deaths is increased (given that the previous amount fixed, that is, Rs 10 lakh was made applicable in 1993). The current equivalent of that amount is Rs 30 lakh. "This shall be the amount to be paid by the concerned agency, that is, the Union, the Union Territory or the state, as the case may be. In other words, compensation for sewer deaths shall be Rs 30 lakh. In the event the dependents of any victim have not been paid such an amount, the above amount shall be payable to them. Furthermore, this shall be the amount to be hereafter paid as compensation," the bench said. The top court directed all the states and Union territories to make sure that all departments, agencies and corporations ensure that the guidelines and directions framed by the Centre are embodied in their own guidelines and directions.

Kerala Christians stand by Israel

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Christians belonging to all sects of Churches in Central Kerala held a major rally and prayer meeting at Pala on Sunday evening to express their solidarity with Israel and the Jewish community in that country. Hundreds including women and children turned up for the rally and prayer meeting despite heavy downpour. The event was organised by Christian Association and Alliance for Social Action (CAASA), an umbrella organization comprising of all Christian sects. This comes in response to the massive demonstrations held last week by Social Democratic Party of India, the frontal organization of the banned Popular Front if India across the State condemning Israel for attacking Hamas and Hezbollah.



"The blessed nation Israel and God's Own children, the Jewish community, with which we have umbilical cord relation are under attack by the terrorists of Hamas and Hezbollah. All we can do is to pray from here for the safety and security of the blessed country and its people," said Jaison Mazhuvancherry, a community leader while addressing the

prayer meeting. Interestingly, Jaison, suffering from a kidney ailment was brought to the venue from the hospital where he is undergoing dialysis. The prayer meeting saw the participants lighting candles in memory of the people who were murdered by the terrorists and prayed for the safety of the people from other countries who were caught up in the attacks. Hundreds of persons from Pala are working in Israel. Those who spoke in the prayer meet expressed their anguish over the indifference of various political parties in the State towards Israel. They thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his condemnation of the Hamas attack on Israel. "Our prayers are also with the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) who fight for the security of Israel and also to save the Keralites working in the blessed country," said Jacob Varghese, district chief of CAASA. Prof Stanly Sebastian, educationist and community leader expressed his shock over the indifference of the Christian spiritual leaders in Pala and Kottayam over terrorist attack against Israel. "For us, Israel and Jerusalem in particular are sacred places. The ultimate dream of all Christians is to conduct a pilgrimage to the Blessed Country and City and offer our prayers. The attack on Israel and the Jews is like stabbing the Christian community straight on our heart. "This has to be condemned in the strongest of words," said Prof Sebastian.

PAWARGRID POWERGRID

NOTICE

1. Approval under regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations'1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations, 2014 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations' 2019 for determination of tariff & truing up of transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block for Asset-1 and from DOCO to 31-03-2024 for Asset 2 to Asset 15 under "Establishment of Fibre Optic Communication System in Northern Region under fibre optic expansion project (Additional Requirement)".

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (i) Ajmer Vidut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (ii) Jaipur Vidut Vitran Nigam Ltd, (iii) Jodhpur Vidut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (iv) Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (v) Haryana Power Purchase Centre, (vi) Jammu Kashmir Power Corporation Limited (vii) Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (viii) Bses Yamuna Power Ltd, (ix) Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd. (x) Chandigarh Administration (xi) Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. (xii) North Central Railway (xiii) New Delhi Municipal Council (xiv) Power Transmission Corporation Of Uttarakhand Limited (ptcul) (xv) Bhakra Beas Management Board (xvi) Punjab State Transmission Corporation Limited (xvii) Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Ltd (xviii) Bses Rajdhani Power Ltd.

3. Apportioned Approved capital cost (Rs. In Lacs), Date of Commercial Operation and total estimated Capital cost (Rs. In Lacs):

Asset	Apportioned approved Capital cost (Rs in Lakhs)	DOCO	Total estimated Capital cost (Rs in Lakhs)
Asset 1	258.07	29.12.2018	254.62
Asset 2	461.59	09.07.2019	454.68
Asset 3	343.81	31.10.2019	337.93
Asset 4	222.29	05.11.2019	216.74
Asset 5	649.58	02.01.2020	639.28
Asset 6	416.23	02.01.2021	409.21
Asset 7	717.63	02.01.2021	705.00
Asset 8	599.39	02.01.2021	588.29
Asset 9	3808.41	27.03.2021	3761.72
Asset 10	579.78	19.08.2021	573.18
Asset 11	485.47	28.10.2021	473.17
Asset 12	4083.78	30.04.2022	4067.35
Asset 13	989.00	22.08.2022	977.88
Asset 14	702.71	30.09.2023	692.29
Asset 15	901.46	30.09.2023	890.90

4. The annual transmission tariff for the tariff period 2014-19 & 2019-24 is summarized as below:

For 2014-19 tariff block

SI No	Name of the asset	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	Asset-1	--	--	--	--	8.08

For 2019-24 tariff block

SI No.	Name of the asset	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1	Asset-1	32.18	33.6	34.33	39.73	45
2	Asset-2	41.02	57.81	58.58	71.4	83.33
3	Asset-3	16.92	44.13	43.65	46.08	51.15
4	Asset-4	10.47	28.27	27.97	29.4	32.59
5	Asset-5	18.5	77.59	87.54	99.79	102.35
6	Asset-6	--	13.42	59.18	65.48	66.63
7	Asset-7	--	23.36	95.7	104.72	112.97
8	Asset-8	--	22.1	90.11	98.31	106.23
9	Asset-9	--	8.48	666.44	704.78	687.26
10	Asset-10	--	--	49.42	82.99	88.17
11	Asset-11	--	--	30.58	72.61	74.24
12	Asset-12	--	--	--	582.22	663.64
13	Asset-13	--	--	--	88.2	157.5
14	Asset-14	--	--	--	--	65.87
15	Asset-15	--	--	--	--	75.33

5. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergrid.in

6. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th floor, Chandralok Building, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: GURUGRAM **Sd/-**
Date: 20.10.2023 **Sr. General Manager (Commercial)**

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CJI Chandrachud felicitated at alma mater Harvard Law School

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud has been felicitated with the 'Award for Global Leadership' by the Center on the Legal Profession, a Harvard Law School.



The chief justice was announced as the recipient of the award on January 11, 2023, in an online ceremony. He was present at Harvard Law School on Saturday for a fireside chat with David Wilkins, Professor at Harvard Law School and Faculty Director, Center on the Legal Profession. The Harvard Law School is also celebrating the 100th anniversary of its Graduate Law Program. The CJI remembered his time at Harvard as an LLM student in 1982-83 and then a SJD candidate in 1983-1986. CJI Chandrachud spoke about the initiatives taken at the Supreme Court during the first year of his tenure. "These include incorporation of technology in court processes, launch of Handbook on combating gender stereotypes, etc." "The Chief Justice also emphasized on the importance of interdisciplinary studies, that law does not work in vacuum. Issues of medical science or technology are connected to the working of law," a release said. Referring to the legal aid clinics at Harvard, the Chief Justice stated that law students should be involved in clinical legal models, where they are actively involved in real time cases in local areas. When asked a question whether the legal profession can be democratized, he referred to the new law clerk scheme implemented in his tenure, which provides equal access to all to apply for a clerkship at the Supreme Court. He also shared his concern about the mental health of lawyers and suggested that apart from senior lawyers and judges, the law schools should also develop a mechanism to train students in handling stress and mental health. The Chief Justice also interacted with the students and faculty members of various departments at the university.

TMC, BJP spar after Nadda's remark at Durga pandal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

War of words erupted between the BJP and the TMC over the saffron party's national JP Nadda's comment at a Durga Puja pandal that he was sure that the Mother Goddess would bring an end to the demonic forces (read the TMC Government) in Bengal. Nadda on Saturday evening visited a Durga Puja pandal in Kolkata from where he prayed to the Mother Goddess Durga. He said, "The way the demonic forces were destroying democracy by indulging in dynastic rule, violence, corruption and infiltration ... I pray to Mother Durga to bring an end to the demonic rule and bring peace and prosperity in Bengal." Nadda was the second senior leader after Amit Shah to visit the State during the Pujas apparently as a part of the BJP national leadership to reach out to the people during the festive seasons. The TMC immediately hit back



at the BJP president saying, it was the culture of the BJP to vilify the people of a place where they visit. "They have no knowledge of the culture of Bengal ... sometimes they appear from nowhere in the horizon and make some nonsensical statements ... the one that JP Nadda ji made was one such statement that he made seeking destruction of the demonic forces ... but in doing so why does he not start from UP which tops in crime against women, minori-

ties ... in BJP ruled States you find the Asuras (demons) ruling with bigger force than in Bengal," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said. Ghosh also attacked Nadda for the "dynastic rule" comment saying, "while they are pointing fingers at the Bengal leaders they seem to forget the instances of their own leaders like Amit Shah and his son, Suwendu Adhikari whose father is an MP, brother is an MP and his whole family is bathing in the nectar of dynastic rule."

His Majesty's Headhunters: Siege of Kohima that Shaped World History

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A hitherto untold story of the Second World War which was staged in India's North-East and the Allied Forces describe as the "last real battle of the British Empire" is being published as a true life account by Penguin Random House and is soon expected to hit book shelves across India. The battle of Kohima was the game-changing event that altered the course of world history during the Second World War, according to release by Peter Modoli, Associate Vice President, Penguin Random House. This party of the military history that took place between 8 March 1944 to 18 July 1944 is chronicled as Battles of Kohima and Imphal and has been acces-



Burma in 1942. "Had the Allied Forces under the leadership of Britain failed to defeat the Japanese Army from this theatre of war, the outcome of the second world war and the subsequent events would have been different," explained Modoli, in a tete-a-tete with *The Pioneer* on Sunday. "His Majesty's Headhunters : The Siege of Kohima that Shaped World History", was authored by Mmholunlo Kikon, a poet-turned-politician-turned-historian. Kohima-born Kikon. This adds to the importance of the work as the author has made use of the repositories of local legends as well as folklores which have were till now limited to the hills and valleys of the north east.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Kikon said this is the first time a comprehensive volume of this kind was being written, "A two-year long research took me back to the period 1832 when the British East India Company came to the north east in search of a route to Kohima and Nagaland. Though there are a few works on the war staged in this part of the world, they do not have the facts which I have mentioned in the volume," said Kikon. Providing a unique perspective of Nagaland and its warriors, this book uncovers the untold story of the siege, regarded as one of the more celebrated battles of D-Day and often referred to as the 'Stalingrad of the East' by Western scholars. Historians even believe that this

was the last battle of the British Empire and the first battle of the 'New India' However, that is just the tale told so far by everyone except the Nagas. The real history of this battle?which involved the Japanese Army, led by Lieutenant General Sato, and the Allied forces?is yet to be recounted. As Lt Gen. Sato is said to have remarked, if it were not for the Nagas people, the Allied forces would have been defeated in Kohima, and the Japanese Army would have easily secured the Imapur railway station and moved victoriously towards Bengal via Assam, thus reversing the outcome of the war. According to a release by PRH, this rare and deeply researched historical account, drawing on

records left by the officers and soldiers who fought in Kohima, is a page-turner. It brings to light the valor and spirit of the Naga 'headhunters', who made the supreme sacrifice to protect the honour of their people. The Kohima War Cemetery lies on the slopes of Garrison Hill and also contains the British 2nd Division's memorial. The inscription on the latter has become famous as the 'Kohima Epitaph', "When You Go Home, Tell Them of Us and Say, For Our Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today", says the Epitaph by John Maxwell Edmonds who laid his life in 1944 at the altar of duty. "Kikon is not one who rests on his laurels. He is out to tell the rest of the country about the real story of North East.

Saved ₹16 cr on Sarai Kale Khan flyover: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The three-lane Sarai Kale Khan flyover was opened for traffic on Sunday, facilitating better connectivity between Central, East and Southeast Delhi. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who inaugurated the flyover, congratulated and thanked everyone involved in its construction including PWD officials, engineers, contractors, agencies, and workers. "Earlier, there used to be jams at T-junction, now people will not have to bother with it with the construction of this flyover. This flyover is 620 metres long. We sanctioned Rs 66 crore for this project, and completed it in Rs 50 crore only. Just as every other project of the Delhi government, we saved the money on this as well," he added. "With the construction of the DND extension, Ashram Underpass and now this flyover, people can travel without any interruptions. Earlier there used to be heavy traffic jams at Ashram. There are no traffic lights on the entire ring road area within Delhi, be it the area of ITO, Chandgi Ram, Ashram, Moolchand, and Dhaula Kuan," he added. "As our next step, we're study-



ing every main point of traffic jams in Delhi. Based on this study, we'll construct the U-turns, flyovers, etc as per the need to make Delhi traffic jams-free," he added. Citing facts and figures related to development of flyovers and underpasses, he said since 1947 till now, 102 flyovers and underpasses have been constructed in the national capital. "Among these, 30 have been constructed by the AAP government in only eight years. What's been done in 75 years, 30 per cent of this has been achieved in just eight years by the AAP government. This shows how rapidly Delhi is being developed. In the coming times, 25 more flyovers are being constructed. Nine flyovers are under-construction and another 16 are at the stage

of approval. This will lead the tally to more than 125, and 50 per cent of this will be developed by the AAP government in 8-10 years," he noted. Citing the example of the Rani Jhansi flyover which was built at Rs 1,500 crore and had an initial cost of Rs 300-400 crore, the chief minister stated that any governmental development work in the country doesn't complete without cost escalation. "In Delhi, we complete all the work on time and save money in the process. In the construction of 30 flyovers in our government, we saved Rs 557 crore. It should be in the Guinness Book that there is a government in Delhi, India, that saves money on every task with complete honesty. Just as we save money in our homes, we work with complete hon-

esty in the government and save every single penny," he added. He said "PWD stands for corruption" across the country, but in Delhi, it is synonymous with "honesty". "Our 'PWD' department is saving money on every project. The whole of Delhi is witnessing how many obstacles we face in our work every day. There is a great effort to stop our work, but despite all these obstacles, we continue to work. We have always said that no matter how many obstacles are in the way, I will not let your work stop, even if the work slows down," he assured. PWD Minister Atishi said Kejriwal has completely transformed the area between Sarai Kale Khan and Ashram. "Earlier, commuting via Ashram meant that we had to face hours of traffic jams. This also impacted the connecting areas with traffic as people tried to take different routes to avoid jams in the Sarai Kale Khan and Ashram areas," he added. She added that this flyover has not only made Sarai Kale Khan and Ashram traffic-jam-free but now there will be no traffic signal between the Chandgi Ram Akhara area and Ashram. Now this 16-km stretch on Ring Road is completely signal-free, Atishi added.

BJP alleges wrong cost calculation, quality compromise

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders on Sunday slammed the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal claiming that his government has saved Rs 557 crore in the construction of 30 flyovers in the last five years. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said there is something amiss in the cost calculation of projects. "The high difference between the sanctioned cost and actual cost indicates there is some corruption in cost calculation system or there is quality compromise. Sachdeva said in these five projects, there has been a difference of 10 per to 30 per cent between the sanctioned cost and actual cost raising a question on the estimated sanctioned cost calculation of PWD or the other project agency. "There are two possibilities that either the estimated sanctioned cost calculation of projects was done at an abnormally high amount to take care of actual costs and political cuts of Aam Aadmi Party and to later claim

saving on cost or else there is a quality compromise on projects," he said. Sachdeva said there is need to order an inquiry into projects cost calculation system of Delhi Government. Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said this Kejriwal government has not constructed a single flyover during its eight years tenure. Bidhuri has challenged Kejriwal to prove his claims of building 30 flyovers and underpasses after coming to power or apologize to the public for lying. "It has been claimed that cost savings were achieved by reducing work on most projects. In addition, Kejriwal is presenting false figures to the public, even though most projects delayed by his government have resulted in increased costs. The Ashram Flyover is a prime example of this," he said. "The NHAI is building 30 flyovers and 18 underpasses on the Ring Road at a cost of 12,000 crores, while the DDA has already built 5 flyovers," Bidhuri added.

Pollution board fines IOC, BPCL

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has fined state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) for not installing pollution control devices at their petrol pumps. IOC has been fined Rs 1 crore and BPCL Rs 2 crore, the two firms said in separate stock exchange filings. "The company has received a direction from CPCB to pay compensation of Rs 1 crore for non-installation of Vapour Recovery Systems (VRS) at retail outlets in National Capital Region (NCR)," IOC said adding the fine was for not installing VRS at petrol refuelling stations within the timeline prescribed by the Supreme Court. When a vehicle is refilled at a fuel station, petrol vapour tends to dissipate into the atmosphere. The vapour contains cancer-causing substances like benzene, toluene and xylene. Petrol pumps were in 2016 ordered to install VRS at fuel stations to prevent petrol vapours from escaping. "There is no impact on the operation and other activities



of the company. However, the financial implication would be limited to a compensation amount of Rs 1 crore," IOC said. In a separate filing, BPCL said it has "received notice under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to pay environmental compensation of Rs 2 crore to CPCB for non-installation of Vapour Recovery Systems within the timeline prescribed by Supreme Court and CPCB, in petrol refuelling stations and storage terminals." BPCL said it is "examining the notice and would be giving appropriate reply requesting the CPCB not to proceed further and discharge the company from the notice". Both the companies received notices on October 19, 2023.

16 people rescued after fire engulfs flat in Subzi Mandi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sixteen people, including six children, were rescued after a fire broke out in a flat in central Delhi's Subzi Mandi area on Sunday, Delhi Fire Service officials said. A call was received at around 7.40 am about the blaze on the second floor of a building and eight fire engines were pressed into service. "The police station concerned was informed as well. We have rescued 16 people comprising six children, seven women and three men," said an official. The rescue operation was challenging as an LPG gas cylinder exploded inside the flat, he added. According to the DFS, the fire has been doused and no one suffered any serious injuries. "We have started an investigation to ascertain the cause of the fire," a senior police official said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Manoj Kumar Meena said on Sunday around 7.40 am, a PCR call regarding fire in Harfool Singh Building, Ghantaghar, Sabzi Mandi, was received following which the staff reached the spot. The Harfool Singh Building



houses Punjab National Bank on the ground floor and different families reside on the first, second and third floors, the DCP said. There was fire on the second and third floor of the building. Some of the family members residing on the second floor had already moved out. The other family members of the second floor and all the family members living on the third floor were found trapped, the DCP said. Four fire tenders, local police, residents of the area and CATS ambulance were engaged in the rescue operation. All the occu-

pants of the building were rescued. Five people residing on the second floor and 11 people on the third floor were rescued. None had any serious injury, Meena said. Two medico-legal cases have been made. A woman suffered minor burns on hand and forearm, police said. The forensic and crime teams have inspected the spot. According to the spot inquiry conducted till now, the fire started from the second floor of the building. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained. Legal action is being taken, they added.

Air quality turns 'very poor'; Rai calls meeting with depts

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai will on Monday chair a meeting with departments concerned on the implementation of mitigating measures under the Central Government's pollution control plan, officials said. Delhi's air quality dipped to "very poor" levels on Sunday, the first time this season, due to unfavourable meteorological conditions. The Capital's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) dropped to 313 (very poor) on Sunday from 248 on Saturday. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), a statutory body responsible for proactively implementing the pollution control plan known as the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), had on Saturday directed authorities in the NCR to increase parking fees to discourage private transport and enhance the services of CNG or electric buses and metro trains amid a likely increase in pollution levels. 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). Stage I mandates the suspension of work at private construction and demolition projects with a plot size equal to or exceeding 500 square metres that are not registered on the state government's portal for remote monitoring of dust mitigation measures. Authorities are also tasked with enforcing a complete ban on the use of coal and firewood in 'tandooors' at hotels, restaurants and open eateries, along with taking punitive action against polluting industrial units and thermal power plants within 300 km 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.

Congress holds Pratigya Rally in Tilak Nagar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Decades after 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the Delhi Congress on Sunday held a 'Pratigya Rally', under the "Jawab do, Hisaab do" campaign in Tilak Nagar chowk, Delhi, in an attempt to regain lost political ground. The area was hit by violence during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and this was the party's first major political rally at the spot since 1984. "It was matter of great pride for Delhi Congress that the historic rally, attended by thousands of people, including a large number of Sikh and Punjabi residents, was organised at Tilak Nagar in West Delhi after a gap of 35 years. Women, youth, people from the rural areas and Poorvanchalis also attended the rally in huge numbers. Enthusiastic Congress workers raised slogans like "Jai Congress-Vijay Congress", "Congress Ko Laoge-Dilli Ko Bachayenge", "Baapra Harao-Dilli Bachao", "Nafrath Nahi, Mohabath Chahiye-Ab Desh Ko Rahul Gandhi Chahiye", etc," Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely said. Hundreds of Congress workers, who had assembled at Tilak Nagar Chowk, accorded a



warm reception to the Congress leaders that it took them quite some time to reach the rally venue at Tilak Nagar, resulting in traffic jams from Jail Road, Najafgarh Road to Raja Garden. The presence of a huge number of Sikh and Punjabi community people at Jail Road was a heart-warming sight for the Delhi Congress leaders. The Sikh community honoured Arvinder Singh Lovely, Subhash Chopra and Mukesh Sharma by presenting them with "Saropa" (sword). Addressing a gathering, Lovely slammed the BJP MPs in Delhi for neglecting their parliamentary constituencies. Lovely said that Rs 5080 crore have been collected from shopkeepers in the name of

conversion and parking charges, including Rs 623.48 crore from West Zone and Rs 77.08 crore from Najafgarh Zone, but the MCD has not done any work for which the money had been collected. He said that parking shortage was a major issue in Delhi, for which the BJP was responsible. He said Lovely said that had the Congress Government not passed the "Protection Act 2006" during the sealing drive, over 30 lakh shopkeepers would have been rendered unemployed. Former Delhi Congress president Subhash Chopra, Raj Kumar Chauhan, Mukesh Sharma, Jai Kishan and Mangat Ram Singhal addressed the gathering.

Requested MEA to contact family of 'Swiss' woman killed in Delhi: Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has requested the help of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in order to contact the family members of a 'Swiss' national who was found dead in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar. The woman's decomposed body with limbs tied with chains was found near a school on Friday. Police on Saturday said they have arrested a man, identified as Gurpreet Singh (30) in connection with the murder, with the accused claiming that the victim hailed from Switzerland and he had befriended her some years back through a dating app. "Establishment of contact with the family members is very important to confirm whether the body is actually of a Swiss national as claimed by Singh. Through DNA sampling, we will be able to confirm the identity of the body and our headquarters has requested the MEA to intervene and reach out to Swiss authorities for help," said an official. Sources also said Singh, who was sent to four days' police custody, is continuously changing his statements. "We are sure that during his police remand and interrogation, he will reveal details about the case. The accused has been changing his statements. He has not shown any remorse so



far. We are also trying to find out why he committed the murder in such a brutal manner," the official said. Police had earlier said Singh had befriended the victim some years back through a dating app, and suspected her of having affairs with other men. A few days ago, he asked her to come to India to meet him. On October 11, she came from Switzerland to Delhi and stayed in a hotel in West Delhi. Police said three days ago, he asked her to meet him outside the hotel. "From there he took her towards the Vishnu Garden area where he told her that he wanted to give her a surprise... And he then strangled her to death," the police said quoting Gurpreet. He told the police he tied her hands and legs with chains and kept the body in the car. He also drove with the body in the area looking for an opportunity to dump it. When he could not do so, he parked the car near his house, but when the foul smell started emanating, he left the body near the MCD school two days after the murder.

Feast on history at this archaeological park cafe

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

History lovers visiting Delhi's Mehrauli Archaeological Park can now feast their eyes on a set of restored monuments and a revived old water body while satisfying their taste buds at a cafe set up in a stone-built circular heritage building. The curious-looking round structure that overlooks the water body, sits in the historic park and has been conserved and adaptively reused as a cafeteria. Named 'The Garden Cafe', it is a self-service cafe in the sprawling Mehrauli Archaeological Park which is dotted with more than 50 old structures dating to different periods, neighbouring the iconic Qutub Minar. The cafeteria's main lounge is housed in a monument, labelled 'Unknown Circular Monument' on an inscription stone near it. This round structure, along with a number of other monuments and the historic water body in the over 200-acre park, earlier lay neglected, and have received a new lease of life under a revival and restoration project undertaken in the last six to seven months. The site was in bad shape earlier, and some of the monuments had graffiti scrawled on their walls, while the water body till a few months ago



had silt and garbage in it, presenting an ungainly sight to visitors. The restoration and redevelopment work undertaken in the park was unveiled by Lt Governor V K Saxena on Friday evening. After the event, refreshments were served to Saxena and other guests near the newly set-up cafeteria. "This cafe is now open to people and they can come and enjoy here from 10 am to 7 pm. Visitors can now feast on history and some good food while exploring the historic park," a senior official of the DDA said. The park comes under the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The location of the cafe offers a beautiful view of the Qutub Minar -- a UNESCO World Heritage Site -- from one side and of gushing fountains which get illuminated by sun-

set from the other side. "Delhi is full of heritage and there is a need to preserve it. A few months ago, this area had a dense jungle, debris lay scattered and the water body was covered in silt. But, in six to seven months the area has been transformed," Saxena told reporters during his visit to the park on Friday. The Lt Governor, also chairman of the DDA, said a cafe has also been set up as part of the revival and redevelopment project. "In future, there will be more such projects, and we are looking for more such heritage sites which can be revived where families can come and enjoy," he said, adding, in November, "another gift" will be given to the people of Delhi. According to a menu board displayed at the cafe, visitors can order tea, coffee, muffins, sandwiches, burgers, and kulchas, among other items.

Palestinian students in India pray for war to end

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Visuals of flattened buildings, debris, and scorched ground in Gaza have caused immense psychological trauma to Talib, a Palestinian student in India, who is constantly worried about the well-being of his family members back home and barely able to concentrate on studies. Running out of money, the 31-year-old also had to cut down on the "quality and quantity" of his meals. "I haven't been able to read or write a single sentence ever since the war started. I am experiencing mental stress and haven't slept properly in a while," Talib told PTI. Unable to get in touch with anyone back home, Talib said he doesn't know if his family members are alive. "It's a helpless feeling and a difficult situation to be in," he said. "I have become conscious about spending money, even on food. Instead of three meals, I eat two meals now and have to compromise on their quality and quantity," he added. Eager to return home, Talib said he is praying for the war to end soon. The latest Israel-Palestine conflict has been triggered by the unprecedented and multi-pronged attacks against Israel by Hamas militants on October 7. Israel has launched a massive counter-offensive in Gaza to avenge the attacks.

According to the Gaza Health Ministry, over 3,300 people have been killed and over 12,000 wounded in Gaza since the conflict began. Alish, another Palestinian student, had completed her degree course and was planning to return home when the war erupted. Ever since losing contact with her family, she has been suffering constant panic attacks. Alish said the Palestine Embassy has not provided any aid to the students in India and several of them are struggling to survive on their own. "The Palestine Embassy in India has not provided us with any kind of support or inquired about our well-being," Alish, who has been staying with her friends, alleged. A similar experience was shared by Farooq, who said he is left with barely enough money to survive one more week. However, he said some of his peers and teachers have supported him. The Palestinian students also said the ongoing conflict has hampered their relationships with some students who are "pro-Israel". "There are several students who support us, but there is a section that supports Israel. Our ties have been severed because of this," Farooq, who is studying at a leading university in Delhi, said.

Nepali national stabs friend to death in Gurugram

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

A 27-year-old Nepali national was arrested for allegedly stabbing to death his friend in Anjana Colony in Gurugram, police said on Sunday. According to the Gurugram police, the victim was 23-year-old Vinod, also a native of Nepal, while the accused has been identified as Sumit alias Sukhalal. Vinod was stabbed late Saturday night. Both were good friends and used to work with a private company in Sector 37, said police. The investigation revealed that Vinod had called Sumit from Nepal to Gurugram 15 days ago for work. Sumit, during interrogation, said, though he got him work, Vinod used to bully him. "Vinod used to scold me over minor things due to which I started having a grudge against him. We were drinking Saturday till late night. I took the opportunity and attacked Vinod with a knife near his neck and killed him," Sumit confessed, according to Gurugram police. "We are questioning the accused and he will be produced in a city court on Monday," said ACP, Crime, Varun Dahiya.

Cyclonic storms brewing in Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a rare weather phenomenon, twin cyclonic storms are brewing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Cyclone storm Tej is brewing in the Arabian sea. This would be the second cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea this year. While cyclone 'Hamoon' in the Bay of Bengal is in a pre-mature stage. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), cyclone 'Tej', brewing in the southwest Arabian Sea, intensified into an extremely severe cyclonic storm on Sunday and is headed towards

the Yemen-Oman coasts. The cyclonic storm is predicted to move northwards and cross the Yemen-Oman coasts between Al Ghaidah (Yemen) and Salalah (Oman), close to the east of Al Ghaidah in the early hours of October 25 as a very severe cyclonic storm with wind speeds of 115-125 kmph, gusting to 140 kmph. The last cyclone to make landfall in this region was Cyclone Mekunu, over 5 years ago in 2018. However, meteorologists caution that at times, storms may deviate from the predicted track and intensity, as seen in the case of cyclone Biparjoy,



which formed in the Arabian Sea in June and initially moved in a north-northwest direction before changing course to make landfall between Mandvi in Gujarat and Karachi in

Pakistan. "The very severe cyclonic storm 'Tej' intensified into an extremely severe cyclonic storm and lay centred about 160 km east-southeast of Socotra (Yemen), 540 km south-southeast of Salalah (Oman), and 550 km southeast of Al Ghaidah (Yemen) at 8:30 am on Sunday," the IMD said in a statement. The storm is likely to move northwestwards till October 24. It is then likely to cross Yemen-Oman Coasts Between Al Ghaidah and Salalah, close to east of Al Ghaidah, at around 11:30 am of October 24. Concurrently, Cyclone Hamoon will emerge in the

Bay, moving close to the Andhra coast before being diverted by the Western Disturbance. It is then predicted to recurve and move north-northeastwards during the subsequent three days towards Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts, the Met office said. Both these cyclones would have no significant impact on the weather with a slight weather change expected in Chennai and the coastal regions of Tamil Nadu, as the cyclones move away. However, evening thunderstorms rains are likely to persist in Kerala and interior parts of Tamil Nadu, according to private weather forecasters.

The common rule is that the name list is proposed by the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of WMO Members of a specific region, and approved by the respective tropical cyclone regional bodies at their annual/biennial sessions. The simultaneous occurrence of tropical storms on both sides of the Indian coastline is a rare phenomenon. However, if these storms, Tej and Hamoon, take shape, they will be separated by a considerable distance of 2,500 km and will traverse along separate ways.

Agniveer martyred in Siachen; Army Chief condoles demise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Manoj Pande and all ranks of the force have condoled the death of an Agniveer who died in the Siachen, often called as the world's highest battlefield. Agniveer Gawate Akshay Laxman, died in the line of duty in Siachen, the Army's Leh-headquartered Fire and Fury Corps said on Sunday. The deceased hailed from Maharashtra. "Quartered in snow silent to remain, when the bugle calls they shall rise and march again," the Fire and Fury Corps said on 'X'. "All ranks of Fire and Fury Corps salute the supreme sacrifice of #Agniveer (Operator) Gawate Akshay Laxman, in the line of duty, in the unforgetting heights of Siachen and offer deepest condolences to the family," it said. The exact details of Laxman's death are not immediately known. "General Manoj Pande (COAS) and All Ranks of the Indian



Army salute the supreme sacrifice of Agniveer (Operator) Gawate Akshay Laxman, in the line of duty, in the unforgetting heights of Siachen. The Indian Army stands firm with the bereaved family in this hour of grief," the Indian Army wrote. The Siachen glacier at the height of around 20,000 feet is known as the highest militarised zone in the world where the soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds. Nearly 900 Indian army personnel have, so far, died since

Centre to reassess vulnerability of glacial lakes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In collaboration with the States, the Centre will reassess the vulnerability of all glacial lakes in the country through ground surveys and establish a monitoring system to disseminate information about potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). According to sources in the government, the decision follows the devastating floods caused by the Lhonak lake outburst in Sikkim due to heavy rains earlier this month. It resulted in at least 60 fatalities and extensive damage in Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong, and Namchi districts. It also led to the destruction of the Chungthang dam, also known as Teesta III dam, a vital component of a major hydropower project in the State. "A comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of glacial lakes in the country is necessary. Our current understanding of these lakes is primarily based on remote sensing. We are now planning to conduct ground validations of all glacial



lakes. Their vulnerability cannot be determined without this exercise," said a source at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Glacial lakes are formed by the melting of glaciers and the accumulation of meltwater in depressions on or near the glacier's surface. GLOFs occur when these lakes suddenly burst open due to various factors, such as excessive water accumulation or triggers like earthquakes.

When a glacial lake bursts, it releases a massive volume of water, resulting in flash floods downstream. These floods can be extremely destructive and dangerous for both people and the environment in the affected area. Given that glacial lakes are located in remote, high-altitude areas, conducting ground surveys is a challenging task, the source said. "The majority of these lakes are situated at altitudes of 5,000 meters or higher. Experts with knowledge of

hydrology, topography, and other characteristics of glacial lakes, who can endure harsh weather and difficult terrain, will be part of the teams selected for ground validation exercises," the source added. A similar initiative was launched to install a monitoring system at Lhonak lake around a month before the GLOF occurred. The expedition team included members from the National Remote Sensing Centre, Wadia Institute of Himalayan

Geology, the Indian Army, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Department of Science and Technology of the Sikkim government, and the Geological Survey of India. Another source said there is no specific deadline for completing the ground validation exercises. "The conditions of glaciers in one state may differ from another, so we will need to develop a comprehensive monitoring system. This will be transformed into an early warning system, and the entire process is expected to take at least five years and a significant effort," the second source explained. Larger glacial lakes pose a greater risk, so ground validation of these will be given priority. States will play a significant role in the programme, which is expected to commence soon. The remote, harsh weather, and challenging terrain will be major challenges, necessitating a focus on strengthening scientific capacity and developing instruments capable of withstanding tough weather, terrain, and topography, the source added.

Rajnath to celebrate Dussehra with soldiers at Tawang base

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will celebrate Dussehra with Army soldiers at a forward base in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang on Tuesday. He will perform 'Shastra Puja' (worship of weapons) in Tawang, sources said here on Sunday. Rajnath's decision to celebrate Dussehra with the soldiers at the strategically-important location that is close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) comes at a time India and China have been engaged in a bitter standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh for more than three years. The defence minister will also carry out a comprehensive review of the ground situation along the LAC in the Arunachal Pradesh sector, sources said. He is likely to visit a few forward locations in the region. Rajnath has been performing 'Shastra Puja' on Dussehra for the last several years, including during his tenure as the Union home



minister in the previous BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over-three-year-long confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides have completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. The Army has significantly bolstered deployment of troops and weaponry along the nearly 3,500-km-long LAC, including in the Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh sectors, following the eastern Ladakh standoff.

Release ₹50L to wife of guard who died during Covid: Court to Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre and Safdarjung Hospital to release ₹50 lakh to the wife of a security guard deployed at the hospital, who died on duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. The high court said the central government cannot take such a narrow approach that only such persons who were posted in the COVID-19 ward or centre will be covered by the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance scheme for health workers fighting COVID-19". Justice Subramonium Prasad said during the pandemic, people were crowding hospitals to get themselves screened and at this juncture, it was these security guards, paramedical staff, who not only ensured the safety of hospitals but were also acting as guides by directing the patients to approach the correct centre. "It, therefore, cannot be said that the security guards who were posted at various places were not in direct contact of COVID-19 patients. It is well known that COVID-19 virus spread through air and any patient who was coming to the



hospital could have been infected by the virus, whether he/she was symptomatic or not. The patients got in touch with many service providers, be it security guards, nurses, paramedical staff, who might or might not have been posted in the COVID-19 ward," the high court said. The court refused to accept the contention of the Centre that the petitioner Sangeeta Wah's husband Dilip Kumar, who died in June 2020, was not deployed for the care of COVID-19 patients and he was not in direct contact with such patients so he would not be covered under the scheme. "The narrow and pedantic stand taken by the Central Government cannot be accepted and the petitioner is entitled to the benefit of 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance scheme for health workers fighting COVID-19'," the high court said. "The scheme was actually

brought out as a measure to benefit the family members of persons who became martyrs in the line of duty while protecting thousands of persons affected by COVID-19 pandemic. Taking such a narrow view actually goes against the spirit of the scheme which was meant to provide immediate relief to persons who were tackling the situation and were protecting the lives of thousands of patients," it said. The court was deciding the plea by the woman who filed the petition seeking benefits of the insurance package announced by the central government and also the scheme announced by the Delhi Government's Department of Health and Family Welfare for grant of ex-gratia compensation of Rs 1 crore to the families of the employees who died of coronavirus while on COVID-19 duty. The Delhi Government submitted before the court that the scheme would apply only to the families of employees who were employed by the state government and since the guard was employed on contractual basis by the Central government, his case would not be covered.

IIT-M forms centre for early detection of pancreatic cancer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras has established a first-of-its-kind Centre of Excellence that is undertaking research to develop biomarkers for early detection of pancreatic cancer, according to officials. The sequence data from the "Centre of Excellence on Cancer Genomics and Molecular Therapeutics" will help develop an India-specific cancer genome database, which is critical to identify and develop biomarkers for early detection and understanding the drug response. The data developed could also help to identify drug targets for novel therapeutics, they said. Pancreatic Cancer (PDAC) is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide and is projected to be the second within a decade. Since the cancer incidence rate is high, most pharmaceutical companies are on the lookout for Indian-specific cancer genome data to establish biomarkers for specific therapeutics.

Kharge objects to Centre's orders asking officers to showcase Govt feats



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging that the government's recent orders asking officials to "showcase" the achievements of the last nine years was "politicisation" of the bureaucracy and demanded their withdrawal. In his letter, Kharge objected to the Government order issued on October 18 which, he claimed, stated that senior officers of ranks as high as joint secretary, director and deputy secretary are to be deployed to all 765 districts of India as "Rath Prabhari" to "showcase achievements of the last nine years of Government of India". He also referred to another order of the Ministry of Defence on October 9, 2023, directing soldiers on annual leave to spend time in promoting government schemes, making them 'soldier-ambassadors'.

"It is no coincidence that the last nine years correspond to your tenure in office. This is of grave concern for multiple reasons," Kharge said, alleging that senior officers are being deputed for "marketing activity" of the incumbent government. "It is a clear violation of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, which directs that no government servant shall take part in any political activity. "While it is acceptable for government officers to disseminate information, to make them 'celebrate' and 'showcase' achievements blatantly turns them into political workers of the ruling party. "The fact that only 'achievements' of the last nine years are being considered, gives away the fact that this is a transparently political order in the run-up to the five state elections and the general elections of 2024," the Congress chief alleged. He said if senior officers of departments are being deputed for "marketing activity" of the current government, the governance of the country will grind to a halt for the next six months. "In view of protecting our democracy and our Constitution, it is imperative that the above orders be withdrawn immediately," Kharge told the prime minister. "For the Modi Government, all agencies, institutions, arms, wings, and departments of the Government are now officially 'Pracharaks,'" he alleged said in a statement. "In view of protecting our democracy and our Constitution, it is imperative that the orders which would lead to the politicising of Bureaucracy and our Armed Forces must be withdrawn immediately," Kharge also said in his post while sharing the letter. AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh also shared the letter on social media posts and said, "Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress President, has just written to the PM on the blatant politicisation taking place of civil servants and soldiers who must, at all times, be kept independent and non-political." Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, said he is writing on a matter of great public importance which is of concern not just to the INDIA parties but also to people at large.

Solar power to light up country's top 19 health research centres

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Soon solar power will light up the country's top 19 central health research institutes headed by the Apex health research body, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) as it embarks on a green journey to set up rooftop solar (RTS) power panels to help achieve country's target of Net Zero by 2070. The emphasis is on energy conservation and pollution-free environment, said an official from the ICMR which recently floated an expression of interest (EoI) aiming to reduce the dependence on conventional sources of energy, and replacing them with renewable sources. It plans to install grid-connected solar panels on the rooftops/land mounted panels



at its institutes and centres having a total Sanctioned load of 14895 KW. Last year's total electric unit consumption of these institutes was 24,181,811 kwh, as per the ICMR official. However, the ICMR has already missed the deadline of 2022 for installing the solar panels on the rooftops of the government buildings. It was in 2020, the Government had asked all the central offices to set up RTS so that such power

can be used either for captive consumption of the premises or can be fed into the grid and be adjusted in the electricity bill. RTS plants also are useful in tackling day time peak loads as solar generation profile matches such peak loads. The Centre had set the target of achieving 100 GW of solar power capacity in the country by 2022 of which 40 GW is to be achieved from RTS. Citing technical and official glitches for the delay, the official

said that process is now on full stream. The selected PSU for the mega project will be entrusted in executing planning, designing, supply, installation, testing, commissioning, operation and maintenance of Grid Connected Rooftop/Land Mounted Solar, for a period of 25 years at its headquarters in the national capital and 19 Institutes across the country. The solar photo-voltaic power plant will be installed on the roof of the research institutes buildings which operates from its over 100 buildings across the country. The research institutes identified for the installation of grid connected rooftops include Bhopal-based National Institute for Research in Environmental Health and Bhopal Memorial Hospital &

Research Center, Jabalpur-based National Institute for Research in Tribal Health Jabalpur, Regional Medical Research Centre at Port Blair, National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases Kolkata and National Institute of Occupational Health Ahmedabad. The other establishments are National Institute of Traditional Medicine at Belagavi in Karnataka, Regional Medical Research Centre at Bhubaneswar, National Institute of Immuno-haematology at Mumbai, National Institute for Research in Reproductive & Child Health, Mumbai and National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research at Bengaluru, National Institute of Epidemiology in Chennai, National Institute for Research

in Tuberculosis (Chennai), National Animal Resource Facility for Bio medical Research (Hyderabad), National Institute of Nutrition (Hyderabad), National Institute of Virology (Pune) and National AIDS Research Institute (Pune). The ICMR is an apex autonomous biomedical research organisation under Department of Health Research, Union Health Ministry with 27 Institutes spread across the country. It is a recommending body to the Ministry on all health related issues in the country. "The whole installation will be in conformity with Central Electrical Authority Regulation and local electricity norms. The PV system should be approved by MNRE," said the official.

Heavy rush seen at Durga Puja pandals on Ashtami

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Heavy rush of the people thronged Durga Puja pandals in different parts of the city, glittered with attractive lighting arrangements, on the auspicious occasion of Ashtami here on Sunday. Traditional gaiety and religious fervour prevailed as a good number of people thronged different areas of the city to see the idols of Goddess Durga. Elaborate security and other arrangements have been made on the occasion as 250-odd pandals have been installed only in the city areas. The pandals were also installed in various rural markets in the district.

The rush was mainly seen in Lahurabir, Sigra, Luxa, Godowlia, Sonarpura, Bhelupur, Maidagin and many areas in the trans-Varuna area including Shivpur, Pandeypur, Orderly Bazar, Pahadiya and some others. In many pandals, all the traditional rituals were performed by the puja samiti members. The Bangiya Samaj, which generally gives its major focus on its idols, performed all their rituals with traditional gaiety. At many pandals, on the beat of nagaras, the people were seen dancing to please the Goddess of Shakti (strength). At several places, Kanya Puja programmes were also organised. At Ramakrishna Mission, a girl decorated as Goddess was offered prayers as per the tradition and then the people sought her blessings. At several places, bhajans and other



Heavy rush of people thronging Durga Puja pandal at Hathua Market in Varanasi on Sunday evening.

programmes were presented apart from offering 'prasad' to the people.

On the occasion, at several pandals dandia and other cultural programmes were also organised. Various religious and cultural programmes were organised at the pandals of Bharat Sevashram Sangh (Sigra), Ramkrishna Advait Ashram (Luxa), Golden Sporting Club (Devnathpura), Kashi Durgotsav Samiti (Shivala), Jim Sporting (Bhelupur), Eagle Club (Jangambadi), Har Sundari Dharmshala (Girjagarh), Boys Sporting Club (Hathua Market)

and many others.

With the installation of idols of Goddess Durga at all the puja pandals, the festive mood gripped the city on the occasion of Saptami. The rush of visitors at puja pandals was heavier on the auspicious occasion of Ashtami and it is expected that it would be bigger on the last day on Navmi. Durga Puja has started in the city even on the first day of Shardiya Navratri when in several pandals the idols were installed for the nine-day long festival. But the real mood started gripping up from Sasthi when the idols were installed at

some leading pandals. Later, on the occasion of Saptami with the installation of idols in all the pandals, the festival reached its peak.

In the district, as many as 601 Durga Puja pandals are being made in the 28 police stations but out of them, 250-odd pandals are in the city areas. The district administration and police department have made all the arrangements to ensure peaceful conduct of the festival. Besides, the Fire Brigade department has also issued necessary fire safety guidelines to the puja pandals in view to avoid any untoward incident.

'Ram Ki Shakti Puja' mesmerises audience in KVT premises

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A play 'Ram Ki Shakti Puja' (showing the worship of Goddess Durga being performed by 'Maryada Purushottam' Lord Ram mesmerised the audience at Shankaracharya Chowk in the Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) premises on the auspicious occasions of Saptami and Ashtami of Shardiya Navratri. The story of the play is based on the Shakti Puja performed by Lord Ram when his war against Ravana was going on.

According to the play story, when the Ram-Ravan war is going on, Lord Ram is dejected and feels defeated as his army is also unhappy and the memory of Sita makes him feel deeper. He leaves remembering the bravery and courage of the past days. The elders want to be excited but their morale is low. Shakti is also with Ravana. Lord Ram has seen the goddess herself fighting on behalf of Ravana. He tells his friends that victory is impossible and in mourning, Jamwant inspires Ram about the power of worship and advises him to fight the battle with perfection. Ram does the same.

On the other hand, a fierce battle is going on under the leadership of Laxman, Hanuman etc, on the other hand the worship of Ram is going on. He had resolved to offer 108 Neelkamals to the Goddess, but the Goddess



'Ram Ki Shakti Puja' play being staged at Kashi Vishwanath Temple premises in Varanasi on Saturday evening.

comes secretly and steals the last flower. Ram is distraught and shocked. Then he remembers that his mother used to call his eyes Neelkamal. He offers his eyes and picks up the arrow in his hands to shoot. Then the goddess appears. She stops Ram, blesses him, prays to him and becomes absorbed in Ram.

The cast included Swati (as Lord Ram), Nandini (Sita and Devi Durga), Sakhi

(Lakshman), Tapas (Hanuman, Vibhishana and Jamwant) and Shashwat (Sugriva and Angad). The music was composed by JP Sharma and Ashish Mishra while the play was directed by Vyomesh Shukla.

Earlier, just before the staging of Ram's Shakti Puja by the city's prestigious theatre group Rupvani, Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Chairman Professor Nagendra Pandey, Divisional

Commissioner Kaushalraj Sharma and his wife and Chief Executive Officer of the temple Sunil Verma offered prayers amidst the chanting of the mantras by trust member Venkatraman Ghanpathy.

The first performance of Ram's Shakti Puja took place on February 5, 2013 in the Nagari Natak Mandali here and since then the presentation has been alive, active and ongoing for the last 10 years. It was the 93rd presentation of the play and the next one will be staged in Gorakhpur on November 4.

The script was prepared by Dr Shakuntala Shukla. In the 1970s, Dr Shukla did research on Niralal's poetry from the Hindi Department of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and also wrote a book titled 'Niralal Ki Kavyabhasha'. The music of the presentation is completely based on the classical music of Banaras Gharana, which was composed in 2012 by a group consisting of Dr Shakuntala Shukla, Vyomesh Shukla, JP Sharma and Dr Ashish Mishra after their hard work for many months. JP Sharma and Ashish Mishra are the music directors of the presentation. The play's director Vyomesh Shukla and actress Swati, who played the role of Ram, received the Kendriya Sangeet Natak Akademi's Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for direction in 2017 and acting in 2021 respectively. This is the highest honour given to youth in the field of performing arts.

Devotees throng Annapurna Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Amidst tight security arrangements, thousands of devotees thronged Mahagauri (Annapurna Mandir) near Kashi Vishwanath Temple on the auspicious occasion of Ashtami during the ongoing Shardiya Navratri here on Sunday. As the temple is located near Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham, every devotee entered the temple after thorough checking. It was the second continuous day when the temple of one of the incarnations of Goddess Durga is located in this sensitive red zone area.

Besides, heavy rush was also seen throughout the day at Durga Mandir and all other temples of goddesses. Several people also preferred to go to the old Durga Mandir in trans-Ganga Ramnagar and Maa Sheetla Mata Mandir at Adalpur near Varanasi-



Mirzapur borders. Not only this, hundreds of people also went to Vindhyaachal in Mirzapur district, about 65

kms from here, to offer prayers at Maa Vindhyaasini Devi. This holy city has nine temples each of all the Devis and Gauris

where the devotees offer prayers on different days during Shardiya and Vasantik Navratri respectively.

Glimpse of Ayodhya Ram temple at puja pandal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Devotees may catch a glimpse of the Ayodhya Ram temple, ready to open early next year, right here in Sangam city, at the Durga puja pandal in Kalindipuram.

Celebrating their 26th year, the organisers have fashioned the pandal on the lines of the Ram temple. Not only does the facade resemble the grand shrine of 'Ram Lala', the interiors too are as in the Ayodhya temple.

Set up under the supervision of artist Billu, the presentation of the pandal is proof of diversity and inclusivity of Indian festivals.

"While the Durga Puja primarily celebrates Goddess Durga, revered by millions of Hindus, the inclusion of the Ram Temple theme highlights the rich tapestry of religious and cultural expressions in India", said the vice president of the committee, BDL Bhattacharya.

The Ayodhya Ram Temple is believed to be the birth place of Lord Rama and its construction and inauguration comprise major events of contemporary India. "Celebrating Durga Puja with this theme can bridge cultural and religious elements, showcasing unity and harmony among different communities," he added.

Pandal themes often feature intricate and artistic representations related to the chosen theme and they can be a source of beauty and inspiration for visitors, transcending caste or religious boundaries and bring people together to appreciate art, culture and spirituality, he said.

MAGH MELA: Dayanand Prasad, ADM of Mahakumbh Mela, has been made the Magh Mela officer in charge of Magh Mela 2023-24. A resident of Ballia, Prasad, is a senior PCS officer of 2008 batch.

Prasad has already rendered his services as SDM in Prayagraj, SDM in Kumbh Mela in Ardh Kumbh Mela and

ADM in Kumbh Mela 2019 besides Secretary in PDA and Secretary in UP Higher Education Services Commission.

He said the responsibility assigned by the government has to be discharged efficiently so that the Magh Mela can pass off safely. ADM Kumbh Mela Dr Vivek Kumar Chaturvedi, tehsildar Vivek Kumar Shukla of Kumbh Mela, and others congratulated him.

Prasad held a meeting with subordinate officers and employees in the office and reviewed preparations for the Magh Mela and gave necessary instructions.

Protest against MP Sanjay Singh's arrest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

After the arrest of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh, the party workers staged a protest near All Saints Cathedral in Civil Lines. The activists submitted a memorandum, addressed to the president, to the district administration officials. They raised slogans against the government's 'dictatorial' attitude.

The activists were led by Kashi province president Pawan Tiwari, district general secretary Sarvesh Yadav and Mohd Qadir. A call was given to unite against the policies of

the government.

Pawan Tiwari alleged that at the behest of the BJP government, senior leaders of the party are being harassed. The party workers will not sit silent. Mahanagar president Mohd Qadir, Arun Kushwaha, Renuka Rai, Aman Kumar, Nikhil Bhartiya, Prashant Srivastava, Arun Bind, Azma, Praveen, Swami Chaurasia, Mukesh Jaiswal, Ganesh Chaurasia, Ramesh Bhartiya etc. were present.

RUCKUS: The junior doctors allegedly beat up an attendant at Swaroop Rani Nehru (SRN) Hospital late on Saturday night following which

the family members created a ruckus. A woman admitted in the hospital had died at night and the family members alleged negligence in treatment. Thereafter the junior doctors gathered and allegedly had a dispute with the attendants.

The police reached the spot and somehow pacified the matter. Kotwali police station in-charge Avendra Singh said that after the death of the patient, the family members had created a ruckus. The case is being investigated.

Meanwhile junior doctors allegedly beat up another youth in the ultrasound room of the

hospital. Musharat Begum of Kareli had reached around 8 am for ultrasound. When her number did not come till 3 o'clock, she started going for ultrasound an employee allegedly started pushing her out.

When the husband protested several junior doctors reached there and allegedly beat him up.

The woman said the police reached the spot. Principal of Motilal Nehru Medical College Dr SP Singh said information has been received regarding the incident and it is being ascertained who was involved in it and action will be taken.

Less students register for UP Board exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A total of 3.76 lakh less students have registered for class X and XII exams of UP Board for the year 2024.

The Board officials maintain that a major reason for the fall in the number of students was strict invigilation and anti-cheating measures being implemented over the last few years. Candidates who hoped to pass the exams by cheating chose to not register themselves, they added.

For the exams scheduled to start in February next year, a total of 55,08,206 students have

completed the registration process. In the last academic session, 58,84,634 students had registered which means that the number of students has decreased by 3,76,428 for next session, said board secretary Dibyakant Shukla.

The board had asked all the schools to complete the online registration process of students from classes IX to XII latest by October 10. At present the total number of registrations for class IX is 27,54,337, of which the number of boys is 14,45,413 while that of girls is 13,08,924. For class XI the number of students is

25,29,420, with 13,24,939 boys and 12,04,481 girls. Likewise, for High School exams, the number of students is 29,47,324, with 15,71,686 boys and 13,75,638 girls.

For intermediate classes, the total number of registrations is 25,60,882, out of which 14,12,806 are boys and 11,48,076 are girls. This time, 52,83,757 students of classes IX and XI completed the advance registration as per norms of the UP Board.

Meanwhile, the Board has also intensified its preparations for the next set of examinations.

DISTRIBUTED: Smart phones were distributed to 652 students at Thakur Harnarayan Singh Degree College here on Saturday. Chief guest MP Dr Rita Joshi said it is very important to connect the youth with technology in the New Education Policy and that is why the Yogi government has brought this scheme. Through smart phones students will be able to become hi-tech and connect with the country.

The faces of students lit up after receiving the smart phones. The scheme was started by UP CM Yogi Adityanath this year.



Devotees wait in queues to offer prayers at Vindhyaasini temple on the occasion of 'Maha Ashtami' during Navratri festival, in Mirzapur on Sunday

PTI

1,600 boxes of liquor recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

In a joint operation of SOG, Surveillance, Excise department and Ahraura police three accused of smuggling were arrested and liquor worth around Rs 1 crore was recovered late on Friday night. Giving details at Police Lines on Saturday Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhinandan said the police had inputs about transportation of illegal liquor from the area so the crime branch had already been asked to look into it. He said on being tipped off by an informer about the mini trucks carrying liquor the police started checking the vehicles. On seeing the police the truck drivers tried to flee after parking their vehicles on

the side but were nabbed. The police searched the vehicles and recovered 1,600 boxes of foreign liquor worth around Rs 1 crore. During interrogation the accused said their job was only to transport the liquor from Uttarakhnad to Jharkhand and it was to be delivered at a petrol pump located in Garhwa, Jharkhand. After taking possession of the liquor the police seized the vehicles and after registering a case against the accused, identified as Sonu alias Harpal Singh of Jiwai Kateem under Patawai police station, Vijaipal of Khaata Chintamani and Pramod Maurya of Baknauri under Shahjadnagar police station, residents of Rampur, were sent to jail.

OBSERVED: The Police Memorial Day was observed at Police Lines on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion DIG RP Singh said the day was dedicated to those cops who sacrificed their lives while performing their duties. Tributes were paid by dedicating flowers and the guard of honour. In respect of martyrs two minutes silence was observed. SP Abhinandan and PAC personnel were also present.

PROGRAMME: Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel while addressing a programme organised under the aegis of Cooperative Bank as the chief guest on Saturday said the cooperative movement was a movement different from oth-

ers. She said that it was a matter of pride that the district achieved laurels in the state by making members on a large scale. She praised the leadership of Chairman of the bank Dr Jagdeesh Singh Patel for the success who worked with team spirit and collected a handsome amount for the bank in the form of membership. On the occasion she conferred the honour on those societies which made minimum 500 members. The programme was conducted by Director Hari Shankar Singh and chaired by Chairman Dr JS Patel. Veteran BJP leader Lal Bahadur Singh, district president BJP Brij Bhushan Singh, bank directors Awadhesh Kumar Singh and Alopi Chand were present.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Piecemeal

A sliver of aid reaches Gaza, but 2.3 mn lives need much more to ease their suffering

A ray of hope, and life, has emerged in the form of a small convoy of truckloads of humanitarian aid slowly entering Gaza. This 20-vehicle convoy began its journey from Egypt and entered the besieged Gaza strip. The importance of this convoy cannot be overstated as it came after negotiations among three countries, the US, Israel and Egypt. This lifeline underscores the immense challenges facing the Strip's 2.3 million residents. The aid, although a vital step, is nowhere near enough to meet the dire needs of Gaza's people, who are grappling with the consequences of Israeli bombardments and the longstanding blockade. The arrival of this convoy marked the first aid delivery to Gaza since October 7. These trucks carried essential supplies such as food and medicine, providing some relief to the beleaguered population. However, the absence of fuel in this aid delivery would mean that the only cancer hospital in Gaza would have to close. Fuel is not a luxury in Gaza; it is



an absolute necessity for the functioning of vital services, including hospitals, water treatment plants and electricity generators. Though Israel has agreed to allow limited aid to Gaza, it has stepped up bombing and is pounding the 365-km piece of land relentlessly. The Gaza Strip is densely settled, with an average population density of more than 5,700 people per sq km. The bombing is causing huge damage to the already tattered infrastructure. The attacks, which have spared no part of the Strip, have created an urgent need for relief efforts.

The scale of the destruction is immense, and the suffering of Gaza's residents profound. The opening of the supply route via Egypt comes after days of intense diplomatic negotiations among President Joe Biden, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egyptian President Sisi. The credit for securing some relief to Gaza must go to the US President for taking the initiative and getting personally involved in the negotiations. Biden made it clear from the outset that humanitarian assistance was not negotiable but a fundamental need that had to be urgently addressed. This commitment was echoed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who urged all parties involved to keep the Rafah crossing open to enable the continued movement of aid. While the arrival of these 20 trucks is indeed a positive development, it is crucial to recognise that the needs of Gaza's population are vast and ongoing. This aid, while significant, is not nearly enough to address the multifaceted challenges faced by Gaza's residents. The international community must continue to work together to ensure a steady flow of aid and address the root causes of this ongoing crisis. As the world watches the tragic events unfold in Gaza, it is imperative to recognise that the humanitarian needs extend far beyond a single convoy of aid. Only through sustained efforts, diplomacy and cooperation can we hope to provide the relief that the people of Gaza so desperately require.

PICTALK



Devotees carry girl children to a puja pandal for 'Kumari Puja' on 'Maha Ashtami' of the Durga Puja in Kolkata

The Russia-Ukraine tango goes on

Putin must know that statecraft works as much by diplomacy as by the power of arsenal and one needs goodwill to achieve goals



PRAFULL GORADIA

Vladimir Putin will shortly visit Beijing to further fatten his relationship with China's strongman Xi Jinping. One wonders whether the Russian leader realizes that his country has vast land on the one hand, but faces a declining population on the other. Does the current Vlad remember that in 1969, his country fought a border war with China and lost many islands on the Ussuri River? In contrast to Russia, China has less land, but a much more population. Russia's large Siberia particularly has a vast land, which will naturally tempt any land-hungry neighbour.

Notwithstanding this reality, Putin continues to wage a war that will complete two years in February. Is it to 'recover' the republic his late predecessor Mikhail Gorbachev let secede in 1990? How did Russia become so revanchist in only 32 years? Ukraine became a Soviet Republic only in 1922, with a government set up under a constitution revised in 1937 and amended in 1944 by the Soviet Union, which gave Ukraine "the right to enter relations with foreign states, to conclude agreements, and to exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them"; and to maintain its military forces (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Ukraine was a full member of the United Nations; it was in fact, one of the founding members of the UNO. The Ukraine Ministry of Trade was permitted to establish exchanges overseas, though these were usually limited to Eastern Europe's socialist countries. In the 9th century, Ukraine's territory was known as the Kivian Roos, under the suzerainty of a duke of Varangian origin. This Kivian state extended westward and northward during the 11th and 12th centuries but was invaded by the Tatars during 1237-41. Later, control was passed on to a Polish prince of the Piast Dynasty. When Poland and Lithuania became united in 1386, Ukraine came under their joint rule. In 1569, Ukraine's territory was separated from Lithuania and incorporated into Poland. The Poles were Roman Catholics and the religion of the Ukrainians was



known as Eastern Catholicity. From time to time, the Ukrainians were also known as Ruthenians. Russia and Poland clashed with each other in the mid-17th century, in 1667, resulting in Ukraine being partitioned between Poland and Russia along the Dnieper River. In 1668, Ottoman emperor Sultan Mehmet IV managed to capture Ukraine, making it a protectorate. Ukraine thus fell under Ottoman suzerainty. In the course of the next two centuries, i.e., in 1846, a united Ukraine asserted its nationalism and the city of Kyiv regained some of its old glory. Nevertheless, Russia didn't stop eyeing Ukraine and interfered with its government. During World War I (1914-18) Count Georgy Bobrinsky was appointed Ukraine's Governor-General, but because Russia sustained defeat in WWI, this was short-lived. The Ukrainians saw their chance to achieve independence and organize an independent government in Kyiv. They elected Srushevsky as their president. The Russian communist regime of Vladimir Lenin tried to assert its rule by setting up a parallel government at Kharkiv, but the Ukrainians insisted that they were a free and sovereign republic. Meanwhile, the Central Powers led by Germany saw an



PUTIN CONTINUES TO WAGE A WAR THAT WILL COMPLETE TWO YEARS IN FEBRUARY. IS IT TO 'RECOVER' THE REPUBLIC HIS LATE PREDECESSOR MIKHAIL GORBACHEV LET SECEDE IN 1990?

opportunity for themselves and promptly occupied Ukraine. However, the Austrian governor could not last long in Lviv and had to hand over power on November 1, 1918. By January 23, 1919, Ukraine was again united and proclaimed itself an independent country with Kyiv as its capital. Russia, however, could not take its eyes off Ukraine. Not only the Red Army, but the White Russians too competed for power. On December 28, 1919, Lenin was so motivated as to address an open letter to the workers and peasants of Ukraine, in which he recognized the equality of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, and suggested a treaty of alliance between the two. Such an alliance was concluded on December 28, 1920, in Moscow, signed by Lenin and Rakovsky; it was an act of incorporation. This incorporation was endorsed in his signature by Marshal Josef Pilsudski, the then-head of the Polish government. It was on December 20, 1922, that the Soviet Union began to normalize as a federation, wherein Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and the Trans-Caucasus came together as the first step towards unification. Separatism, however, did not disappear in Ukraine and an underground Ukrainian mil-

itary organization called the UVO continued to simmer, if not actively function. Ukrainian nationalists looked to Germany for the realization of an independent Ukraine, hoping to provoke a Ukrainian revolution within the Soviet Union. On June 30, 1941, after Nazi Germany occupied Lviv, the Ukrainians proclaimed the restoration of their state as an independent republic. After Josef Stalin died in 1953, Crimea was transferred to Ukraine; northern Bukovina and the Bessarabian districts of Hotin and Izmail were also incorporated. Vladimir Putin is experienced enough to realize statecraft works as much by diplomacy as by the power of one's arsenal. Diplomacy continually needs the blessings of goodwill. Does he even realize, behind the walls of the Kremlin, that he has lost the goodwill of virtually all of Europe and the West? After attacking Ukraine, he has very few friends left. He rules over 17 million kilometres of territory; why does he crave for bits and pieces of Ukraine, especially when he should know that China can grab virtually what it likes, of Siberia?

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEFENDING TRADITIONS

Sir—I am writing to express my concerns about the recent restrictions placed on the celebration of Saraswathi 'Poojai' in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. This cherished Hindu tradition involves placing books, musical instruments, and other learning tools before the goddess Saraswathi. However, the directives from the Demonically Mindless Killers (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and the Congress in Karnataka have banned the use of images or photos of Saraswathi and traditional materials for 'Poojai' on this day. This unjustified assault on our Hindu traditions needs to be addressed promptly. We must not allow these restrictions to continue. The only way to protect our customs and beliefs is to remove those in power who endorse such measures. If we do not take action, these incidents could set a worrying precedent for our entire nation. We must stand up for our traditions and religious practices to ensure that they are respected and protected.

Akhila Jagannath | Chennai

A SETBACK FOR EQUALITY

Sir—I write to address the recent decision by the Supreme Court of India on October 17, 2023, regarding marriage equality. The verdict denied the inclusion of gay, lesbian, and transgender unions under the Special Marriage Act and rejected the right to marry as a fundamental right. It was a 3:2 split verdict, with the majority voting against. Although same-sex couples can legally adopt children, this decision has disappointed and disheartened the queer community.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

This judgment came as a blow to those who had hoped for a favorable outcome, especially given India's previous landmark judgments regarding human rights, privacy, the NALSA judgment, and the repeal of Section 377, which criminalized homosexuality. It is worth noting that during the proceedings, the BJP-led Union government opposed

A Muslim girl as "Kumari" in Durga Puja



Divine Mother in all female individuals, regardless of their religious background. Taking inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's teachings, Durga Puja organisers in a North Kolkata suburb have chosen Nafisa, a Muslim girl, to be their "Kumari," to be revered as the Mother Goddess in human form, symbolising the acknowledgment of divinity within all people.

At a time when fellow citizens of Islamic lineage are often perceived as the "Other" in our diverse and democratic nation, Bengal has taken a significant step towards fostering communal harmony by selecting a Muslim girl for Kumari Puja. It is heartening to witness such efforts, and as Haji Ilyas, a Muslim priest, aptly remarked, "In this time of provocation, such affection...such efforts for communal amity shall be approved." It is high time that we place all human beings on an equal pedestal, irrespective of their origins, birth, caste, religion, language, race, region, or nationality. This inclusive approach is a testament to Bengal's commitment to diversity and unity.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

legal recognition of same-sex marriages. The queer community has historically struggled to find support from any of the three pillars of Indian democracy. It is disheartening that despite legal victories, practical implementation and acceptance lag behind. This verdict emphasizes the need for continued advocacy and reform for equal rights and recognition of diverse identities.

COMPENSATION FOR SEWER DEATHS

Sir—I am writing to commend the recent landmark decision by the Supreme Court of India addressing the issue of sewer deaths in the country. The ruling mandates that government authorities will now be liable to pay Rs 30 lakh as compensation to the families of those who lose their lives while cleaning sewers. This news is heartening, as over the

last five years, 347 individuals have tragically lost their lives performing this perilous task. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this decision, though significant, comes after numerous lives have already been lost. It underscores the necessity for preventive measures and timely compensation for affected families. This issue demands immediate attention. While we celebrate this positive move, we must also recognize that there is much work to be done. Central and state governments, along with various stakeholders, must collaborate to enforce strict safety measures and implement modern technologies that eliminate the need for individuals to enter these hazardous environments.

Vishal Mayur | Tumakuru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Benefits of an intelligent automation approach

In an evolving digital economy, organisations must automate their IT infrastructure to leverage vast amounts of data and draw relevant insights



MANISH GUPTA

Automation is a hot topic these days. Most of us agree that automating business processes can save time and money, making our organizations more efficient and innovative. But there is often an unspoken fear surrounding it. Questions like 'How much time and effort will it cost to get my organisation up to speed with automation?' or 'the elephant in the data centre, "Will automation leave my staff without a job?" contribute to inaction or the late adoption of automation. IT managers today face multiple challenges in an increasingly competitive environment. According to the Dell Technologies 2023 Innovation Index report, 35% of Indian businesses are dealing with the lack of automation to manage complex security technology. Many share common frustrations that slow down processes, increase costs and make life harder and less efficient than it should be. Especially for medium businesses, lacking the extensive resources and specialist skills of large corporations, are vul-



nerable to facing risks. On average, medium-sized businesses have limited IT staff personnel and with a lean team, time is precious. It is estimated that 47 per cent of all cyberattacks target medium businesses, with extremely costly consequences ranging from lost productivity to business success. As the challenges of data protection continue to mount, the pressure for IT teams to reduce cost and to "do more with less" continues to grow. **Data Infrastructure** To accelerate innovation, an intelligent automation approach uses machine learning, artificial intelligence, and predictive data analytics to offload the management burden and free teams to focus on high-value innovation initiatives. To enable intelligent automa-

tion, organisations must incorporate infrastructure that is built with automation at the core. By automating with embedded intelligence, a business dramatically increases efficiency, reduces human error and improves productivity. **Five Benefits** By leveraging automation and intelligence in the organizational value chain we can easily address the new reality of data while reducing the impact that complexity has on the business. An intelligent automation approach makes it easier to: **Leverage new technologies:** Intelligent infrastructure adapts to any workload to provide flexibility while helping IT simplify operations. **Reduce the IT burden:** A modernized infrastructure allows IT staff to spend less time on day-to-day activities and more time delivering business value. Intelligent systems can work together and independently, enabling rapid digital transformation and productivity while allowing organizations to scale without disruption. **Deliver-a-service simplicity:** Infrastructure delivered using

as-a-service operating models frees IT teams from having to deploy and manage hardware while improving the organization's ability to acquire, scale and manage infrastructure as the business grows. **Achieve Proactive resilience:** About 35% of Indian businesses are still dealing with the lack of automation to manage complex security technology. Proactive resilience automatically ensures data and network security with multiple layers of defence that work in tandem to keep hackers out while anticipating and eliminating blind spots before they can be exploited. **Upgrade business agility:** By proactively replacing outdated resources at the optimized time, IT can better maximize the value it delivers for a business and its customers — while reducing costs. An intelligent automation approach gives the IT department the ability to say "yes" more frequently to innovation-related requests. (The writer is vice president, Infrastructure Solutions Group, Dell Technologies India, views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

RAINBOW FOODS: FILL COLOURS IN YOUR LIFE

Your plate is like a palette, make it colourful



SAKSHI SETHI

From minimizing the risk of inflammation, improving gut health and immunity, and promoting weight loss to getting rid of deadly diseases such as heart attacks, diabetes, different types of cancers and many more, a new diet in town is making a buzz and that is none other than the rainbow diet.

A Rainbow Diet means eating as many natural colours as possible that are available from a variety of fruits and vegetables, to score enough vitamins, minerals, fibres and phytonutrients, thereby reducing the risk of a multitude of diseases that are recurring these days due to the intake of protein shakes and other preservatives. Rather than focusing on including more protein in the diet and reducing the intake of carbohydrates and fats, it becomes necessary for an individual to concentrate more on a colourful way of eating as this type of diet supports immunity, gut health, healthy hair, glowing skin, reproductive health and much more.

Today, rainbow diets are becoming one of the biggest diet trends. One needs to dive into a colourful journey to diverse nutrients, antioxidants power and enjoy a joyful heart. According to a recent study published by the US National Library of Medicine, in 2017, poor intake of vegetables and fruits was the major cause of approximately 3.9 million deaths worldwide. The study also mentioned that a greater variety in the types of vegetables and fruits consumed has also been linked with a lower risk of diabetes, mortality and improved cognitive function.

The phytonutrients (Plant foods contain thousands of natural chemicals that are not essential for keeping an individual alive unlike the vitamins and minerals, but when an individual eats or drinks these phytonutrients, they may help prevent disease and keep the body working properly) in our diet help modulate intracellular functioning at the micro level. For



instance, including Red colour foods such as strawberries, watermelon, pomegranates, beetroots, apples, cranberries, tomatoes, red bell peppers, etc help in improving heart, blood and urinary tract health; Green colour foods such as cucumber, avocados, kiwi, peas, green bell peppers and other green leafy vegetables helps in maintaining heart health. Such foods are also good for expecting mothers as they keep the baby healthy and prevent defects during pregnancy. The inclusion of Yellow colour foods such as yellow bell peppers, pineapples, bananas, ginger, lemon, maize, corn etc helps in improving vision and even prevents different types of cancers whereas including fruits and vegetables of Purple or Blue-Black foods such as blueberries, brinjal, purple cabbage, black grapes, etc are powerful foods as they are rich in antioxidants. Such foods also help in regulating blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart diseases; White colour foods such as mushrooms, coconut, radish, cauliflower, garlic, etc form the whole health to strengthen the immune system.

These foods also help maintain bone and teeth health. Last but not least the Orange colour foods such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and apricots help decrease inflammation in the body and simultaneously support the immune system in the body. Following such a type of diet enables an individual to add not only more colour to their food choices but also intake as they contain rich fibres and are low in calories. Adding them also helps in maintaining weight and more importantly reduces the cravings for junk and ultra-processed foods. These foods are a power pack of nutrients and so keep the energy levels of the individual at par.

Remember, food is much more than we think. It contains a spectrum of energy. It is a physical matter and finer substance that can feed the body and nourish the soul. So, make an initiative to add more colours to the plate and attract fewer diseases in life.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

No reason is good enough to shatter peace



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The tragic events in Gaza – and conflicting nations in war – underscore the devastating impact of armed conflicts on civilian population



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and many other world leaders expressed shock over the death of nearly 500 people in an attack on a hospital in Gaza on October 18th and condemned the incident. Prime Minister Modi also offered condolences to the families of the civilian victims. He also said those involved in this act should be held responsible.

Civilian casualties in the ongoing conflict are a matter of serious and continuing concern. Hostilities between Israel and Hamas began after Hamas militants based in the Gaza Strip launched an unprecedented attack on Israel by land, air, and sea on October 7, 2023. Since the start of hostilities, as many as 3,785 Palestinians have been killed. The escalating conflict and deteriorating humanitarian situation does not seem to end very soon and the number of casualties is increasing.

War, throughout history, has often been portrayed as a means to achieve political objectives, asserting dominance, or protecting national interests. However, the grim reality is that wars inflict severe and lasting consequences on civilian populations, particularly on men, women and children. The recent events in Gaza serve as a poignant reminder of the devastating toll that armed conflicts take on innocent lives. These numbers represent not just statistics but individuals with dreams, families, and futures.

One of the most heart-wrenching aspects of armed conflicts on women and children is that they often face increased risks of displacement, violence, and loss of essential services. Children, innocently caught in the crossfire, endure unimaginable suffering. Displacement, trauma, and the loss of educational opportunities rob them of a normal childhood. Children become silent victims, grappling with the physical and psy-



BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE HUMAN TOLL, WAR INFLECTS LASTING DAMAGE ON THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF NATIONS

(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

chological scars that persist into adulthood. For women and young girls, war often brings life-long torment, brutality, physical torture, rape, trafficking and so on. For pregnant women, war imposes a crisis on maternal health. Access to prenatal care, essential for ensuring healthy pregnancies, becomes severely restricted. The stress and trauma of conflict contribute to increased rates of premature births and complications during delivery. Civilian populations, including men, women, and children, often bear the brunt of such conflict that leads to the displacement of families, forcing them to seek shelter in crowded and inadequate conditions. The psychological toll of living in a protracted conflict zone is significant, with long-lasting effects on mental health. It also disrupts economic activities, affecting livelihoods and employment opportunities for many.

Wars have the power to reshape the course of history, but not in the way often envisioned by those who initiate them. Instead of progress and prosperity, conflicts lead to a crisis of civilizations. The destruction of cultural heritage, displacement of communities, and the trauma inflicted on societies leave a lasting scar on the collective memory of humanity.

Throughout history, leaders have justified wars as "just" or necessary for noble causes. However, the fallacy lies in the subjective nature of these justifications and the often arbitrary distinction between aggressors and defenders. Innocent civilians, regardless of their nation-

ality or allegiance, bear the brunt of such geopolitical decisions.

Targeting hospitals and bombing them has unfortunately been a recurring tactic for conflicting nations, often viewed as a vulnerable and strategic choice. Non-state actors, including insurgent groups, have sometimes used hospitals as shields, putting both patients and medical staff at risk. During World War I (1914-1918) hospitals, both on the frontlines and in rear areas faced indiscriminate bombings and shelling. The brutality of trench warfare made it challenging to establish safe zones for medical care, exposing hospitals to the risk of being targeted. The Second World War (1939-1945) witnessed deliberate attacks on hospitals as military strategies aimed at disrupting the enemy's ability to provide medical care. The Vietnam War (1955-1975) saw the widespread use of guerrilla warfare, blurring the lines between combatants and non-combatants. Hospitals were not spared from attacks, and the guerrilla nature of the conflict made it difficult to establish secure medical facilities. The 'My Lai Massacre' (a war crime committed by United States Army personnel on 16 March 1968, involving the mass murder of unarmed civilians in Son T?nh district, South Vietnam) is a notorious example where unarmed Vietnamese civilians, including patients in a hospital, were targeted and killed by U.S. soldiers. In the Bosnian War (1992-1995), hospitals and medical personnel were intentionally targeted as part of ethnic cleansing campaigns. The

'Siege of Sarajevo', in particular, witnessed the deliberate shelling of hospitals and ambulances, causing significant civilian casualties and impeding the delivery of medical aid.

Beyond the immediate human toll, war inflicts lasting damage on the history and cultural heritage of nations. Historical sites, repositories of a nation's identity, are often reduced to rubble. The casualty of war is that it erases the collective memory of people (read generations) and disrupts the transmission of cultural knowledge to future generations. Not only this, war forces communities to flee their homes, leading to the loss of cultural identity. Generations of traditions, stories, and languages are jeopardized as displaced populations struggle to preserve their way of life.

Then there is the illusion of rebuilding. Post-war reconstruction often focuses on physical infrastructure, neglecting the intangible aspects of a nation's history. Rebuilding shattered cities, and infrastructure is one aspect of it. Rebuilding lives and ruined and devastated families is one greater aspect. Rebuilding the hopes of hundreds and thousands of refugees and their rehabilitation is an entirely different episode.

The tragic events in Gaza – and conflicting nations in war – underscore the devastating impact of armed conflicts on civilian populations. The need for global efforts to prevent further loss of innocent lives, preserve cultural identity, and build a future free from the ravages of war is more urgent than ever. The world is hungry for peace.

The glaring gender gap in SMEs must be bridged

Moving ahead requires collective action, strategic initiatives and innovative financing to support women-led ventures and attain true equality

Is male business acumen inherently superior? Does a male entrepreneur guarantee success? Are strategic thinking and innovation exclusive to men? Does the Y chromosome come with an entrepreneurship manual? Are financial avenues genuinely gender-neutral, or do they harbour hidden biases? These questions arise, as only 20% of businesses in India are owned by women. While India's start-up landscape flourishes, women entrepreneurs, especially in SME financing, encounter significant challenges.

A recently conducted study by Villgro & LEAD titled 'Beyond the Numbers: Decoding the Gender Gap in Financing SMEs in India', focused on understanding SMEs with a



VIBHA TILWALLI SHARMA

(The writer is a chartered Accountant, and CFA Lead, Impact Finance, Villgro, views are personal)

credit requirement of over 10 lakhs. The study delves deep into the intricacies of the financing challenges, highlighting gender disparities and recommending potential solutions.

While access to finance affects both genders significantly, the study unveils the added barriers and biases women entrepreneurs confront due to their gender. Though the financing gap and collateral requirements don't significantly differ by gender, a notable gap emerges in turnaround time (TAT) for credit applications. More than half of the women had a TAT of over 30 days compared to a little over a quarter of the men. Additionally, women-led businesses negotiated three times more than men over interest

rates, processing fees, prepayment charges, etc. The study highlights the business case for lending to women. Women have a lower NPA rate (4% as opposed to the 6.2% average NPA in public sector banks) and show higher customer loyalty due to fewer banking relationships than men. Yet, many female participants were required to have a male co-signer for loans and 46% of the women respondents felt the banks demanded more documents from women than men. To bridge the gender financing gap, the Indian government and partners launched initiatives empowering women entrepreneurs. The StandUp India scheme provides loans (INR 10 lakh to Rs. 1 crore) to foster entrepreneurship, especially for women. NITI Aayog's

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) offers knowledge sharing, capacity building, funding access, and partnerships with private players like DeAsra, NASSCOM Foundation, and CISCO Systems. SIDBI introduced financial products like Mahila Udyam Nidhi (MUN) for collateral-free loans, Mahila Vikas Nidhi (MVN) for expansion, and Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme (MUNS) for micro and small enterprises, driving economic growth and women's empowerment. Central Bank of India's Women Entrepreneurship Cell provides gender-specific financial products and promotes best practices, expanding across sectors like MSME, agriculture, and retail in alignment with government priorities.

Despite Government efforts, a significant credit gap of INR 1.95 lakh crores remains for women borrowers. This untapped market holds great potential for financial institutions. To address this, a focused multi-faceted strategy involving various stakeholders is crucial. The study emphasizes demand-side analysis, supply-side integration, and financial institution recommendations. These suggestions are categorized into three key areas: program, process, and product. Program-Level Solutions: Aggregators and Facilitation Agencies Entrepreneurial networks and memberships are crucial for boosting confidence, learning, trend awareness, and professional connections. They

also foster collaborations and business growth. A study by Women's World Banking (WWB) 2020 suggests multi-level interventions for bank managers, including customer relationship training. This targets subconscious bias, expedites loan processing, reduces bank visits, and ultimately streamlines the loan process, promoting greater female applicant participation. Product-Level Solutions: Innovative Instruments for Financing The report reveals that out of 75 women-led and 96 men-led businesses seeking credit in the past 5 years, 40% and 43% respectively didn't apply, fearing rejection or not meeting credit criteria. Financial institutions can enhance loan applications by implementing

online eligibility checks, raising product awareness, and reducing processing time. To enhance finance for women-led SMEs, tailored blended finance approaches are valuable. To improve Program Intervention and Product Development, regulators such as RBI and IBA must prioritize policies for women-centric DSAs, crucial as front-line guides in loan processes. Simultaneously, establishing dedicated priority sector lending targets for women-led MSMEs and adjusting credit limits beyond INR 1 lakh is urgently needed to better address their needs. The financing gap is more than a number; it stems from intertwined sociocultural norms, institutional frameworks, and biases.

Coast guard ship rammed by Chinese vessels: Philippines

AP ■ MANILA (PHILIPPINES)

A Chinese coast guard ship and an accompanying vessel rammed a Philippine coast guard ship and a military-run supply boat Sunday off a contested shoal, Philippine officials said, in an encounter that heightened fears of an armed conflict in the disputed South China Sea.

A top Philippine security official told The Associated Press there were no injuries among the Filipino crew members and an assessment of the damage to both vessels was underway. The official said that the two incidents near Second Thomas Shoal, where China has repeatedly tried to isolate a Philippine marine outpost, could have been worse if the vessels were not able to maneuver rapidly away from the Chinese ships. The official spoke on condition of

anonymity due to a lack of authority to publicly discuss the matter.

China's sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea, including over islands closer to Philippine shore, have raised tensions and brought in the United States, a longtime treaty ally of the Philippines, into the fray.

The US ambassador to Manila, MaryKay Carlson, wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that "the United States condemns the PRC's latest disruption of a legal Philippine resupply mission to Ayungin shoal, putting the lives of Filipino service members at risk."

She used the initials for China's formal name, the People's Republic of China, and the name the Philippines uses for Second Thomas Shoal. She added that Washington was standing with its allies to help protect Philippine sovereignty

and to support a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine vessels "trespassed" into what it said were Chinese waters "without authorization" despite repeated radio warnings, prompting its ships to stop them. It blamed the Philippine vessels for causing the collisions.

"The Philippine side's behaviour seriously violates the international rules on avoiding collisions at sea and threatens the navigation safety of our vessels," the Chinese coast guard said in a statement posted on its website.

The Chinese authorities said that they were stopping Philippine ships that carried "illegal construction" materials.

A Philippine government task force dealing with the South China Sea said the collisions occurred as two Philippine supply boats escorted

by two Philippine coast guard ships were heading to deliver food and other supplies to the military outpost that has been under a Chinese blockade. The actions of the Chinese ships were "in utter blatant disregard of the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea" and international regulations that aim to prevent sea collisions, it said.

Near-collisions have happened frequently as Philippine vessels deliver supplies to Filipino marines and sailors stationed on the disputed shoal. But this was the first time Philippine officials have reported their vessels being hit by China's ships.

In the past, Chinese officials have played down claims that the Chinese vessels enforcing Beijing's territorial claims were in fact paramilitary ships disguised as fishing boats.

Australian PM to visit China

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he will visit China in early November, making the announcement Sunday hours before he was to fly to the United States to meet with President Joe Biden.

Albanese also said China agreed late Saturday to review the crippling tariffs it levied on Australian wine that have effectively blocked trade with the winemakers' biggest export market since 2020.

Albanese will become the first Australian prime minister to visit China in seven years when he travels to Beijing and Shanghai on Nov. 4-7.

"It's in Australia's interest to have good relations with China, and certainly though my focus in the coming days will be very much on the visit to the United States," Albanese told reporters at Australian Parliament House.

"With Australia's closest partner, talking about the future of our alliance, the future which has been upgraded by

the AUKUS arrangements, a future based upon our common values, our commitment to democracy, and our commitment to the international rule of law and stable order throughout the globe," Albanese added, using the acronym for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Under the trilateral pact, the U.S. and Britain will cooperate to provide Australia with a fleet of submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology to counter a more assertive China.

Albanese said he will meet with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing and then attend the China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

The visit to China and a potential breakthrough in the wine dispute mark a further repair in relations since Albanese's center-left Labor Party won elections last year after nine years of conservative government in Australia.

China has agreed to review its tariffs on Australian wine over five months, Albanese's

office said. In return, Australia has suspended its complaint against its free trade partner to the World Trade Organization.

A similar dispute resolution plan led to China removing tariffs from Australian barley.

Albanese said reopening the Chinese wine market would be worth more than 1 billion Australian dollars (\$631 million) to exporters.

"We're very confident that this will result in once again Australian wine, a great product, being able to go to China free of the tariffs which have been imposed by China," Albanese said.

"It is important that we stabilize our relationship with China. That is in the interests of Australia and China, and it is indeed in the interests of the world that we have stable relations and that is what this visit will represent," he added.

The visit will come near the 50th anniversary of Labor Party leader Gough Whitlam becoming the first Australian prime minister to visit the People's Republic of China in 1973.

Albanese accepted an invitation weeks ago to visit China this year, but finding suitable dates had been challenging.

Albanese is visiting Washington to meet with Biden this week and will return to the United States after his China trip to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' forum in San Francisco on Nov. 15-17. It will be the ninth time Biden has met with Albanese as prime minister.

The first meeting was in Tokyo hours after Albanese was sworn in as government leader in May last year for a leaders' summit of the Quad strategic partnership that also includes Japan and India. As well as the AUKUS deal, the leaders will also seek more cooperation on clean energy, critical minerals and climate change.

Albanese's department announced Friday that it decided after an investigation not to cancel a Chinese company's 99-year lease on the strategically important Darwin Port despite U.S. concerns the foreign control could be used to spy on its military forces.

US sending additional air defence systems to Middle East

Washington (PTI): The US has decided to send a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system as well as additional Patriot battalions to the Middle East to increase its force posture there following recent escalations by Iran and its proxy forces across the region, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said. These steps will bolster regional deterrence efforts, increase force protection for US forces in the region, and assist in the defence of Israel, he said.

"Following detailed discussions with President Joe Biden on recent escalations by Iran and its proxy forces across the Middle East Region, today I directed a series of additional steps to further strengthen the Department of Defence posture in the region," Austin said. The US is on alert for activity by Iran-backed groups amidst escalating tension in the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war.

"First, I redirected the movement of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group to the Central Command area of responsibility. This carrier strike group is in addition to the USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, which is currently operating in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea," Austin said.

It will further increase America's force posture and strengthen our capabilities and ability to respond to a range of contingencies. The US has also activated the deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) battery as well as additional Patriot battalions to locations throughout the region to increase force protection for US forces, he added. The Patriot is considered one of the most advanced US air defence systems.

The THAAD is a highly effective, combat-proven defence against short, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missile threats.

'Hamas attacked Israel to stop historic pact with Saudi'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden said Friday he thought Hamas was motivated to attack Israel in part by a desire to stop that country from normalising relations with Saudi Arabia.

"One of the reasons... why Hamas moved on Israel, is because they knew I was about to sit down with the Saudis," Biden said at a campaign fundraiser. The US president indicated that he thinks Hamas militants launched a deadly assault on Oct 7 because, "Guess what? The Saudis wanted to recognise Israel" and were near being able to formally do so.

Jerusalem and Riyadh had been steadily inching closer to normalisation, with Biden working to help bring the two countries together, announcing plans in September at the Group of 20 summit in India to partner on a shipping corridor.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Biden on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September and told him, "I think that under your leadership, Mr. President, we can forge a historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia."



Crying women hug as victims are being pulled from the rubble of a building which collapsed after an airstrike in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Saturday. AP/PTI

BODIES OF 4 NEPALI STUDENTS KILLED IN ISRAEL ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU

Kathmandu (PTI): The bodies of four Nepali students killed in a Hamas attack in Israel have been brought back to Kathmandu, authorities said on Sunday. Ten Nepali students were killed when the Palestinian militant group Hamas launched a barrage of rocket attacks in Southern Israel on October 7. The unprecedented assault left over 1,300 dead and triggered retaliatory strikes from the Israel Defense Forces. The bodies of the four students were recently handed over to Nepal's embassy in Tel Aviv by the Israeli government after their identification and completion of legal processes. Among the bodies brought back on Sunday morning were those of Lokendra Singh Dhami and Dipesh Raj Bista of Darchula.

The mortal remains of Narayan Prasade Neupane of Kailali were brought on Sunday. The body of Ashish Chaudhary of Kailali arrived at Tribhuvan International Airport here on Sunday, according to secretariat of Foreign Minister N P Saud.

All four bodies were airlifted on Saturday to Dhangadhi in Western Nepal on a Nepal Army helicopter, according to Nepal Army headquarters sources. The identification of the remaining six bodies and due legal process are underway.

Elections open for Argentina election

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Argentinians began voting in an election Sunday that could see a right-wing populist who upended the political landscape become president and adopt controversial measures to shore up South America's second-largest economy. Polls opened at 8 am (1100 GMT) and were scheduled to close 10 hours later.

Voting is conducted with paper ballots, making it unpredictable how long it would take for Argentina's electoral authority to tally results. Initial results were expected around four hours after the polls closed.

The highly polarised election will determine whether Argentina continues on course with a centre-left administration or elects one of the right-leaning leaders who have both promised profound changes to a country plagued by triple-digit inflation and rising poverty.

In order to win outright, a candidate needs to receive 45 per cent of the vote, or 40 per cent with a 10-point difference with the runner-up.

Whatever the results, Milei has already inserted himself and his libertarian party into a political structure dominated by a centre-left and a centre-right coalition for almost two decades.

Former Security Minister Patricia Bullrich of the main opposition coalition battled Milei for right-wing support and argued her team had the necessary connections and experience negotiating legislation to bring about the change the country needs.

Economy Minister Sergio Massa, a leading figure in the centre-left administration in power since 2019 and in second place in most polls, sought to rally support despite the fact inflation has soared on his watch.

He blamed recent troubles on a historic drought that decimated exports and said he prevented things from getting worse.

rapidly depreciating currency. His platform also calls for reshaping Argentine culture, and he casts himself as a crusader against the sinister forces of socialism at home and abroad.

"Argentina is in for a wild ride," Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America program at the Washington-based Wilson Centre, said.

"The most likely scenario is rather worrisome, a polarised society, divided congress, combative and inexperienced leader and an economy hurtling toward an abyss."

French intel points to Palestinian rocket for Gaza hospital blast

Paris (AP): An assessment by French military intelligence indicates the most likely cause of the deadly explosion at Gaza City's al-Ahli hospital was a Palestinian rocket that carried an explosive charge of about 5 kilograms (11 pounds) and possibly misfired, a senior French military official said Friday.

Several rockets in the arsenal of the Palestinian militant group Hamas carry explosive charges of about that weight, including an Iranian-made rocket and another that is Palestinian-made, the intelligence official said. None of their intelligence pointed to an Israeli strike, the official said.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity, but was cleared to discuss the assessment by President Emmanuel Macron in what was described as an attempt to be transparent about the French intelligence findings.

UK min condemns 'jihad' chants at pro-Palestinian protest in London

London (PTI): A British government minister on Sunday condemned as "completely reprehensible" the chanting of "jihad" on the streets of London during pro-Palestinian protests across the UK capital, which ended in at least 10 arrests.

Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick said the issue was an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as he confirmed that some arrests have been made under terrorist legislation. It came after a series of protests across London and other cities of Birmingham, Cardiff and Belfast on Saturday in response to the Israel-Hamas conflict and as a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

"Chanting jihad on the streets of London is completely reprehensible and I never want to see scenes like that," Jenrick told "Sky News." "It is inciting terrorist violence and

it needs to be tackled with the full force of the law. Ultimately, it's an operational matter for the police and the CPS whether to press charge. There have been arrests under terrorist legislation. And we want to do everything that we can to protect British Jews," he said.

The minister said that beyond legality, the issue also highlighted a broader question about values. "And there should be a consensus in this country that chanting things like jihad is completely reprehensible and wrong and we don't ever want to see that in our country," he added.

In a statement issued by the Met Police, the force said there had been "pockets of disorder and some instances of hate speech" during the demonstrations and five of its officers suffered minor injuries. The force said that officers had also reviewed a video from a Hizb

ut-Tahrir protest in which a man can be seen chanting "jihad, jihad." The word has a number of meanings but we know the public will most commonly associate it with terrorism. Specialist officers have assessed the video and have not identified any offences arising from the specific clip," the Police said. "However, recognising the way language like this will be interpreted by the public and the divisive impact it will have, officers identified the man involved and spoke to him to discourage any repeat of similar chanting," the statement said.

In addition to officers deployed to police the protests, the Met Police also had counter-terrorism officers with specialist language skills and subject expertise working alongside public order officers in its main operations room, assessing video that emerge.

Thousands rally in Berlin due to rising antisemitism

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany's chancellor and president strongly denounced a rise in antisemitism in Germany in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war in separate appearances Sunday that stressed the same idea that it is unacceptable for such hatred to flourish in the nation that perpetrated the Holocaust. In Berlin, thousands of people gathered at a demonstration called to show opposition to antisemitism and support for Israel. People carried Israeli flags or posters with photos of some of the people reported to be missing or held by Hamas as hostages.

The protest, organised by a broad alliance of various organisations, comes as antisemitic incidents have been rising in Germany following the violent escalation of the war in Gaza.

"It is unbearable that Jews are living in fear again today —

in our country of all places," President Frank-Walter Steinmeier told those gathered in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

"Every single attack on Jews, on Jewish institutions is a disgrace for Germany. Every single attack fills me with shame and anger."

Earlier, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was outraged by the antisemitic agitation spreading as the Gaza war rages, and warned at the inauguration of a new synagogue that the vow of "never again" must be unbreakable.

Assailants threw two Molotov cocktails at a synagogue in Berlin on Wednesday, and police protection has been increased for Jewish institutions. Scholz, who denounced the violence on Wednesday, expanded on his comments at the inauguration of the temple in Dessau, a city in eastern Germany whose synagogue

was destroyed by the Nazis 85 years ago.

Both Scholz and Steinmeier denounced the Hamas attack on Israeli civilians on October 7 while also voicing their concern for Palestinian civilians caught up in the conflict. But the thrust of their message was to address the fallout at home.

"I am deeply outraged by the way in which antisemitic hatred and inhuman agitation have been breaking out since that fateful October 7, on the internet, in social media around the world, and shamefully also here in Germany," Scholz said. "Here in Germany, of all places."

"That is why our never again' must be unbreakable," Scholz said as he gathered with Jewish leaders at the Weill Synagogue, noting that the community has recently grown as it welcomed people from Ukraine.

Hurricane Norma takes aim at Mexico's Los Cabos resorts

AP ■ CABO SAN LUCAS

Residents of Mexico's Los Cabos resorts rushed to prepare as Hurricane Norma headed toward the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula for an expected landfall on Saturday, while in the Atlantic, Hurricane Tammy threatened to batter the islands of the Lesser Antilles.

Businesses in Cabo San Lucas nailed up sheets of plywood over their windows, and government personnel hung up banners warning people not to try to cross gullies and stream beds after Norma regained strength and once again became a major storm Friday.

By early Saturday, Norma had weakened and was downgraded to Category 1 on the hurricane wind scale. It was located just offshore 25 miles west of Cabo San Lucas storm with winds of 85 mph (140



Mexican soldiers and rescue team remove mud and sludge from an avenue flooded by the rains of Hurricane Norma in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico on Saturday. AP/PTI

kmh) and moving north at 8 mph, according to the US National Hurricane Centre.

The hurricane was expected to continue on that path through the evening before turning to the northeast and

slowing down through Monday.

The forecast track would take a weakened Norma toward the mainland of Mexico's western Pacific coast as a tropical storm. Its languid pace raised

the possibility of severe flooding. Norma was expected to dump six to 12 inches of rain with a maximum of 18 inches in places across southern Baja California and much of Sinaloa state.

According to the state civil protection agency, shelters in Baja California Sur housed some 1,500 people by Saturday morning.

The Los Cabos Civil Defence agency urged residents to stay indoors all day as winds and rain increased. Emergency workers rushed around the area evacuating people from low-lying areas and moving them to shelters.

Police in San Jose del Cabo rescued two people from their truck when a surging stream swept it away early Saturday. Some informal settlements, away from the hotels that serve tourists, were already isolated by rising water.

Fourth death linked to storm that battered northern Europe

London (AP): Police said Sunday that a fourth person has died in Britain during a storm that pounded the UK and northern Europe with gale-force winds and torrential rain.

Derbyshire Police said a woman in her 80s was found dead at a home in Chesterfield, central England. Her death was being linked to flooding in the area.

In nearby Derby, the River Derwent reached its highest-ever recorded level on Saturday during a storm that brought 8 inches (200 mm) of rain to parts of Britain.

Since Thursday, at least five people have died in the storm — named Babet by the UK Meteorological Office — that battered Britain, northern Germany and southern Scandinavia with powerful winds, heavy rain and sea surges.

Sharif cuts a tamer figure on his homecoming: Pak media

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD



Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif cut a tamer figure and opted for the role of elder statesman by emphasising several times that he was not back to take revenge, but to unite the cash-strapped country as he addressed his supporters on homecoming, Pakistani media said on Sunday.

Sharif, 73, the three-time prime minister and supremo of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), returned to Pakistan on Saturday after spending four years in self-imposed exile in London.

The Dawn newspaper in its editorial on Sharif's return titled 'Cometh the hour' said that it was as good a welcome event as his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) could have hoped for as a sizable crowd of supporters had gathered for Sharif at Lahore's Greater Iqbal Park.

"In his speech, however, Mr Sharif made no secret of the fact that he was controlling himself with great difficulty. He shared a verse suggesting that his tears would flood the world if he were to start dwelling on the trials and tribulations he had endured," the paper said. The former premier was keen to remind the crowd that he had been made to pay an immense personal cost. "There are some wounds that never heal," he said. He had lost his wife while in jail and could not even say a last goodbye. He was unable to bury his mother. "The two used to greet me at my doorstep whenever I returned home from abroad,"

sought a narrative reset and his speech was heavy on nostalgia for 2017; on motorways, the rupee-dollar exchange rate, the price of bread, the price of petrol and electricity, poverty and unemployment.

But instead of there being any acknowledgement of his own bad policies, some of which have greatly augmented Pakistan's present crisis, he still seemed keen to sell populist pipe dreams," it stated. The paper concluded by saying that perhaps Sharif ought to be forgiven because this was his first speech upon his return as more speeches will follow. The News in its editorial "The return of Nawaz Sharif" said emotion trumped politics as Sharif made his first live speech at a rally in Pakistan after four years in exile. "Saturday evening was for Nawaz (Sharif) to make a grand re-entry into politics, and try and revive his party's dwindling popularity in a time of crippling inflation. The PML-N managed to put together an acceptable enough power show at Minar-e-Pakistan," it said. "A visibly emotional Nawaz reaching the stage set the tone for the evening's messaging: heavy on nostalgia, justifiable emotional references to his

deceased wife Kulsoom Nawaz and his deceased mother, and visible reservations regarding his ouster from power," it added.

There had been a lot of wonder at what Sharif's 'narrative' would be on his return. Anyone expecting a speech of resistance or vengeance would have been disappointed on both counts, the paper said, Nawaz opted for the role of elder statesman, emphasising several times that he was not back to take revenge but to unite the country and lead it towards prosperity, it said. Sharif has now set the tone for what will probably be the PML-N's narrative going forward into the elections: a party that has been around, knows the business of the state, knows people's economic misery, and also knows what it's like to be persecuted - but is still willing to work for the people, it said. A politics of compromise and unity as opposed to a politics of defiance, it added. On the economic front, Sharif made much of the inflation rate, electricity prices and prices of other commodities when he was in power and how things have drastically changed over the years because someone somewhere decided to throw him out.

Rivals say state machinery used for his political comeback

Islamabad (PTI): As Nawaz Sharif returned home, his rivals criticised the former Pakistan prime minister for using unconstitutional means and the state machinery to stage a political comeback. Sharif, 73, the three-time prime minister and supremo of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), returned to Pakistan on Saturday, ending his four-year self-imposed exile in London. His nemesis Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party led the barrage by saying that a "coward fugitive is returning under judicial asylum". In a statement issued on Saturday, the PTI led by jailed former premier Imran Khan said that the "state has buried shame, modesty, law and justice with its own hands" by allowing the "national criminal's return" from London. "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 reiterated the demand that an immediate holding of transparent, free and fair elections can steer the country out of crisis. The elections are scheduled to take place in January 2024. PTI secretary general Omar Ayub Khan said the convict was being unjustly and unlawfully facilitated in everything. "A convicted prisoner got VVIP protocol and the State Room opened at Islamabad Airport to receive him," he said, adding that Pakistan's legal system has been completely destroyed by PML-N. Commenting on photos of Sharif providing his biometrics at the airport, he said: "This picture is not only of Nawaz Sharif's biometrics but of the funeral of Pakistan's judicial system. The whole world had seen the coercion and treatments of Imran Khan for the same biometrics." PTI senior leader Moonis Elahi said Sharif's return had been managed. "Never in the history of Pakistan, a convict

ed absconder has been welcomed like this," he said. Apparently, he said, court staff went to the airport to get his biometric attendance done, while in sharp contrast, another prime minister (Imran Khan) was picked up from court while giving his biometrics for attendance. Elahi claimed the Punjab government had instructed all deputy commissioners to provide transport as well as ensure the attendance of government employees such as 'patwaris' at the event. "We welcome Nawaz Sharif back but it would have been far better if had come back through constitutional means," PTI leader and former minister Ali Muhammad Khan said. Pakistan Peoples Party leader Faisal Karim Kundi foresaw support of state machinery for Sharif in elections and warned of consequences. "He was facilitated by the Punjab government on return... There would be anarchy if Sharif was also facilitated in elections," he warned.

6 killed in Russian rocket strike on Kharkiv city of Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV



A missile strike on a mail depot in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv killed six people, Ukrainian officials said Sunday. A further 16 people were injured in the blast late Saturday, which is believed to have been caused by a Russian S-300 rocket, Kharkiv governor Oleh Syniehubov said on social media. All of the victims were employees of private Ukrainian postal and courier service Nova Poshta. In a statement, the company said that the air raid shaken had sounded just moments before the attack, leaving those inside the depot with no time to reach shelter. It announced that Sunday would be a day of mourning for the firm. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the strike as an attack

face responsibility for what they have done." Elsewhere in the Kharkiv region, three people were injured in Russian shelling on the city of Kupiansk, Syniehubov said. The Ukrainian-held front-line city has been at the heart of fierce fighting as both Moscow and Kyiv push for battlefield breakthroughs amid the looming onset of wintry conditions. Officials in southern Ukraine said Sunday that the Russian military had used a record number of aerial bombs over the country's Kherson region in the past 24 hours. Natalia Humeniuk, a spokeswoman for the Ukrainian military's Operational Command South, said that 36 missiles had been recorded over the area, with some villages being hit by several strikes.

Ukrainians prepare firewood, candles to brace for winter

AP ■ MOSCHUCHUN

In the humble backyard of a destroyed house, a 13-year-old chops firewood to get ready for winter. His mother, Tetiana Yarema, has been preparing for months as she remembers last winter's Russian strikes on the energy infrastructure that plunged Ukraine into darkness. "Those were dark days. I didn't want anything. I just wanted to pack my things and go abroad," said Yarema, 48, who says she ended up staying because of her son's insistence. For the Yarema family, like millions of other Ukrainians touched by Russia's war on Ukraine, winter is an especially challenging time. The mother and son live in trailers that were set up in their backyard after fighting in the early days of the war destroyed their house in Moshchun, a village about 25 kilometers (15 miles) north-west of Kyiv. "I have a feeling that when

the cold sets in, they'll start bombing again," the woman said, echoing the sentiments of many Ukrainians. This time, however, they say they are better prepared. Sales of generators exploded toward the end of summer. Some, who can afford it, have invested in solar panels. Others, like Yarema, have been purchasing candles, batteries, flashlights, and portable lanterns and stocking up on compact gas canisters, making the most of discounted prices. "It's a bit challenging... but I already know what to do," she said. Last winter was declared the most challenging in the history of Ukraine's energy system, with over 1,200 missiles and drones fired by Russians at power plants, according to Ukrainian state-owned grid operator, Ukrrenergoproekt. The strikes impacted almost a half of Ukraine's energy capacity. People were forced to endure hours without electricity and

water during the coldest months in what Ukrainian officials described as "energy terror." Millions of people across Ukraine had to learn to work, live, and cover their basic needs without relying on electricity. After a lull of six months, Ukraine's energy system sustained its first attack of the season on Sept. 21, resulting in damage to facilities in the central and western regions, Ukrrenergoproekt said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has committed to substantially enhancing air defense systems, which already have demonstrated greater effectiveness than the previous year. "Everyone must play their part in defensive efforts to ensure that Russian aggression does not halt Ukraine this winter. Just as on the battlefield, in all areas, we must be resilient and strong," Zelenskyy said in a recent address to the nation. Ukrainian Prime Minister

Denys Shmyhal recently announced that the United States has allocated \$522 million for energy equipment and the protection of Ukraine's infrastructure. "We stand on the threshold of a difficult winter. Thanks to the assistance of our allies, we successfully weathered the last, which was the most challenging winter season in our history," Shmyhal said. Major retailer Epicenter said sales of generators increased 80% in August compared to the same time last year, and sales of portable charging stations increased by 25 times. Yurii Musienko, 45, another resident of Moshchun, also plans to rely heavily on firewood, and has a wood-burning stove in his compact wooden trailer that has been provided to him for two years, and which sits next to his ruined home. "I've already adapted," he said with a smile. The gates of his home still bear the holes from exploded ammu-

munition that serve as a reminder of when Russian forces tried to seize the Ukrainian capital. "May no one ever have to endure such conditions," said his mother, Valentyna Kirianin, who lives in a separate plastic trailer installed in the same courtyard. She's dressed in a hat and a coat, with multiple layers of clothing to stay warm. She notes that the cold has already set in, forcing her to sleep fully clothed, much like the previous winter. During the power outages last winter, the mother and son relied on canned food. Occasionally, Valentyna would visit her neighbor, whose house remained intact and had a gas stove for boiling water. "It's difficult for me to talk about. It pains my soul, and my heart weeps," she said. Private Ukrainian energy producer DTEK has spent the last seven months restoring its damaged infrastructure and fortifying the protection of its equipment for the approaching winter.

S Korea, US and Japan conduct first-ever trilateral aerial exercise

AP ■ SEOUL

The South Korean, US and Japanese militaries conducted their first-ever trilateral aerial exercise on Sunday in response to evolving North Korean nuclear threats, South Korea's air force said. The training held near the Korean Peninsula was to implement the three countries' earlier agreement to increase defense cooperation and boost their joint response capabilities against North Korea threats, the air force said in a statement. The drill involved a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber from the United States and fighter jets from South Korea and Japan, the statement said. South Korea and Japan are both key US allies in Asia, which together host about 80,000 American troops.

The three countries have occasionally held trilateral maritime drills, such as anti-submarine or missile defense exercises, but Sunday's training marked the first time for them to perform a trilateral aerial drill. In South Korea, expanding military drills with Japan is a sensitive issue, because many still harbor strong resentment against Japan's brutal 1910-45 colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula. But the North's advancing nuclear program has pushed South Korea's conservative president, Yoon Suk Yeol, to move beyond historical disputes with Japan and beef up a trilateral security cooperation with the US and Japan. In August, Yoon, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met at Camp David in their countries' first stand-

20 houses damaged in Nepal quake

PTI ■ KATHMANDU



A powerful earthquake of 6.1 magnitude rocked Nepal's capital Kathmandu and damaged 20 houses on Sunday, spreading panic among people and bringing back the painful memories of 2015 when a devastating quake killed about 9,000 people. According to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre, the earthquake with its epicentre in Dhading district was recorded at 7:39 a.m. The tremor was also felt in other districts of Bagmati and Gandaki provinces. Although no causality was reported, there were landslides in various parts of the district, according to media reports. Twenty houses were damaged and 75 more have developed cracks at Kumlati, Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality of Dhading due to the earthquake, the reports said. Dhading was hit by another three tremors of over 4 in magnitude on Sunday afternoon. According to the National Earthquake Monitoring Centre, earthquakes measuring 5.1, 5 and 4.1 magnitudes were recorded with their epicentre in Dhading district.

side their houses. Information Officer of the District Police Office and Deputy Superintendent of Police Santul Prasad Jaiswar said detailed information on the damaged houses is being collected. Earlier, an aftershock measuring 4.3 occurred at 8.08 am followed by another of 4.3 in magnitude at 8.28 am and 4.1 at 8.59 am, according to Earthquake Measurement Centre. The quake and continuous tremors triggered panic among people. Earthquakes are common in Nepal which is situated on the ridge where the Tibetan and Indian tectonic plates meet and advance two metres closer to one another every century which results in earthquakes. On October 16, Nepal's Sudurpaschim province was hit by a 4.8-magnitude earthquake. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake and subsequent aftershocks killed around 9,000 and injured nearly 22,000 people in Nepal in 2015. A total of 3.5 million people were rendered homeless. As the government's post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) report noted, Nepal is the 11th most earthquake-prone country in the world.

Rushdie receives German prize, calls for defence of freedom of expression

Berlin (AP)

Author Salman Rushdie called Sunday for the unconditional defence of freedom of expression as he received a prestigious German prize that recognises his literary work and his resolve in the face of constant danger. The British-American author decry the current age as a time when freedom of expression is under attack by all sides, including from authoritarian and populist voices, according to the German news agency dpa. He made his remarks during a ceremony in St Paul's Church in Frankfurt, where he was honored with the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade for continuing to write despite enduring decades of threats and violence. In August 2022, Rushdie was stabbed repeatedly while on stage at a literary festival in New York state. Rushdie has a memoir coming out about the attack that left him blind in his right eye and with a damaged left hand. "Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder" will be released on April 16. He called it a way "to answer violence with art." The German prize, which is endowed with 25,000 euros (USD 26,500), has been awarded since 1950. The German jury said earlier this year that it would honor Rushdie "for his resolve, his positive attitude to life and for the fact that he enriches the world with his pleasure in narrating." Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini had condemned passages referring to the Prophet Muhammad in Rushdie's 1988 novel "The Satanic Verses" as blasphemous. Khomeini issued a decree the following year calling for Rushdie's death, forcing the author into hiding, although he had been travelling freely for years before last summer's stabbing.

'Restricted rights put Af women in deadly situation during quakes'

Kabul (AP)

Women and girls are in a "not only difficult... but deadly" situation following recent earthquakes in Afghanistan because of the humanitarian and civil rights crises in the country since the Taliban seized power, a UN official said Sunday. An update from UN Women highlighted some of the problems women are facing in areas of Herat province, where a series of violent earthquakes and aftershocks this month killed thousands of people, more than 90 per cent of them women and children, and destroyed nearly every home. Cultural norms make it impossible for women to share a tent with neighbors or other families, the UN agency said in its update published Thursday. Many women also have difficulty obtaining humanitarian aid

if they don't have male relative who can access it on their behalf and there is an absence of female workers aid distribution points, the UN said. Women affected by the earthquake have told the UN they cannot access aid without the national identity card, or tazkira, of a male relative. They need clothing, including the Islamic headscarf, so they can dress appropriately to access services and aid, according to the update. "When natural disasters strike, women and girls are impacted most and often considered least in crisis response and recovery," Alison Davidian, the UN special representative for women in Afghanistan, said in a message to the Associated Press. "The earthquakes, when combined with the ongoing humanitarian and women's

rights crisis, have made the situation not only difficult for women and girls, but deadly." One reason children and women accounted for the vast majority of the at least 1,482 people who died in the quakes is they were more likely to have been indoors when the disasters struck, according to aid officials. Taliban officials gave higher casualty figures than humanitarian groups, saying more than 2,000 people died. Davidian noted that women and girls have been increasingly confined to their homes because of increasing Taliban-imposed restrictions on them in the last two years. The Taliban have barred girls from school beyond sixth grade and banned women from public spaces and most jobs. Women must also comply with dress codes and have a

Iran sentences 2 journalists for collaborating with US

AP ■ DUBAI

A court in Iran sentenced two female journalists to up to seven years in prison for "collaborating" with the United States government among other charges, local reports said. Both have been imprisoned for over a year following their coverage of the death of Mahsa Amini while in police custody in September 2022. This is a preliminary sentencing that can be appealed in 20 days. The two journalists, Niloufar Hamed, who broke the news of Amini's death for wearing her headscarf too loosely, and Elaheh Mohammadi, who wrote about her funeral, were sentenced to seven and six years in jail respectively, reported the judiciary news website,

Mizan on Sunday. Tehran Revolutionary Court charged them with "collaborating with the hostile American government," "colluding against national security" and "propaganda against the system," according to Mezan. Hamed worked for the reformist newspaper Shargh while Mohammadi for Ham-Mihan. They were detained in September 2022. In May, the United Nations awarded them both its premier prize for press freedom "for their commitment to truth and accountability." Amini's death touched off months-long protests in dozens of cities across Iran. The demonstrations posed one of the most serious challenges to the Islamic Republic since the 2009 Green Movement protests drew mil-

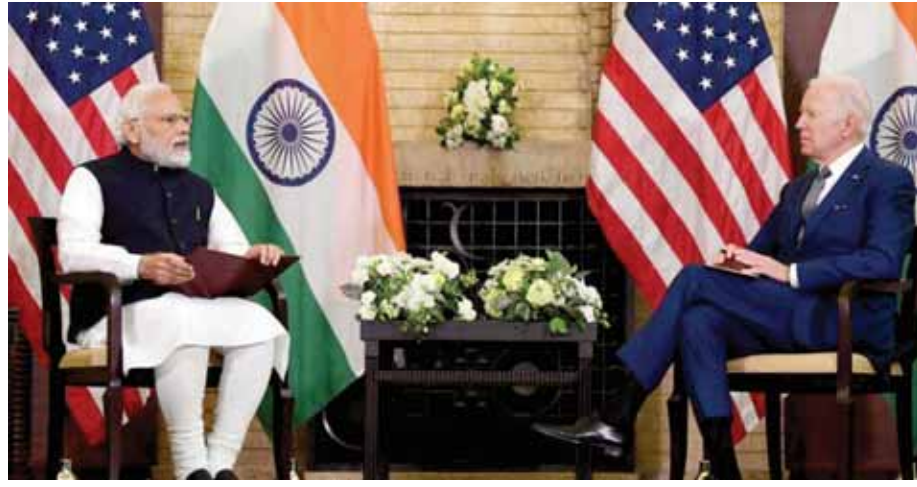
ions to the streets. While nearly 100 journalists were arrested amid the demonstrations, Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi's reporting was crucial in the days after Amini's death to spread the word about the anger that followed. Their detentions have sparked international criticism over the bloody security force crackdown that lasted months after Amini's death. Since the protests began, at least 529 people have been killed in demonstrations, according to Human Rights activists in Iran. Over 19,700 others have been detained by authorities amid a violent crackdown trying to suppress the dissent. Iran for months has not offered any overall casualty figures, while acknowledging tens of thousands had been detained.

US India's biggest trading partner till Q2 this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The US has emerged as India's biggest trading partner during the first half of the current financial year despite global economic uncertainties and declining exports and imports, according to government data.

According to the provisional data of the commerce ministry, the bilateral trade between India and the US has declined by 11.3 per cent to USD 59.67 billion during April-September 2023 against USD 67.28 billion in the same period last year. Exports to the US have come down to USD 38.28 billion during April-September 2023 from USD 41.49 billion a year ago. Imports also declined to USD 21.39 billion during the first six months of the current fiscal compared to USD 25.79 billion in the same period last year. Similarly, the two-way trade between India and China also dipped by 3.56 per cent to USD 58.11 billion. Exports to China contracted marginally to USD 7.74 billion during the first half of the current fiscal from USD 7.84 billion in the year-ago period. Imports fell to USD 50.47 billion from USD 52.42 billion a year earlier. Trade experts believe that



though exports and imports are declining between India and the US due to global demand slowdown, the growth rate will enter a positive zone soon. Despite this, the trend of increasing bilateral trade with the US will continue in the coming years as New Delhi and Washington are engaged in further strengthening the economic ties, they said. Chairman of the CII national committee on EXIM Sanjay Budhia has earlier stated that an early solution for restoration of GSP benefits by the US to Indian exporters is the need of the hour as it would help further boost the bilateral trade.

Mumbai-based exporter Khalid Khan said that going by the trend, the US will continue to be the biggest trading partner of India despite the global challenges. Ludhiana-based exporter SC Ralhan said that the trade between New Delhi and Washington will continuously grow in the coming years. "The US should seriously consider restoration of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits to domestic exporters as it would significantly help boost trade," Ralhan noted. America is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus.

The US was India's biggest trading partner in 2022-23. The bilateral trade between India and the US rose 7.65 per cent to USD 128.55 in 2022-23 against USD 119.5 billion in 2021-22. It was USD 80.51 billion in 2020-21. Earlier, China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21. Before China, the UAE was the country's largest trading partner. In 2022-23, the UAE, with USD 76.16 billion bilateral trade, was the third largest trading partner of India, followed by Saudi Arabia (USD 52.72 billion) and Singapore (USD 35.55 billion).

Govt may infuse capital in PSU general insurers in Q4 based on performance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Ministry would consider capital infusion in three loss-making public sector general insurance companies based on their financial performance of nine months. The infusion if required would be made in the fourth quarter of the current financial year, sources said. According to sources, the finance ministry last year asked three insurers -- National Insurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited and United India Insurance Company -- to chase bottomlines rather than top line and underwrite only good proposals. The financial review would give some idea about the impact of restructuring initiated on the profitability numbers and the solvency margin, sources said. The solvency margin is the extra capital the companies must hold over and above the claim amounts they are likely to incur. It acts as a financial backup in extreme situations, enabling the company to settle all claims. The government last year provided Rs 5,000 crore capital to three insurers -- National Insurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited and United



India Insurance Company. Kolkata-based National Insurance Company Limited was given the highest, Rs 3,700 crore, followed by Delhi-based Oriental Insurance Company Limited (Rs 1,200 crore) and Chennai-based United India Insurance Company (Rs 100 crore). According to sources these companies have been asked to improve their solvency ratio and meet the regulatory requirement of 150 per cent. The solvency ratio is a measure of capital adequacy. A higher ratio reflects better financial health and the ability of the company to pay claims and meet future contingencies and business growth plans.

Barring the solvency ratio of New India Assurance, this key indicator of the three public sector general insurance companies stood below the regulatory requirement of 150 per cent. During 2019-20, the government infused Rs 2,500 crore in these three companies. It increased substantially to Rs 9,950 crore in the following year and Rs 5,000 crore in 2021-22. In all, the government infused Rs 17,450 crore into these insurance firms so far to improve their financial health. Public sector general insurance companies are undergoing various reforms, including organisational restructuring, product rationalisation, cost

rationalisation and digitalisation. For efficient use of capital and to push profitable growth, the sources said, a set of key performance indicators linked reforms have been initiated by all public sector general insurance companies effective 2020-21, when the maximum capital infusion was made. Of the four state-run general insurance companies only New India Assurance Company is listed on the stock exchanges, the remaining three are wholly owned by the government. The government has already announced its intention to privatise one general insurance company. To facilitate privatisation, Parliament has already approved amendments to the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act (GIBNA). Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2021-22 announced a big-ticket privatisation agenda, which included two public sector banks and one general insurance company. "We propose to take up the privatisation of two public sector Banks and one general insurance company in the year 2021-22. This would require legislative amendments," she had said.

139 SMEs mobilise ₹3,540 crore via IPO in 2023

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Strong participation of family offices as well as high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), adequate market liquidity, and optimistic investor sentiment have amplified interest in small and medium enterprise (SME) IPOs, with 139 such firms garnering Rs 3,540 crore through initial share sales in 2023 so far. This was higher than 109 companies that raised Rs 1,875 crore through initial public offerings (IPOs) in the entire 2022, according to data provided by primedatabase.Com. Looking ahead, the fundraising environment for SME IPOs is anticipated to remain favourable, experts said. "The primary determinants include the growth potential of specific sectors, market liquidity levels, investor sentiment, and potential regulatory changes. The robust fundraising momentum is expected to persist, buoyed by the convergence of these influential factors," Abhishek Jain, Head of Research at Arihant Capital Markets Ltd, told PTI. Going by the industry data, a total of 139 IPOs have debuted on the SME platforms -- BSE SME and NSE Emerge -- and raised Rs 3,540 crore this year (till October 20). In addition, the maiden public issues of two more SMEs -- Paragon Fine and Speciality Chemical and



On Door Concepts -- are scheduled to open next week. These companies that came out with their maiden public issue belong to a wide range of sectors like IT, FMCG, automotive components, pharma, infrastructure, advertising, and hospitality. These firms have mobilised funds for expansion plans, support working capital requirements, and retire debt. The remarkable surge in SME fundraising through IPOs in 2023 can be attributed to the participation of family offices and HNIs that injected substantial capital into the SME market, Jain said. "Some reasons for the whopping growth in fundraising are the upward movement in the markets, the liquidity has been good, and businesses are scaling up. As a result, there is a huge demand for capital. And many companies are taking

advantage of these favourable market conditions to raise capital from the public market," Himanshu Kohli, Co-founder of Client Associates, said. Also, there is a lot of demand for offers for sale because investors who had invested in those companies before are considering unlocking value and wish to exit through this route right now, he added. In terms of month, September saw the highest number of 37 SMEs hitting the IPO market. The largest issue this year was Spectrum Talent Management which mobilised Rs 105 crore, followed by CFF Fluid Control which mopped up Rs 86 crore. Stock exchanges BSE and NSE launched SME platforms in 2012 becoming the only two bourses to offer such a segment in the country. These platforms provide opportunities for such firms to raise capital for growth and expansion.

'Global trends, crude oil prices, Q2 earnings to drive markets in holiday-shortened week'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic equity markets will be driven mainly by quarterly earnings, global trends, and the movement in crude oil prices in this holiday-shortened week, analysts said. Investors would also keep an eye on the Middle East amid the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict and the trading activity of foreign investors. Markets will remain closed on Tuesday for Dussehra. "Global markets are currently fragile due to heightened attention on the rising US bond yield, global economic uncertainty, and also the geopolitical situation. These factors will be closely monitored, as they have the potential to influence market sentiment. "Market participants will be closely watching the movement of the rupee against the dollar and crude oil prices, as well as investments by foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and domestic institutional investors (DIIs), during the results season," Praveesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. Markets may face volatile trends amid monthly derivatives expiry on Thursday. This week is a holiday-shortened one and we expect volatility to remain high due to the prevailing earnings season



and scheduled expiry of October month derivatives contracts, Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research at Religare Broking Ltd, said. "The market will take further cues from the Israel-Palestine conflict. One should keep a watch on the earnings of major companies in India. Some major global and domestic events will be in focus such as the UK services PMI, US manufacturing and services PMI, US GDP, initial jobless claims, and crude oil inventories," Arvinder Singh Nanda, Senior Vice President at Master Capital Services Ltd, said. Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail) at Kotak Securities Ltd, said markets worldwide, including India, will respond to geopolitical challenges, oil prices, and bond yield fluctuations, with continued stock-specific action tied to quarterly results.

"We expect earnings season to pick up pace in a truncated week which would direct the market trend along with global cues. On the global front, ECB (European Central Bank) will announce interest rate decision this week," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. Among the key results, Axis Bank, Tech Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki and Bajaj Finserv will announce financial numbers for the September quarter, he added. Canara Bank, Asian Paints, PNB, BPCL and Reliance Industries will also announce their quarterly earnings during the week. Last week, the BSE benchmark plunged 885.12 points or 1.33 per cent and the Nifty declined 208.4 points or 1.05 per cent.

'Government plans to register only India-made solar panels under ALMM'



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is planning to register solar panels made up of only domestically manufactured cells, wafers and polysilicon under the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers in the next 3-4 years. Minister for New and Renewable Energy RK Singh has also asked the concerned officers of his ministry to prepare a policy in this regard. ALMM was introduced by the government to boost domestic manufacturing of solar panels. The modules with less efficiency are removed from the ALMM, the minister said. "We will evolve our policies. We will only protect those modules, which are made-in-India cells. In one or two years, we will bring such a policy. Then again, after 1-2 years, we

will bring a policy that wafers and polysilicon should also be made in India. "We only register those players under ALMM whose cell, wafers and polysilicon are India-made," Singh said. "The move will help in real 'Make-in-India'. The government will not promote the import of components of solar panels in the next few years, the minister said. "You import cell from outside and assemble here and sell it saying it is made in India, whereas it is 90 per cent made in China this will not do," he said, adding that the ministry will also do a review of the ALMM next year. The government will not allow the manufacturers to endorse any outdated equipment or technology to protect the interest of the people of India, Singh added.

BUSINESS-BRIEF

23 CRPF PERSONNEL AWARDED DEGREES AT SRMIST
Kattankulathur: About 23 CRPF personnel were awarded degrees for successfully completing the Diploma in Yoga for Human Excellence program through Distance Education at SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur. Chief Guest for the event was Deputy Inspector General of CRPF, Avadi, M Dhinakaran. Also present were Commandant, GC-Avadi, CRPF, Navir Singh and DIG, Medical, GC, Avadi, CRPF, Dr S Jayabalan. Advisor, Directorate of Distance Education, SRMIST, Prof R Rajagopal welcomed the gathering.



ELECTROPRENEUR PARK ANNOUNCES EXIT OF UNIVLABS
New Delhi: In a major boost to the Indian Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) market, Electropreneur Park (EP) announced the exit of Univlabs, a leading Indian health-tech startup. With its remarkable growth journey, Univlabs Technologies has established its presence in 6 countries, offering innovative solutions to 2000+ hospitals in India and overseas. So far, the startup has applied for 11 patents while having 2 to its name. An initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and IT, Electropreneur Park has been set up primarily to carry out incubation and build an ecosystem to help budding ESDM entrepreneurs. EP is managed by Software Technology Parks of India, and implemented by India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA). Since its inception, Electropreneur Park has incubated 59 companies which have developed 125 products, and applied for 66 patents, along with generating employment opportunities for 885 professionals. The startups of EP have received Rs 21.79 crore of follow-on funding.

AFFORDABLE FOOTWEAR NEW STORE
New Delhi: Khadim India Ltd, the home grown affordable fashion footwear brand, has opened its new store in Kalkaji Market in New Delhi. Khadim is poised to strengthen its retail presence through more store launches in various strategic markets. Its campaign, Aapka Khadim Sabka Khadim portrays the long lived legacy of the brand and captures the emotional quotient of the brand with its consumers over the years.

86 power plants have 25 per cent less coal stocks than normative levels: CEA report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 86 thermal power plants in the country, including six imported dry fuel-based, had critical coal stock levels as of October 18, according to a Central Electricity Authority (CEA) report. The power plants are labelled as having a critical coal stock situation, where the dry fuel is less than 25 per cent of the normative level. According to the daily coal report of the CEA for October 18, 2023, as many as 86 thermal power plants were having critical coal stock situations out of the monitored 181 in the country. There were six imported coal-based plants out of these 86 plants. CEA monitors 181 coal-based thermal power plants in the country with a total installed generation capacity of 206 GW. As per the report, 148 non-pithead domestic coal-based power plants with a total capacity of about 149 GW had 29 per cent less dry fuel



stocks than the normative (or ideal) levels. These 148 plants had about 12.77 million tonnes of coal against the normative level of 43.53 million tonnes as of October 18, 2023. However, the situation was better at 18 domestic pithead plants where dry fuel stock was 81 per cent of the normative levels. These 18 plants have a total power generation capacity of about 40 GW. The experts are of the view that generally the dry fuel stock situation is not often critical at pithead plants as these are located near coal mines. The non-pithead plants are those where the dry fuel is transported from far-flung places where coal mines are located.

FPIs pull out ₹12,000 cr from equities in Oct so far; invest ₹5,700 cr in debt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have withdrawn over Rs 12,000 crore from Indian equities this month so far, mainly due to a sustained rise in US bond yields and the uncertain environment resulting from the Israel-Hamas conflict. However, the story takes an intriguing turn on observing FPI activity in Indian debt as they have infused over Rs 5,700 crore into the debt market during the period under review, data with the depositories showed. Going ahead, the trajectory of FPIs' investments in India will be influenced not only by global inflation and interest rate dynamics but also by the developments and intensity of the Israel-Hamas conflict, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Adviser India, said. Geopolitical tensions tend to elevate risk, which typically hurts foreign capital inflows into emerging markets like India, he added. According to the data with the depositories, foreign portfolio



investors (FPIs) sold shares worth Rs 12,146 crore this month (till October 20). This came after FPIs turned net sellers in September and pulled out Rs 14,767 crore. Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months -- from March to August -- and bought shares worth Rs 1.74 lakh crore. The latest outflow appears to be in response to the current global uncertainties. Geopolitical issues, particularly the conflicts in Israel and Ukraine, have cast shadows of instability over international markets, prompting FPIs to adopt a cautious stance in the Indian equity arena, Mayank

Mehraa, principal manager and principal partner at Craving Alpha, said. "The primary reason for the sustained selling was the sharp spike in US bond yields, which took the 10-year yield to a 17-year high of 5 per cent on 19th October," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. In the current scenario, experts believe that there could be an enhanced focus on safe-haven assets, such as gold and the US dollar. Explaining reasons for the Rs 5,700 crore inflow in the debt market, Vijayakumar said this could be attributed to a host of factors such as FPIs diversifying their investment amidst

global uncertainty and weakness in the global economy, Indian bonds are giving good yields and the rupee is expected to be stable given India's stable macros. Another factor is the inclusion of India in the JP Morgan Global Bond Index, he added. "This might be a strategy to sit tight on the sidelines in the equity market and await more stable conditions or potential corrections before diving back in. In essence, this dual approach of FPIs highlights the intricate dance they perform in response to global events," Mehraa said. Their readiness to shift focus from one asset class to another underscores the dynamic nature of investment strategies in the face of changing circumstances, he added. With this, the total investment by FPIs in equity has reached Rs 1.08 lakh crore and close to Rs 35,000 crore in the debt market this year so far. In terms of sectors, FPIs have been selling across the board in sectors like financials, power, FMCG and IT, while purchasing was subdued in automobiles and capital goods. However, they were buyers in telecom.

Messi plays entire game for Inter Miami in a 1-0 loss as Charlotte qualifies for the MLS playoffs

AP ■ CHARLOTTE (US)
Lionel Messi played the entire game on artificial turf in Inter Miami's season finale and Charlotte FC qualified for the MLS playoffs with a 1-0 victory.
Messi shared the spotlight with Charlotte's bid to qualify for the postseason on the last day of the regular season in a game that drew 66,101 at Charlotte's 74,000-seat Bank of America Stadium.
Messi, who led Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title, was the clear drawing card, and thousands in attendance were adorned in "Messi 10" jerseys.
The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner as the world's top player went the distance in the meaningless game for Miami, which had already been eliminated from playoff contention. He finished with three shots and had two scoring chances. Messi's apparent goal in the 49th minute was negated by an offside call, and his shot in the 62nd minute bounded off the crossbar. Messi had 11 goals in 14 matches with Miami this season. The



team was winless in his final six league matches (three losses, three draws) and had four wins, four losses and four draws in the league since he joined the team in mid-July.
Messi, who scored twice for Argentina in its 2-0 World Cup qualifying win at Peru on Tuesday night and did not play the next day in a makeup game against Charlotte, did not address the media after the game. He had one media availability in a half-season with team, on Aug. 17.
Charlotte delivered for its fans. The second-year franchise needed a victory over Miami and help from other results to claim one of the two remaining Eastern Conference playoff spots in a scramble of five teams. The Chicago Fire and CF Montreal lost earlier Saturday and that allowed Charlotte to clinch a playoff berth with a victory.
Kerwin Vargas' goal in the 13th minute was enough to seal the historic victory, and Charlotte held Miami without a goal down the stretch in a season in which it has yielded many late-game goals.

Charlotte will finish the 2023 season second in league attendance; Charlotte FC was averaging 33,634 entering Saturday's regular-season finale.
"I knew it was because Messi was in town," Charlotte FC coach Christian Lattanzio said of the large crowd. "The more they come to see us they will see we can play toe-to-toe with the best in the world."
"I'm very, very proud of the boys. They have been working very, very hard."
Messi is expected to play in Inter Miami's colors on Nov. 5 and Nov. 8, when the team plays two exhibition matches in China. It'll be the first time Inter Miami goes on a foreign tour. Argentina then has more World Cup qualifiers on Nov. 16 and Nov. 21 - after which Messi should get an extended break before Inter Miami begins preparing for 2024.
Inter Miami CF coach Gerardo Martino said his team finished the season wearied by its heavy schedule.
"We had three tournaments and won one," Martino said through translator.

German soccer club gives away tickets for crowd of 52,000 to connect with its community

AP ■ DUSSELDORF (GERMANY)
A crowd of 52,000 watched a thrilling win for Fortuna Dusseldorf in German soccer's second division.
And they all got in for free. Saturday's game was the first step in a "Fortuna for Everyone" plan to give away tickets for selected games, which Fortuna hopes could revolutionize how fans relate to club soccer. In future, it says it wants to offer every one of its home games for free.
The hope is to reconnect Fortuna, which last won a trophy in 1980, with its community and attract a new generation of fans.
The fans certainly enjoyed Fortuna's win, and they may have inspired it, as the home team surged back from three goals down to beat Kaiserslautern 4-3. There were also some ugly moments.
When Kaiserslautern raced into a 3-0 lead by the 32nd minute, there were whistles from the home fans and one Kaiserslautern player was struck by an object thrown from the stands. As Fortuna got back into the game, the crowd got behind the team, every decision that went its way greeted with roars from the stands.
By the time Japan midfielder Ao Tanaka scored a spectacular long-range goal to give Fortuna the lead, most of the stadium was on its feet to celebrate a remarkable comeback. The ultras - hardcore Fortuna fans behind one goal - let off flares and fireworks, defying a stadium announcement to "stop this nonsense."
At the final whistle, Fortuna players hugged or sank to their knees in celebration as if it were a final.
"It was something special, and with the win, unbelievable," Fortuna defender Jamil Siebert said of the atmosphere.
Giving away tickets creates a shortfall of around 450,000 to 500,000 euros (\$477,000 to \$530,000) per game in lost revenue, CEO Alexander Jobst told reporters Wednesday. Fortuna aims to make that up by attracting new sponsors keen to advertise to a capacity crowd.

Man United gets emotional victory to pay tribute to Bobby Charlton

Man City and Liverpool also win

AP ■ LONDON
A red smoke spread over the away end at Bramall Lane, the chants of "There's only one Bobby Charlton" rang out from the Manchester United supporters toward the end of its game against Sheffield United.
On the day when United mourned the passing of the club's greatest ever player, a thundering strike by Diogo Dalot made sure that the team and its fans could celebrate his life with a win.
Dalot's long-range curler in the 77th minute secured a 2-1 win at Sheffield United in an emotionally charged evening game that was played only hours after the death of the England great was announced. It began with United captain Bruno Fernandes laying down a wreath at the center circle before the kickoff, and ended with the chorus of chants in Charlton's honor that were sparked by Dalot's late goal.
"We had to show our respect for him and I think we did that today," United manager Erik ten Hag said. "We wanted to celebrate but also to remember him."
It was not a performance to be remembered by United, as it struggled to break down a team in last place in the standings, but none of that mattered as it was all about paying tribute to Charlton.
"I felt with the win we gave a little bit of joy on a sad day," Dalot said. "This is the contribution we could have today and give to the family."
The death of Charlton, the 1966 World Cup winner and arguably England's greatest ever player, was announced during the halftime break of Saturday's five afternoon games, overshadowing the results on the field on a busy day as the Premier League returned after the international break.
Earlier, Manchester City and Liverpool both bounced back from two straight disappointing results with comfortable wins to reignite a title rivalry that is showing signs of once again going deep into the season.
Liverpool beat crosstown rival Everton 2-0 in the Merseyside Derby in the early kickoff, before City ended a two-game losing streak in the league with a 2-1 win over Brighton.
Arsenal then came from two goals down to draw 2-2 at Chelsea to sit level on points with Man City atop the stand-

AP ■ AUSTIN (US)
Max Verstappen started from the pole position and cruised to his third Formula One sprint race victory of the season at the Circuit of the Americas, a day before he'll go for another win in a dominant season at the United States Grand Prix.
Verstappen was denied the pole position for Sunday's race because of a rare mistake on his final lap of qualifying on Friday. But the Red Bull driver returned to the track in top form a day later and won the pole position for the 19-lap sprint race.
Verstappen has already won the season championship with 14 grand prix victories and has taken three of the five sprint races so far.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen cruises to another F1 sprint race win at the Circuit of the Americas

He squeezed Ferrari's Charles Leclerc into the first corner, an uphill, switchback left hander, to keep the lead out of the start.
"It was close into turn one. Charles had a little better start. I tried to make it as difficult as possible for him," Verstappen said.
"I saw a very little gap and tried for it," Leclerc said. "I lost position."
From there it was a matter of Verstappen building some space ahead of Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, who had jumped Leclerc into second out of the



first turn. Hamilton is trying to catch Red Bull's Sergio Perez for second in the drivers' standings over the final five races of the season.
Mercedes brought what it hoped would be its last significant upgrades to the car this season.

Hamilton stayed close to Verstappen for about four laps before dropping off. He still finished second, ahead of Leclerc. Leclerc will start on pole Sunday. Hamilton will start third.
"I was trying early-on to get closer to Max, but their pace is just undeniable," Hamilton said. Verstappen lost the pole position for Sunday's grand prix race because he exceeded track limits on the penultimate corner of his final lap of qualifying. He will start Sunday from sixth as he chases a record-tying 15th win this season.
"He'll be breathing down our necks before too long," Hamilton said.
Verstappen has won the last two races in Austin. The winner at COTA has come from the front row every year since 2012, but Verstappen has already won from sixth in Belgium and ninth in Miami this season.
After Verstappen's mistake in qualifying, race stewards widened slightly the race lanes in three corners, including the one one Verstappen missed, for the sprint race and Sunday's grand prix.

Arsenal rallies from 2 goals down to draw 2-2 at Chelsea and stay unbeaten in Premier League

AP ■ BERLIN
Bundesliga top-scorer Serhou Guirassy struck again for Stuttgart while Harry Kane did his best to keep up for Bayern Munich.
Guinea forward Guirassy took his league tally to 14 goals in eight games during Stuttgart's 3-0 win at Union Berlin, before Kane responded with a goal of his own in Bayern's 3-1 victory at Mainz in the late match. It was the England captain's ninth goal after starting every Bundesliga game so far this season.
"I've been really happy with the start," Kane told Sky TV afterward. "The boys are obviously setting me up really nicely and



I'm just trying to get in the right positions to score the goals. But I still feel like there's room for improvement."
Bayern's win kept the pressure on early leader Bayer Leverkusen, which remained top with a 2-1 victory at

Wolfsburg earlier. Bayern, Leverkusen and Borussia Dortmund are the only unbeaten teams remaining.
Bayern had a great start at Mainz, with Leroy Sané setting up Kingsley Coman for the opener in the 11th minute, five minutes before Kane headed the ball in from close range.
Bayern also needed Sven Ulreich to produce a fine save before Mainz deservedly pulled one back with a fierce strike from Anthony Caci before the break.
Mainz pushed for an equalizer after the interval and almost got it, too, with Stefan Bell just missing the target after good work from Danny da Costa.
The Mainz defender was to rue

the miss less than a minute later when Leon Goretzka scored Bayern's third goal in the 59th, set up by the outstanding Jamal Musiala.
"The most important thing is that we're winning games whether I'm scoring or not scoring," Kane said. "When you come away from home to get the three points it's a good feeling."
STUTTGART FLYING
Stuttgart had never beaten Union Berlin in the Bundesliga before, but Guirassy converted the visitors' first chance in the 16th. He was unable to add to his tally, however, as he was forced off in the 30th with what Stuttgart said was a left hamstring problem.



Nice edges 10-man Marseille 1-0 to go top in France

Mbappe scores for PSG in 3-0 rout of Strasbourg

AP ■ PARIS
Nice, the only unbeaten team in the French league, edged 10-man Marseille 1-0 with a late goal from substitute Evann Guessand to provisionally take top spot.
Nice is one point clear of defending champion Paris Saint-Germain and two clear of Monaco. Kylian Mbappe scored from the spot and had an assist to fire PSG to a 3-0 win over Strasbourg earlier Saturday.
Monaco can take the top spot back with a win over promoted Metz on Sunday.
Marseille finished the game with 10 men after center back Leonardo Balerdi received a second yellow card for a late tackle on Pablo Rosario in the 78th minute. The subsequent set piece led to the winning goal for Nice as Guessand met a free kick from Jeremie Boga to score with a powerful header in the 79th.
"When we show solidarity and walk in the same direction, we do what we want," Guessand told Canal Plus television. "There aren't many teams that can worry us." Nice has the tightest defense in the league but was lucky to keep a sixth clean sheet in its last seven games since Marseille had the best chances. Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka palmed away a header by Amine Harit in the 62nd. Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang then beat Bulka with a chip in the 73rd only to see the ball bounce off the base of the post. Marseille dropped to seventh place, five points outside the top three.
MBAPPE SCORES AGAIN
In Paris, Mbappe raised his league tally to eight goals this season by converting a penalty in the 10th after Goncalo Ramos had been brought down. The France striker then beat the offside trap in the 31st to set up Carlos Soler for the second goal.
Spain midfielder Fabian Ruiz sealed the win by dribbling past a defender to lift the ball past goalkeeper Matz Sels in the 77th.
Mbappe had not scored in his four previous games for PSG. But he rediscovered his scoring touch during the international break by netting twice in a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Oct. 13 to help France qualify for Euro 2024 before notching a goal and an assist to thrash Scotland 4-1 in a friendly.

Kvaratskhelia nets twice and Napoli beats Verona 3-1 to relieve pressure on Garcia

AP ■ MILAN
Khvicha Kvaratskhelia appears back to his stunning best as he scored two goals to help Napoli beat Hellas Verona 3-1 in Serie A and relieve some of the pressure on coach Rudi Garcia.
Kvaratskhelia, who got married at home in Georgia during the international break, netted a goal either side of halftime. Matteo Politano set up both of those goals and also scored the opener.
That took Kvaratskhelia's tally to five goals and three assists in his last seven matches for club and country.
The Georgia winger was a revelation last season and was named Serie A player of the year after helping Napoli to the



title but hadn't scored since March before ending his goal drought last month.
Napoli moved level on points with third-place Juventus and Fiorentina ahead of their matches in this round. The three teams are five points behind Inter Milan, which moved top with a 3-0 win at

Torino.
Second-place AC Milan can reclaim top spot from its city rival with a win over Juventus on Sunday.
With only four wins in the opening eight rounds, Garcia - who replaced title-winning coach Luciano Spalletti in the offseason - was already under

pressure and had met several times with club president Aurelio De Laurentiis recently. Napoli was also without stand-out forward Victor Osimhen, who injured his right thigh while with Nigeria's national team.
Napoli withstood a promising start from the home side before taking the lead in the 27th minute. Giacomo Raspadori did well to get in a cross from the left to the back post where Politano volleyed the ball into the bottom corner.
Politano turned provider two minutes before halftime as he sent Kvaratskhelia down the left and the winger cut inside, feinted and then squeezed a shot between Verona goalkeeper Lorenzo Montipò and the near post.

Fils stuns Tsitsipas to set up European Open final against Bublik

AP ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)
French teenager Arthur Fils stunned top-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4) to become the youngest finalist in the history of the European Open.
The 19-year-old Fils will seek a second career title against third-seeded Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan, who beat German qualifier Maximilian Marterer 6-4, 6-4 in the first semifinal.
Fils saved eight of nine break points and hit 34 winners to 21 for his Greek opponent. He failed to serve out the match at 5-4 as Tsitsipas broke back to force a second tiebreaker.
"I was very tired," Fils said on court. "My first serve didn't go. I mean, I was trying to ace on every serve, but I cannot. So, I said: OK, maybe it will be tough."
In the second tiebreaker, Fils

jumped to a 5-1 lead before winning the match with a forehand volley.
In his breakthrough season, Fils won his first title in Lyon and got his first victory over a top 10 player by knocking out Casper Ruud in Hamburg.
Meanwhile, Bublik will chase a third career title. He beat Marterer in their previous meeting, a straight-set victory at Wimbledon this summer.
"I came up with the same game plan," Bublik said on court. "Just stay solid, be focused and use my experience. It worked out in the crucial moments."
Marterer struggled to find his range in the opening game, making two forehand errors to drop serve. Bublik saved two break points with an ace at 4-3 and another ace at 5-4 before pocketing the first set with a forehand winner.

Ramos helps Sevilla hold his former club Real Madrid to 1-1 draw

Hat trick for Atletico's Griezmann

AP ■ BARCELONA
Sergio Ramos showed that he is still the boss of the box after the 37-year-old player put in a characteristically tenacious performance to help Sevilla grind out a hard-fought 1-1 draw against his former club Real Madrid.

Ramos was playing his first game against Madrid since returning to the Spanish league last month with Sevilla, his boyhood club.
David Alaba scored an own-goal to put Sevilla ahead in the 74th, but Dani Carvajal equalized with a header four minutes later.

Leader Madrid was left three points ahead of second-place Girona and four points ahead of Barcelona in third before they play games on Sunday.
Ramos started his career with Sevilla but soon moved to Madrid, where he won 22 trophies in 16 seasons - including four Champions League titles - before leaving in 2021. After two frustrating years with Paris Saint-Germain, the former

Spain defender returned to Sevilla.
Ramos saved a goal-bound shot by former teammate Toni Kroos in the first half. The center back also had two late scoring chances to almost snatch the win for the hosts.
Ramos featured in some run-ins with Antonio Rudiger, who arrived at Madrid last season in part to fill the hole left by the aging Ramos. In one clash,



Ramos grabbed the cheeks of Rudiger while the Germany defender held him as they exchanged words.
Ramos also clashed with Jude Bellingham, Madrid's new star. Ramos elbowed Bellingham in the head during a corner and earned a yellow card for a foul on him in the second half.
Ramos, who scored several big goals in his career for Madrid, almost bagged a winner from

two headers with the score at 1-1. Kepa was able to push the ball onto his post, and Ramos later sent the ball high with his second header in stoppage time.
The game's final stretch was marred by a tussle between several players after Vinicius Junior pushed Sevilla goalkeeper Orjan Nyland. That led to more serious shoves by several players, including Ramos and Vinicius.

When the final whistle blew, Ramos embraced with Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti. The day before the game Ancelotti heaped praise on his former player, saying that Ramos' stoppage-time equalizer in the 2014 Champions League final was a key moment in his career.
"I loved seeing him again," Ancelotti said about Ramos after the game. "I said hello to him and wished him the best."



IT'S TIME TO TELL THE WORLD HOW GOOD SOUTH AFRICANS ARE UNDER PRESSURE: KLAASEN

PTI ■ MUMBAI

For a nation that has never won the 50-over World Cup despite producing some of the best players and teams, South Africa look determined to go the distance in this edition, shedding the 'chokers' tag. With one 400-plus and another near-400 total to their credit and a massive 229-run win over reigning champions England, South Africa have made a strong statement ahead of the fixtures against New Zealand and India. Heinrich Klaasen, who smashed a 67-ball 109 against England, viewed those two matches as a perfect occasion for his side to deliver in a high-pressure situation, often termed the Achilles Heel of South African teams. "Our World Cup performance, everyone, obviously, has got their tag over us but we have



played some good cricket. We've been unlucky, and obviously, we did not execute on certain games," Klaasen told the media

here on Saturday. "But if you look at our games that we have played, we have played some very, very good

cricket in the World Cup (history). It is not a surprise that we are playing good cricket." "This group has been playing

good cricket for the last three years now. We've been maturing nicely. It is our time to really try to make a big statement for the world, that South Africans are very good under pressure. We have done it before," Klaasen said. The wicketkeeper-batter, who struck his third hundred of the year, described the conditions in Mumbai as excruciating. Klaasen cracked 12 fours and four sixes during his innings, and the effort under the sweltering heat and humidity in the city has left him a drained man. "It ranks up to one of my better hundreds purely on the conditions that were out there. I really had to dig deep mentally. Physically, I was not in a good space, but mentally I had to dig very deep there," Klaasen said. "It is like just breathing in hot air and every time you try to run it is just sapping more and more

energy and then at the end of the day, your body just does not want to work with you anymore," he said. "It is like almost running in a sauna for the whole innings, which is what we obviously prepare for and we are used to these conditions. But it still takes a lot out of the body," he added. Klaasen revealed the warning Marco Jansen, his partner for England demolition job, served when they met in the middle. Klaasen and Jansen hammered 151 runs for the sixth wicket - a record for South Africa. "Marco has been working extremely hard on his batting and he is taking a lot of pride in his death hitting as well. He has been disappointed in a couple of the innings that he did not really pull through," the 32-year-old said.



Pakistan wary of Afghanistan spin threat at Chepauk

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A desperate Pakistan will be wary of a competent group of Afghanistan spinners' ability to strike hard on an often-gripping Chepauk pitch during the World Cup match here on Monday. A win is mandatory for Babar Azam's side after two successive defeats against India and Australia, as another slip up will severely hamper their ambitions to reach the semi-finals of the tournament. Pakistan always had some handy spinners supplementing the fast bowlers, but here left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawas and leg-spinners Shadab Khan and Usama Mir just don't look the part. They were neither able to pluck wickets nor stop the flow of runs, a primary reason behind Pakistan's failure to exert control over their rivals in the middle overs. And that will precisely be the point Afghanistan will look to cash in on tomorrow, and they will eye a better outing from their batsmen. Their batters, except opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz, too haven't been able to fire in a desired manner in the quadrennial big bash. There have been flashes by Ikrar Alikhil, Azmatullah Shahidi but they need to infuse some consistency into their performance as Pakistan are still a far more experienced opponent at such stages. They also enjoy a 7-0 edge in the head-to-head stats against Afghanistan in ODIs. Apart from the on-field calculations, the Pakistan vs Afghanistan rivalry has developed some needle to it over the last few years. If the teams can fire themselves up to the occasion, then we may just see another classic.

batters go off the boil, but this time they have not really stepped up to the occasion. Left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi showed some signs of regaining his range with a five-wicket haul against Australia at the M Chinnaswamy stadium. But the form of other two pacers Haris Rauf and Hasan Ali remains a concern as they are still coming to terms with the demands of bowling inside the Power Play. Pakistan always had some handy spinners supplementing the fast bowlers, but here left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawas and leg-spinners Shadab Khan and Usama Mir just don't look the part. They were neither able to pluck wickets nor stop the flow of runs, a primary reason behind Pakistan's failure to exert control over their rivals in the middle overs. And that will precisely be the point Afghanistan will look to cash in on tomorrow, and they will eye a better outing from their batsmen. Their batters, except opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz, too haven't been able to fire in a desired manner in the quadrennial big bash. There have been flashes by Ikrar Alikhil, Azmatullah Shahidi but they need to infuse some consistency into their performance as Pakistan are still a far more experienced opponent at such stages. They also enjoy a 7-0 edge in the head-to-head stats against Afghanistan in ODIs. Apart from the on-field calculations, the Pakistan vs Afghanistan rivalry has developed some needle to it over the last few years. If the teams can fire themselves up to the occasion, then we may just see another classic.

'Beasts' India favourites to win World Cup at home, says Taylor

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Firing on all cylinders, India are a different beast at home and firm favourites to win the World Cup, feels former New Zealand batter Ross Taylor. India have begun their World Cup campaign in a resounding manner, winning all four of their matches so far. The hosts take on New Zealand, the only other unbeaten side in the tournament, in a marquee clash in Dharmasala on Sunday. "India in their home conditions are a different beast and they have started unsurprisingly strongly - I see them as favourites to win the competition at this stage, no matter what happens in Dharmasala (on Sunday)," Taylor wrote in his ICC column. India's batting and bowling units have been performing in tandem. While the likes of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have been in impeccable form, Jasprit Bumrah and the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja have delivered with the ball. "Jasprit Bumrah has led the attack brilliantly, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja are bowling really nicely and their top three have been fantastic for a long time. You can't expect your top three to score runs all the time but they also now seem to have found a nice combination at four and five with Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul," he said. While India will enjoy the support of the fans, Taylor reckons the packed crowd will bring out the best out of the Black Caps as well. "New Zealand will need early wickets to put that middle-order under pressure. The crowd will naturally play a part but I think New Zealand will thrive in that atmosphere. Every time you come here, you play in front of full crowds and you know you'll be up against it. The crowds here are very vocal but very fair at the same time." India have a record of faltering against New Zealand at ICC



events. The Men In Blue have been unable to get past the Kiwis for over two decades. "I'm not quite sure what explains why New Zealand keep beating India at these tournaments but if you talk to a lot of Indian supporters, New Zealand are their second favourite team - maybe that has something to do with it, who knows!" Taylor said. "Rachin will be a key part of NZ in years to come" New Zealand have been equally clinical in their display despite the absence of skipper Kane Williamson and pacer Tim Southee. "I have been really impressed with how they have gone about it so far. They have played fantastically well. Everyone has stood up at different stages. A lot has been made of the injuries to Tim Southee and Kane Williamson but the people who have come in have stepped up, particularly Will Young and Rachin Ravindra. Ravindra has made the most of his opportunity, scoring a century on his World Cup debut while also notching up a fifty. "If you would have said two or three weeks before the tournament that Rachin would have been in the starting line-up, I don't think anyone would have picked that. He pushed himself in there with his performances in the warm-up games and even then, I don't think people thought he would have batted as high up the order as he has.

Five-star Shami helps India limit New Zealand to 273

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Daryl Mitchell hit a gutsy hundred before India pacer Mohammed Shami sizzled with a five-wicket haul in his first game of the World Cup to restrict New Zealand to 273 all out here on Sunday. Sent into bat, Mitchell (130 off 127 balls) and Rachin Ravindra (75 off 87 balls) rescued New Zealand after a poor start, sharing 159 runs off 152 balls for the third wicket. Shami (5/54) was the star with the ball for India while the other pacers, Jasprit Bumrah (1/45) and Mohammed Siraj (1/45), also played their part well.



India had a rare ordinary day in the field and were guilty of dropping three catches. Kuldeep Yadav (2/73) was the most expensive bowler but got the important wickets of Tom Latham and Glenn Phillips. The start was far from rosy for New Zealand who lost Devon Conway early. The left-hander flicked a Mohammed Siraj delivery straight to Shreyas Iyer at forward square leg in the fourth over. Introduced into the attack in the ninth over, Shami struck

with his first ball of the tournament by removing Will Young, who played on to an incoming delivery. Regarded as one of India's best fielders, Ravindra Jadeja dropped a sitter at point of Shami's bowling to hand Ravindra a life. Ravindra cashed in on the chance with both hands and together with Mitchell forged a much needed partnership to stabilise the innings. The duo was particularly severe

against Kuldeep Yadav, clobbering the left-arm spinner for three huge sixes straight over his head. Ravindra brought up his fifty off 56 balls, while Mitchell's half-century came in 60 deliveries. The hallmark of the partnership between Ravindra and Mitchell was that they never went into a shell and rotated the strike to keep the scoreboard ticking. Mitchell's straight hits over the two in-

form Indian spinners' heads were a treat to watch. The Indians were sloppy on the field as Mitchell also got a reprieve on 69 in the 33rd over when Jasprit Bumrah dropped an easy chance at the long-off boundary. Shami finally broke the partnership in the next over when Ravindra failed to clear the long-on boundary, handing a simple catch to Shubman Gill. Ravindra's wicket hardly bothered Mitchell who continued to play aggressively, smashing the Indian bowlers with disdain as New Zealand brought up their 200 in 36.1 overs. Kuldeep, who was put under pressure for the first time in the competition, finally tasted success when he had New skipper Tom Latham LBW with a wrong one. Glenn Phillips made 23 before he sliced a Kuldeep delivery to Rohit at point. India pulled things back significantly by picking up six wickets in the last six overs for only 30 runs. Shami cleaned up Mitchell Santner and Matt Henry off consecutive balls in the 48th over to get close his third five-wicket haul in ODIs.

'Opener' Jansen ready to make big contributions with bat for South Africa in World Cup

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The cricketing world might be in awe of Marco Jansen's blistering 42-ball 75 against England, but the South African is firm about progressing further in his journey as an all-rounder, and he is banking on his experience as an 'opener.' South Africa's humongous 229-run win included a sensational maiden ODI fifty in ODI cricket by Jansen, who added 151 runs for a record sixth-wicket partnership with Heinrich Klaasen (109).

The left-arm seamer also returned a fine spell of 2/35, accounting for Dawid Malan (6) and Joe Root (2). "When I grew up, I opened the batting so for me, I enjoy batting a lot. I'm not as pleasing on the eye like the other guys, but I love batting and I try to work very hard on it," Jansen said. Jansen said South Africa did not think about getting to a total as big as 399/7. "We knew it was not that bad a wicket. When I joined Klaasen, he just said have good options and plans. We never thought

that we were going to get to 400. The plan was to get around 320-350," he said. The left-arm pacer said the Proteas bowlers did not rest on the cushion of a heavy total, and were focusing on hitting right lines and lengths against English batters. "We knew that they were going to come hard, but since the wicket was good, we thought we had to stick to our plans and try and force them to make a mistake. "They are very good stroke makers, and we knew that if we were going to miss our mark



they were going to put us all over the park," Jansen added. The lanky all-rounder said he was not receptive to Klaasen's complaints about the extremely challenging conditions when he joined him in the middle. "When I got in, I was like 'why are you complaining' but by the end of the innings I knew what he was talking about," Jansen said. "I know that he did a lot of work to get there. I told him that he was not walking off this ground if he is not getting a hundred," he said.

Hendricks looks to build on Reeza Hendricks has had a challenging period in international cricket waiting for his turn to play for the national side. But the South African made the opportunity count with a fine 85 against England, while coming in as a last-minute replacement for captain Temba Bavuma, who missed the match with an illness. Hendricks, who made a debut ODI hundred in 2018, added 121 runs for the second wicket with Rassie van der Dussen, said he was not even expecting to play against England.

Afghanistan coach Trott hopeful of win against under-pressure Pakistan

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Head coach Jonathan Trott is hopeful Afghanistan can keep their World Cup campaign alive by pulling off a win against an under-pressure Pakistan, having come agonisingly close to defeating them earlier this year. The 42-year-old added that the passionate rivalry between the two teams, who are desperate to win, would make it an enthralling contest here on

Monday. "I think for them (Afghans), it's a rivalry that excites them. It's a rivalry that sometimes in the past has been very passionate," Trott said at the pre-match press conference on Sunday. "But I'm sure we'll see an exciting game tomorrow. It's just the nature of the rivalry. And both teams respect each other but are very desperate to win," he added. Pakistan had defeated Afghanistan 3-0 in a three-match ODI series in August with

Babar Azam and Co. Eking out a narrow one-wicket win in the second match. "We've had an ODI series against them recently where we should have won a few games, (but) we didn't. So hopefully, we can put that right tomorrow." Afghanistan play their second game at the Chepauk, the Hashmatullah Shahidi-led side fell to 149-run loss to New Zealand at the same venue on Wednesday. "The pitch I'm not sure. Chennai



is normally a good wicket. So, everybody's got to put in a good team performance if we want to beat the likes of a strong side like Pakistan." In the game against New Zealand, the Afghan spinners failed to make an impact. "With spinners, there are only two or three of them playing a game. And, it's the other eight as well that have to play the game, so that's important," Trott replied to a query from PTI. "It's everybody's job. It's not just

the spinners' job to win games. There are batters who've got to put runs on the board or chase down a total. Yes, the spinners are important and getting our selection is key for the fixture, but it's a team effort. There's no reliance on just spinners." Afghanistan are at the bottom of the points table, having lost three of the four fixtures they have played. Their only victory came against defending champion England. The game against Pakistan is a

must-win of sorts for Afghanistan if they want to keep their fate in their own hands. A loss could mean they will have to rely on favourable results to stay in the semi-final race. "Every game is a must-win game. This is a World Cup, and every game is important. So, I don't see the other matches just as more important as this," said Trott. Pakistan is headed into the match having suffered back-

to-back losses against hosts India and Australia. Trott asserted that his side would aim to exploit this situation against an under-pressure Pakistani side. "We always look to put up the opposition under pressure straight away, so we'll be looking to do that tomorrow, obviously. There's a lot of other things that come into the game with regards to the rivalry and the history of and the passion of everything."