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DIATRIBE IS UNCALLED FOR

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AUSTRALIA, CHINA OPEN FIRST
HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE IN 3 YEARS

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MILLETS TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

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Modi stresses ASEAN's centrality in Asia-Pacific

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/
AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/
JAKARTA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday stressed the need for building a rules-based post-Covid world order and said the progress of a free and open Indo-Pacific and elevating the voice of the Global South is in the common interest of all.

He made these assertions in his address at the annual Association of South East Nations (ASEAN)-India summit in Jakarta and described the 10-nation ASEAN grouping as the epicentre of growth as the region plays a crucial role in global development.

The Prime Minister presented a 12-point proposal for strengthening India-ASEAN cooperation in areas like digital transformation, trade and economic engagement while addressing contemporary challenges like terrorism and deepening the strategic partnership. He also announced a decision to open an Indian embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste at the summit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Modi said the ASEAN holds a prominent place in India's Indo-Pacific initiative and that New Delhi is committed to working "shoulder to shoulder" with it.

The grouping is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dia-

logue partners. "The 21st century is Asia's century. It is our century. For this, it is necessary to build a rule-based post-Covid world order and efforts for all for human welfare," the Prime Minister, co-chairing the summit, said. "The progress of free and open Indo-Pacific and elevating the voice of the Global South is in the common interest of all," he said.

Modi also reaffirmed that ASEAN is the central pillar of India's Act East Policy and it fully supports ASEAN centrality and its outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

"Our history and geography connect India and ASEAN. Along with shared values, regional unity, peace, prosperity, and a shared belief in a multipolar world also binds us together," he said, adding the grouping holds a "prominent place" in India's Indo-Pacific initiative.

It was the first summit between the two sides since the elevation of their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership last year.

"Today, even in an environment of global uncertainties, there is continuous progress in every field in our mutual cooperation. This is a testament to the strength and resilience of our relationship," he said.

In his opening remarks, Modi said: "ASEAN matters because here everyone's voice is heard, and ASEAN is the epicentre of growth because the ASEAN region plays a crucial role in global development."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim as US Vice President Kamala Harris looks on, on the sidelines of the 20th ASEAN-India Summit, in Jakarta, on Thursday

"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — one earth, one family, one future — this sentiment is also the theme of India's G-20 Presidency," Modi noted.

ASEAN-India dialogue relations started with the establishment of a sectoral partner-

ship in 1992. This graduated to a full dialogue partnership in December 1995 and a summit-level partnership in 2002. The ties were elevated to a strategic partnership in 2012.

The 10 member countries

of ASEAN are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The ties between India and ASEAN have been on a significant upswing in the last few

years with the focus being on boosting cooperation in the areas of trade and investment as well as security and defence.

Two joint statements — one on Maritime Cooperation, and the other on Food Security — were adopted at the summit,

the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

At the summit, Prime Minister Modi held extensive discussions with ASEAN partners on further strengthening of ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and charting its future course, it said.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed ASEAN's centrality in the Indo-Pacific region and highlighted the synergies between India's Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative and ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

He also emphasised the need to complete the review of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement in a time-bound manner.

The Prime Minister presented a 12-point proposal for strengthening India-ASEAN cooperation covering connectivity, digital transformation, trade and economic engagement, addressing contemporary challenges, people-to-people contacts and deepening strategic engagement.

Under the 12-point proposal, the prime minister called for a collective fight against terrorism, terror financing and cyber-disinformation.

He called for collectively raising issues being faced by Global South in multilateral fora, the statement said. The Prime Minister invited ASEAN countries to join the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine being established by World Health Organisation in India and called for working together on Mission LiFE, an

India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and preserve the environment.

In addition to India and ASEAN Leaders, Timor-Leste participated in the Summit as an observer. In view of strengthening the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the meeting reviewed the progress made under ASEAN-India dialogue relations and welcomed the adoption of the Annex to the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2021-2025), ASEAN statement said.

Reiterating both sides' shared vision for a peaceful, stable, prosperous, rules-based, open and inclusive region, the Leaders of ASEAN and India also adopted the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Maritime Cooperation, it said.

Modi's proposal came days after a number of ASEAN member countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines reacted sharply to China's territorial claim over the South China Sea in its latest edition of the "Standard Map of China". India had also rejected China's new map which showed Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin as Chinese territories.

Modi also attended the 18th East Asia Summit in Jakarta. In his address, Modi reiterated the importance of the EAS mechanism and reaffirmed India's support to further strengthen it.

Beast to secure Biden's G20 tour

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

US President Joe Biden is arriving to take part in the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi on Friday and will be driven around India in the "Beast", an armoured limousine maintained by the US Secret Service.

Biden will be having his own security mechanism in place which includes world's most expensive cars, advanced weapons, bomb detectors, a control room and a parallel communication system.

Apart from the Air Force One and helicopters for air travel, Biden will have a long-range of vehicles, including the Beast for the ground movement during the summit. The armoured limousine includes military-grade armour, bullet-proof windows (obviously), and a tear gas dispenser. It is transported by Air Force One to wherever the US President travels. The chauffeur is specially trained by the US Secret Service. The Beast arrived in India ahead of Biden's visit.

The vehicle's armour is composed of aluminium, ceramic and steel and capable of protecting the passengers even in case of chemical warfare. It also carries its own supply of oxygen in case of chemical or biological attack. It has 5-inch-thick doors at the front and 8-inch-thick doors in



the rear. It has five layers of glass and polycarbonate so that it can withstand a bomb blast.

Some of the enhanced features include tear gas dispenser, shotgun, smoke screen, two bags of blood matching the president, a communication device, GPS and night vision. Despite being a limousine, the Beast can seat seven people and is packed with several features that are not available in other cars. It weighs around 2,000 pounds.

The latest model, debuted in 2018, was made by General Motors and cost over \$1.5 million. The Beast first appeared in 2001 with the arrival of President George W Bush.

The Secret Service uses a C-17 Globemaster aircraft to transport the Beast, another limo, and a heavily armoured Chevrolet Suburban communications vehicle, anytime the POTUS travels. The Suburban communications vehicle is called the Roadrunner which is said to house a communications office linked to a military satellite.

To ensure President Biden's security during the G20

Summit, highly trained officers between the ages of 21 and 28 have been assigned to his proximity team. These officers will carry pistols and a range of weapons, including M4 and Glock, along with bullet-resistant sheets.

The US has proposed to bring 75-80 of its own vehicles for the G20 Summit, but after discussions with the Indian Government, they have settled on 60 vehicles.

Security preparations for President Biden have been underway for several weeks, with a team of security officers arriving in India and coordinating with the US Embassy in Delhi.

A multi-layer security has been arranged for Biden and other Heads of State visit to Delhi. While the outermost layer would have paramilitary force personnel, the second layer would have commandos from India's SPG and the innermost circle would have Secret Service agents.

Biden and other US delegates will stay at ITC Maurya Sheraton hotel. The staff will undergo background checks, and special access cards will be given to those who will visit the 14th floor, where Joe Biden will stay. The special lift will be installed to reach the floor. About 400 rooms of this hotel have been booked.



Govindas take part in 'Dahi Handi' celebrations on the occasion of Janmashanti, in Mumbai on Thursday

Aditya takes selfie, unveils spectacular Earth & Moon

PTI ■ BENGALURU

ISRO on Thursday released a "selfie" and images of the Earth and the Moon — the first of the images taken by the camera on-board Aditya-L1 solar mission spacecraft, which on reaching its intended orbit would begin sending as many as 1,440 images a day to the ground station for analysis.

"Aditya-L1, destined for the Sun-Earth L1 point, takes a selfie and images of the Earth and the Moon," the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency said on social media platform X.

The images show VELC (Visible Emission Line Coronagraph) and SUIT (Solar Ultraviolet Imager) instruments as seen by the camera on-board Aditya-L1 on September 4, 2023. ISRO also shared images of the Earth and Moon as seen by the camera. VELC, the primary payload of Aditya-L1, was built by Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA).

Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, had developed the SUIT payload. VELC is an internally occulted coronagraph, with 40 different optical elements (mirrors, gratings, etc) inside it that are aligned precisely. The atmosphere of the Sun, the Corona, is what we see during a total solar eclipse.

A coronagraph like the VELC is an instrument that cuts out the light from the disk of the Sun, and can thus image the much fainter corona at all times, IIA officials say.

VELC will be sending 1,440 images



per day to the ground station for analysis on reaching the intended orbit, according to them. VELC, "the largest and technically most challenging" payload on Aditya-L1, was integrated, tested, and calibrated at the IIA's CREST (Centre for Research and Education in Science Technology) campus in Hoskote near here with substantial collaboration with ISRO.

ISRO successfully launched the Aditya-L1 using its trusted PSLV-C57 rocket on September 2. The Aditya-L1 spacecraft carries a total of seven different payloads to study the Sun, four of which will observe the light from the Sun and the remaining three will measure in situ parameters of the plasma and magnetic fields. Aditya-L1 will be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrangian Point 1 (L1), which is 1.5 million km from Earth in the direction of the Sun.

It will revolve around the Sun with the same relative position and hence can see the Sun continuously.

G20 dinner on India's fusion elegance silverware

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

To make the breakfast table, lunch, and dining tables special for the G20, the heads of State and other world leaders will be served on silver and gold-plated utensils, showcasing glimpses of India's rich culture and heritage.

According to Jaipur-based metalware firm IRIS, from high tea for breakfast in the morning to different style dishes for lunch and beautiful plates for dinner, baskets for bread and beautiful fruit baskets were prepared. Around 15,000 silverware have been crafted by over 200 artisans in around 50,000 man-hours.

This crockery has reached all the big hotels where foreign guests will stay so that all the guests will be served food in

this silver crockery. Many artisans have worked hard day and night to create special utensils based on the theme "Fusion Elegance" of India's "Unity in Diversity".

Items are made with various themes like peacock, banana half leaf among others. Designers Rajeev Pabuwal and Laksh Pabuwal of IRIS, who held a special preview of G20 tableware and decor at the India Habitat Centre, said that it was commissioned by various luxury hotels to design made-to-order tableware and silverware which will be used by foreign guests while staying at hotels and for lavish dinners and luncheons, which will be hosted for them.

Most tableware have steel or brass base or a mix of both with an elegant coating of sil-



ver, while some wares like plates that will carry glasses to be used for serving welcome

drinks have gold plating. Laksh Pabuwal, owner of IRIS said. The firm is run by him and his

father Rajeev Pabuwal. Iris Jaipur said 50,000 man-hours have been spent on craft-

ing these on which craftsmen from Jaipur, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and other parts of the country worked.

"Designs are characterised by meticulous detailing, beaded borders, and a fusion of semi-machined hand craftsmanship with contemporary casting techniques. The electroplated silver finish adds a touch of sophistication, aligning seamlessly with the grandeur of the event," said Rajeev Pabuwal.

Meticulously curated tableware merchandise bridges tradition and modern aesthetics, becoming the crown jewel of the G20 Summit, said the company. The tableware and silverware designs are a nod to India's rich heritage and its global prominence, Pabuwal said.

"The tableware and silver-

ware depict the glorious cultural heritage of India, motifs of flowers, peacock, our national animal grace the plates, and other items. And, the silverware will dazzle the Heads of State with their cultural sparkle, and they will see it and exclaim wow," he said.

"This is all silver-plated and silver is suppose to be more hygienic and were used by the Maharajas in the ancient times. India is very well with the culture even in the best of the best places of the world, these silver plating stuffs have been used. It's an alloy made up of copper and different material," Pabuwal said.

The tableware and silverware designs reflect India's rich heritage and global prominence, according to the manufacturers.

"Earlier, we used to import goods from other countries but all these silverware which you can see has been designed and made in India itself. It is a really good effort to promote 'Make in India' and 'Made in India'. We have created a fusion of semi-machined hand craftsmanship with contemporary casting techniques," he added.

Pabuwal said special silverware has been crafted for keeping garland and other items which will be used for welcoming VIP guests.

"There is a peacock as you can see here, motifs of flowers, peacock, our national animal grace the plates and especially banana leaves thali. Everything is highly silver-plated," said Pabuwal, adding he has created silverware for various key events in the past as well.

G20 SUMMIT

NEW DELHI, INDIA
8-10 SEPTEMBER

2023

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Stalin defends son Udhayanidhi's 'Sanatan dharma' remark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI/NEW DELHI

On a day when former Union Minister and a senior DMK leader A Raja reportedly said Sanatan Dharma should be compared to diseases such as AIDS and leprosy that have a social stigma attached to them, which is similar to the remarks by his party colleague Tamil Nadu Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, the chief minister M K Stalin came out in defence of his son Udhayanidhi saying some used the Sanatana doctrine to perpetuate oppression against women.

Stalin accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using the issue as a diversion-

ary tactic. A day earlier Modi said parties and leaders behind such statements should be exposed and the truth brought before people.

The chief minister cited media reports quoting Modi's call for a proper response to Udhayanidhi Stalin's remarks. He added this was disheartening.

Congress, which is in coalition in the DMK government and also both major stakeholders in the newly formed Opposition bloc called INDIA, said it did not agree with the remarks of DMK leaders and asserted the party believed in "sarvadharmasambhav" (equal respect to all religions).

The opposition party also asserted that every single mem-

ber of the INDIA alliance has immense respect for all faiths, communities and beliefs. Other parties like Trinamool Congress and AAP has already condemned the statement by Stalin junior.

Under intense attack from the BJP, Udhayanidhi Stalin too mounted an offensive on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as he accused the saffron party leaders of "twisting" his statements made at conference last week.

The DMK Youth Wing chief, who is the state minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, vowed to face all cases in this connection legally.

The chief minister said Tamil Nadu's ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam the



(DMK) provided the women what Sanatan denied them.

He hit out at BJP and said it will find itself sinking in quicksand if it believes it can tarnish DMK's reputation over Udhayanidhi Stalin's comments that "Sanatana Dharma should

be eradicated".

M K Stalin said the formation of the Opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), which includes DMK, seems to have rattled Modi.

He said contrary to what

the BJP has alleged, his son never called for genocide. He added that Udhayanidhi Stalin spoke up against oppressive ideologies. The chief minister wondered whether Modi, who has access to all the resources to verify any claim or report, is unaware of the lies spread about Udhayanidhi Stalin or if he was doing it anyway knowingly.

The father son duo said DMK respects all religions that teach all lives are born equal. "But without an iota of understanding about any of these, Thiru Modi and Co are solely dependent on such slanders to face the Parliamentary elections. On the one hand, I can only feel sorry for them. For the last 9 years, Modi has been

doing nothing. Occasionally he demonises money, builds wall to hide huts, builds new Parliament building, erects a Sengol (scepter) there, plays around by changing the name of the country, standing at border and making the white flag work," Udaynidhi lashed out. Asked about comments by leaders of ally DMK, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said, "The Congress has always believed in 'sarvadharmasambhav' wherein every religion, every faith has its space. No one can treat any particular faith as less than another faith."

"Neither the Constitution allows this nor the Indian National Congress believes in any of these comments," Khera

said during a press conference at the AICC headquarters.

Pressed further as to why the Congress had not condemned the remarks, Khera said, "I just said we do not agree with such comments."

Asked if the Congress would raise this with its ally DMK, Khera said there is no need to raise these issues because "we know for a fact that each one of our constituents also respects every religion".

"Now if you want to twist anybody's remarks, they are free to do so. If it suits the PM let him twist those remarks but every single member of the INDIA alliance has immense respect for all faiths, communities, beliefs and religions," he said.

Assets worth \$1.8 bn seized from economic offenders in last four years: Jitendra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Thursday said assets worth over USD 1.8 billion worth assets have been recovered from economic offenders and fugitives in the last about four years after the Centre enacted the Economic Offenders Act.

Likewise, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) has helped in attaching the assets of offenders worth more than USD 12 billion since 2014.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology, Minister of State of PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Singh said there has been a "quantum jump" in extradition of criminals and fugitives in recent years especially after India hosted the 90th Interpol General Assembly in October 2022, Singh said while inaugurating the first ever International Day of Police Cooperation and the Investiture Ceremony at the CBI headquarters here.

"During the UPA period between 2005 and 2013 on an average around 4 criminals/fugitives returned to India, while the number jumped to 10 after Prime Minister Modi came to power in 2014. This year so far 19 criminals/fugitives have returned to India, in the previous years, on an average around 10 criminals/fugitives have returned to India with 27 returning in 2022 and 18 in 2021, the minister said.

Singh underscored that the marked increase in the return of criminals/fugitives to India is the result of enhanced cooperation policing between India and other countries following the 90th Interpol General Assembly.

Speaking about the enactment of the Economic Offenders Act in 2018, Singh said the Modi Government is aggressively pursuing economic offenders.

"It is unique providential co-incidence that G20 Summit is happening tomorrow and the



Ministry of Personnel has already deliberated the Anti-Corruption Working Group Meets in Gurugram, Rishikesh and Kolkata and there is forward movement in areas like action-oriented High-Level Principles on three priority areas, namely, law enforcement cooperation through information sharing, strengthening asset recovery mechanisms, and enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of anti-corruption authorities," he said.

Singh noted that the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 2022 adopted a historic resolution to designate September 7 as the International Day of Police Cooperation to be observed from 2023.

The resolution emphasizes 'the need to strengthen international cooperation at the global, regional and sub-regional levels in various areas related to preventing and combating transnational crime, in particular transnational organized crime, and preventing and countering terrorism.' The selected date for annual observance on September 7, coincides with the date when INTERPOL's predecessor the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) was created in 1923, he noted.

The Minister highlighted that 2023 is the Diamond Jubilee Year of CBI and in its 60 years of existence, CBI has emerged as India's premier anti-corruption agency and internally evolved as a capable organization to handle investigations ranging from bribery and corruption, sensational and complicated cases handed over by States and Constitutional Courts, economic offences, and banking frauds.

Emulsifiers may be associated with increased risk of CVD: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Widely used in industrially processed foods such as cakes and desserts to improve texture and extend shelf-life, emulsifiers may be associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), suggests a study published by The BMJ.

Given that these food additives are used ubiquitously in thousands of widely consumed ultra-processed food products, these findings have important public health implications, say the researchers.

Emulsifiers are often added

to processed and packaged foods such as pastries, cakes, ice cream, desserts, chocolate, bread, margarine and ready meals, to enhance their appearance, taste, texture and shelf life. They include celluloses, mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids, modified starches, lecithins, carrageenans (derived from red seaweed; used to thicken foods), phosphates, gums and pectins.

As with all food additives, the safety of emulsifiers is regularly assessed based on the available scientific evidence, yet some recent research suggests that emulsifiers can disrupt gut bacteria and increase



inflammation, leading to potentially increased susceptibility to cardiovascular problems. To explore this further, researchers in France set out to assess the associations between exposure to emulsifiers and risk of cardiovascular disease,

including coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease - conditions affecting blood flow and blood vessels in the heart and brain.

Their findings are based on 95,442 French adults (average age 43 years; 79% women) with no history of heart disease who were taking part in the NutriNet-Santé cohort study between 2009 and 2021.

During the first two years of follow-up, participants completed at least three (and up to 21) 24-hour online dietary records. Each food and beverage item consumed was then matched at the brand level against three databases to identify the presence and the dose of any food additive.

Laboratory tests were also performed to provide quantitative data. Participants were also asked to report any major CVD event, such as a heart

attack or stroke, which were validated by an expert committee after reviewing the participants' medical records.

After an average follow-up of 7 years, higher intake of total celluloses, cellulose and carboxymethylcellulose were found to be positively associated with higher risks of CVD and specifically coronary heart disease.

The authors stressed that these results need replication in other large scale studies, but say they could "contribute to the re-evaluation of regulations around food additive usage in the food industry to protect consumers."

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya signs MoU with Airbus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a historic moment, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya on Thursday signed MoU with Airbus to strengthen and provide more speed to the aviation industry and other sectors of the transportation industry.

This industry academic partnership will enable core development and core delivery of sector relevant skilling courses and programmes for regular students and working professionals, joint research and industry experiences for faculty, internships and placement for students and scholarship programmes.

The MoU was signed by Prof. Manoj Choudhury, Vice Chancellor, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya and Remi Maillard, President & Managing Director Airbus, India & South Asia in presence of Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Railways, Communications and



Electronics & Information Technology, Jaya Varma Sinha, Chairperson & Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board and other Railway Board Members.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashwini Vaishnav, said that this partnership will create a new record in the transportation and logistics sector which will change the working culture in India.

This MoU is a step towards Industry - Academics partnership which

is envisioned in the National Education Policy, he added.

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, a vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is India's first University exclusively focused on transport-related education, multidisciplinary research and training.

Airbus and Tata had recently announced a partnership to design, innovate, make, manufacture and develop in India C295 aircraft facility at Vadodra (Gujarat).



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi at Round table with MEPs in the European Parliament co-hosted by MEP Alviina Almetza (Greens, shadow Rapporteur on EU-India Relationship) and MEP Pierre Larrourou (Progressive Alliance, portfolios within the Parliament- Parliamentary Budget, Climate/Fossil Fuel phasing out, Employment generation etc). Telecom expert, Sam Pitroda is accompanying the Lok Sabha MP Pioneer photo

G20: Taking measures to ensure efficient delivery of civic services: NDMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Thursday said that it is taking measures to ensure the efficient delivery of civic services and coordination with various agencies during the G-20 Summit.

NDMC Vice Chairman Satish Upadhyay said that in order to enhance accessibility and responsiveness, NDMC has introduced three dedicated telephone numbers for its NDMC Disaster Management Centre located at Humayun Road, which will serve as the G20 Control Room.

Upadhyay informed that, in an effort to facilitate the smooth operation of the G20 Summit, Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDM), District Magistrates (DM), and Heads of Departments (HODs) will be accompanied by Quick Response Teams (QRT) from various departments, including MCD, PWD, Department of Health, Directorate of Fire Services, Delhi Disaster Management Authority (GNCTD), Transport Department (GNCTD), IGL, and NDMC. They will convene at the NDMC Disaster Management Centre for the G20 Control Room, where they will promptly address department-

specific complaints without delays.

He said that these three dedicated contact numbers are exclusively for officers and employees on duty at the NDMC Disaster Management Centre for the G20 Control Room and are not intended for general public complaints. Shri Upadhyay highlighted that the introduction of these contact numbers underscores NDMC's commitment to providing timely assistance and support while facilitating effective collaboration with multiple agencies involved in the G20 Summit.

These dedicated contact numbers have been established to address a wide range of needs and inquiries, including civic services, emergencies, and concerns arising during the G20 Summit.

In addition to establishing dedicated contact numbers, NDMC had already deployed a dedicated Quick Response Team (QRT) consisting of 11 Heads of Departments (HoDs) and 12 Departmental Incharges. This team will operate round-the-clock in four shifts, ensuring the continuous availability of key personnel responsible for overseeing NDMC's civic services during the G-20 Summit.

Gurugram administration advises institutions to allow staff to WFH

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM/NOIDA/GHAZIABAD

With the national capital busy hosting the G20 Summit, the Gurugram administration has advised all corporate offices and private institutions to allow employees to work from home in the wake of traffic restrictions and resulting congestion while the Noida Police has already announced traffic diversions, which will come into effect on Thursday, restricting the movement of heavy and certain commercial vehicles into Delhi. These vehicles will be rerouted through the peripheral expressways. The diversions will come into effect at 5 pm on Thursday and remain in place till 11.59 pm on Sunday, the traffic police said.

An advisory by the District Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner of Gurugram, Nishant Kumar Yadav, read: "Whereas, in wake of G-20 Summit in Delhi traffic will be regulated on NH-48 on September 8, 2023, which might result in occasional traffic congestion on the roads of Gurugram city. Accordingly, there is a need to exercise caution and minimise travel so that traffic congestion can be avoided. In



consideration of the aforementioned facts, all corporate offices and private institutions in the district are advised to guide their employees to Work from Home tomorrow i.e. on 8th September 2023."

Gurgaon DCP (Traffic) Virender Vij issued directions for passengers travelling to Delhi airport on September 8, 9, and 10. "Passengers should note that road journeys towards IGI Airport will be affected from 12 am on September 8 and to 12 am on September 10.

In case passengers travelling to the airport opt for a road journey, they are advised to make travel plans with sufficient time at hand to

take the following routes," he had said. Additional Director General of Uttar Pradesh Police (Director of Traffic and Road Safety) BD Paulson, during a visit to Noida, chaired a meeting with Additional Commissioner of Police (Headquarters, Gautam Buddha Nagar) Babloo Kumar and Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Anil Kumar Yadav. All traffic assistants commissioner of police, inspectors and sub-inspectors also attended the meeting.

"During the review, the ADG (Paulson) directed us to ensure full cooperation to the Delhi Police in making the

G20 programmes hassle free and successful. He particularly laid focus on ensuring strict vigil at Noida's borders with the national capital and enforcement of diversions," Yadav told media persons.

"We are coordinating with the Delhi Police. I am in regular touch with my counterparts in Delhi. We are extending full cooperation and support. We have also written to our neighbouring districts such as Ghaziabad and Haryana's Palwal and Faridabad for traffic-related coordination," he added.

Yadav said the Noida Traffic Police is already issued an advisory, informing commuters and carriers about the diversions and reroutes that will come into effect on Thursday.

In Ghaziabad, around 1000 police personnel have been deployed for the security of delegates arriving for the G20 Summit at the Hindon Airport.

Personnel will also be deployed on rooftops of high-rise buildings adjoining the airport and residents of nearby villages have been asked to avoid terraces during the movement of delegates, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Trans Hindon) Shubham Patel said.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lcknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

(A)

- 15/S.M.-Jal-III/E.T./2023-24, Village Development & Maintenance (Replacement of Old & Choked Water Lines in Village-Hoshiyarpur) Noida. Cost Rs. 76.93 Lacs
- 16/S.M.-Jal-III/E.T./2023-24, D/o Village (P/Laying Water & Sewer Line in Khashra No.-85 Village-Nayagaon, Noida. Cost Rs. 56.18 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date:- 21.09.2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date:- 22.09.2023 at 11.00 AM.

(B)

- 04/S.M.(JAL)-I/E.T./2023-24, Strengthening of W/s (Maintenance of Office, Plumbing Work & Other Miscellaneous Work in Division Jal-I Compound, Sector-5) Noida. Cost Rs. 82.19 Lacs
- 02/S.M.-Jal-III/E.T./2023-24, Strengthening of W/s (P/F Non Clog Water Pump and Pannel at Underpass Sector-71) Noida. Cost Rs. 46.77 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date:- 14.09.2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date:- 15.09.2023 at 11.00 AM. Dy. General Manager (Jal) NOIDA

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G20 SUMMIT

NEW DELHI, INDIA
8-10 SEPTEMBER

2023

भारत 2023 INDIA

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ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE



(Left to right) The newly-built International Exhibition Convention Centre at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Thursday remains lit up. Flyovers decked-up with paintings and welcome signs with G20 logo ready to greet world leaders ahead of the Summit in New Delhi on Thursday.

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

DELHI READY TO HOST G20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After months of preparation, excitement and security arrangements are all set to pay off as Delhi is all decked up to welcome the delegates for the G20 Summit that will be held from September 8-10. Unprecedented security arrangements have been put in place in the national Capital. To ensure their security and smooth movement, special restrictions have been put into place for people and vehicles in the New Delhi area.

The entire capital is open, apart from Pragati Maidan, areas of Lutyen's Delhi which house stately bungalows, luxury hotels and government buildings will be under the controlled zone.

As the Delhi is ready to host the G 20 summit, the Bharat Mandapam at Pragati Maidan - the main venue of this gala event, has been illuminated and decorated with plants, flowers and other festive items.

Over 100 sculptures and 150 fountains, each with a unique design, have been installed to give Delhi a picturesque and modern look.

Graffiti featuring legendary figures like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Ahilyabai Holkar, Ahoms, Adi Shankaracharya, Maharana



Security personnel stand guard near Pragati Maidan, ahead of the G20 Summit, to be held from September 8-10, in New Delhi on Thursday

Pratap, and Rajaraja Chola now adorn railway bridges, adding a touch of history and culture to the cityscape. A towering statue of 'Nataraja', believed to be the world's tallest, installed at the venue of the G20 Summit, has been made using an ancient casting technique.

The statue, which is 28-foot tall including the pedestal, was made using the ancient lost-wax technique of metal casting that was used for making the famed Chola bronzes. Sculptures made of waste and scrap materials are being displayed across parks and roundabouts across the city ahead of

the G20 Summit. The New Delhi area, will be put under a tight security ring from Friday morning and there will be a slew of traffic restrictions in place. The movement of vehicles will be regulated in the New Delhi district as the area will be considered as Controlled Zone-I from 5 am on Friday till 11.59 pm on Sunday due to the G20 summit.

However, movement of ambulances will be allowed and local residents of the area and tourists accommodated there will be permitted to move after presenting proper identification papers, police said. They further stated that

all online delivery services, except medicines, will be barred in the New Delhi district during the G20 Summit.

Delhi Traffic Police has listed out restrictions on the movement of goods vehicles, buses, auto-rickshaws and taxis and has urged people to make maximum use of metro services in view of regulated movement of traffic.

Police have also urged people not to visit India Gate and Kartavya Path for activities such as walking, cycling and picnicking in view of the G20 Summit. The police have also advised people to use the navigation app 'MapmyIndia' to

reach their destinations.

The entire area of New Delhi will be considered as "Controlled Zone-I" from 5 am on September 8 till 11.59 pm on September 10. The traffic police has designated the entire area inside Ring Road (Mahatma Gandhi Marg) as "Regulated Zone" from 5 am on September 8 to 11.59 pm on September 10.

This means that only bonafide residents, authorised vehicles, emergency vehicles and vehicles of passengers travelling to the airport, Old Delhi and New Delhi Railway Stations will be allowed to ply on the road network beyond Ring Road towards New Delhi district.

No three-seater rickshaws (TSRs) and taxis will be allowed to enter or run in the area from 5am on Saturday to 11.59pm on Sunday. Vehicles dealing with housekeeping, catering, waste management, etc. For hotels, hospitals and other important installations in New Delhi district will also be allowed after verification.

Nearly 16 roads and junctions will be treated as "Controlled Zone II" from 12 noon till 2 pm on Sunday. The Controlled Zone II roads and junctions include W-Point, A-Point, DDU Marg, Vikas Marg (till Noida Link Road-Pusta Road), Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Delhi Gate etc.

LG makes final inspection before G20 Summit starts

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With hours to go before the G20 summit commences, Delhi Lt Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday assured that the national Capital is set to receive foreign dignitaries. He also conducted the final round of inspection to take stock of the security, cleaning, beautification preparedness and other related works.

The LG took a mini bus on his inspection tour of the City and was accompanied by senior officers including Chief Secretary, NDMC, Chairperson, MCD Commissioner, VC, DDA, Pr. Secretary, Transport, Pr. Secretary, PWD, Pr. Secretary, Home, Pr. Secretary, E&E, among others, the Raj Niwas said. From issuing instructions to replacing dried-up foliage to ensuring that the route taken by delegates from the airport towards the city was dust-free, Saxena's visit included areas from the ITPO and Raj Ghat to the Indira Gandhi International Airport and Palam airport apart from Lutyens' Delhi.

As part of his inspection, Saxena also visited the state-of-art developed Control Room of the Delhi Police set up at its headquarter to keep hawk eyes



of each nook and corner of the city. Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora briefed Saxena about the security preparedness and details of the Control Room where live visuals captured by more than 5,000 CCTVs installed in different parts of the city, will be received. Two teams comprising 25 security personnel will be monitoring in different shifts, the digital information being beamed into the Control Room, round the clock.

The Control Room is getting district wise visuals and a special Command Room has been set up for 30 senior police officials to monitor the minutest of developments in the City and its roads. Besides the Police Control Room, the LG also undertook the inspection of the Control Room of the NDMC's Disaster Management Cell which is manned by senior officers and around 30 person-

nel who are working round the clock to immediately address complaints like water leakage, damage of pavements, replacement of damaged branches and flower pots.

In his final round of visit following 59 inspection visits spread over different days during the last 65 days, Saxena minutely inspected the areas around Raj Ghat, Dilli Gate, ITPO - the venue of Summit, Bhairon Marg, Shershah Road - Delhi High Court, India Gate, Akbar Road, Lok Kalyan Marg, round about near Samrat and Ashoka Hotel, Kautaliya Marg, Sardar Patel Marg, Dhaura Kuan Bust Stop and Metro Station, Vighanharta Sculpture, T3 crossing of Dwarka, Northern Access Road towards Aero City, Aero City Hotels, T3 VIP lounge, Ulan Battar Marg and the inside of Air Force Station, Technical Area Palam.

78 instrumentalists set to perform for world leaders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrating the rich tapestry of the country's musical heritage, an ensemble of virtuoso instrumentalists bringing different styles of classical and contemporary music will perform for world leaders attending the G20 Summit here, according to an official brochure of the programme.

The performance 'Bharat Vadya Darshanam' - Musical Journey of India - by the 'Gaandharva Aatodyam' group will be showcased during the ceremonial dinner that will be hosted by President Droupadi Murmu in the honour of G20 leaders on September 9, officials said.

It will feature Indian classical musical instruments such as santoor, sarangi, jal tarang and shehnai, among others, has been conceptualised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, according to the brochure. The ensemble is a "unique and



groundbreaking musical presentation, a harmonious journey of Bharat through music," reads the concept note in the brochure. Some of the prominent styles that will be depicted include the Hindustani, Carnatic folk and contemporary music, it says.

"This journey will take us through all parts of India through their representative music. Our co-traveller will be the 'Gaandharva Aatodyam' with an ensemble of 78 traditional instrumentalists from all over the country," the official brochure reads. "This pioneering programme celebrates

the rich tapestry of Bharat's musical heritage, bringing together virtuoso instrumentalists who infuse their unique styles into a mesmerising symphony of sounds.

With this innovative blend, the ensemble not only showcases the cultural depth of India but also creates an auditory experience that transcends regional boundaries," it says. The performance will begin with compositions of Vilambit Laya (slow tempo), followed by Madhya Laya (medium fast tempo), ending with few scores in Druta Laya (fast tempo), officials said.

The ensemble includes 34 Hindustani musical instruments, 18 Carnatic musical instruments and 26 folk musical instruments from across India.

The 78 artistes include 11 children, 13 women, six differently-abled (divyang) artistes, 26 young men and 22 professionals, the brochure says.

Automatic weather station near Pragati Maidan installed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has installed an additional automatic weather station near Pragati Maidan - the G20 Summit venue - to provide specialised and real-time weather forecasts in view of the high-level event. The weather agency round-the-clock weather monitoring for the summit will begin on Thursday morning.

As per the latest bulletin, weather in the national capital is likely to remain pleasant with cloudy sky accompanied with strong winds, leading to a drop in temperature in next 2-3 days. The weather agency will also release special weather bulletin to give frequent updates from Thursday and these will be accessible through a dedicated webpage on the

IMD website at mausam.Imd.Gov.In/g20. The webpage will provide real-time data from the newly deployed automatic weather station (AWS) near the G20 Summit venue, offering precise information on air temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction and rainfall.

The data will be updated at 15-minute intervals, ensuring that users have the most accurate and up-to-date weather information at their fingertips, the IMD said.

Similar information will be available for nine other key locations across Delhi - the Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi railway station, Chandni Chowk, Akshardham Temple, Bahai/Lotus Temple, Qutab Minar, Red Fort/Rajghat, Delhi University and Lodhi Road (Lodhi Garden).

Chandni Chowk traders engage women translators for visitors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Traders in Chandni Chowk have engaged nearly 100 women entrepreneurs who will double up as translators fluent in English, French, Spanish and other languages to provide foreign visitors a seamless experience ahead of the G20 Summit.

The Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) has partnered with these women entrepreneurs, fashion designers, influencers, bloggers, salon and boutique owners who are fluent in languages such as English, French, Spanish and German to work as translators, its chairman Brijesh Goyal said.

These women will assist the traders of Chandani Chowk market in communicating with foreign visitors on September 8-10, he said. They will be engaged on voluntary basis, he said. These women entrepreneurs and businesswomen include Mohika Sawhney,



Emeli Munshi, Gauri Webster, Vandana Rao, Chhaya Singh, Neeru Sehgal and Shweta Rajpal. Goyal said that CTI has also sent a list of volunteers to the Ministry of External Affairs so that it can contact them to help traders of other markets as well as foreign delegates.

While many prominent markets of the city lying in the controlled zone of New Delhi will be closed during the G20 Summit, Chandni Chowk famed for its food and shopping experience as well proximity with historic monuments will serve as a big draw for the

visitors. According to shop owners, these measures will facilitate seamless communication with foreign visitors. "Our aim is to make Chandni Chowk, which is well known all over the country, famous in other countries also," Goyal said.

Shop owners expressed their enthusiasm regarding the summit and said such a programme had never happened before. "We are proud that the event will draw so many foreign visitors here and we welcome all of them to the Walled City," said a local trader.

DDA plants trees as part of 'cycle-walk' project

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The first leg of the Delhi Development Authority's 'cycle walk' project envisions planting thousands of indigenous trees and transplanting a few species within forests.

The project, a pro-ecology initiative, is part of the government's climate change resilience efforts to serve the twin purpose of strengthening forests and green cover and creating a safe dedicated walking and cycling track for citizens to "engage meaningfully with the



beautiful city forests and master plan greens of Delhi," the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) said in a statement. "Leg A of the 'cycle walk' project starting from Sangam Vihar to

the Malviya Nagar metro station imagines planting of thousands of indigenous trees and transplantation of a few trees within the forests," it said.

In Sangam Vihar, there is hardly any vegetation on the ground except some 'kikkar' trees. Through the 'cycle walk' project, indigenous trees will be planted along the tracks.

The DDA is adding approximately eight acres of new forest land to the city. The city's biomass and carbon sequestration capacity will get upgraded as a result of the pro-

ject, the DDA said. Indigenous trees being planted will also have many fruit trees such as 'gular' and 'pikhan' that offer a great habitat for birds to thrive.

Nearly 4,000 indigenous trees are being planted. Shrubs and ground covers that attract bees and butterflies are being introduced to strengthen the ecosystem, the DDA said. Cycling tracks currently exist in Sanjay Van and "no adverse effect on the ecology" has been observed over the years, it said.

Cops intensify patrolling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has intensified patrolling in sensitive areas across the national Capital. The city is under heightened security with the Delhi Police taking every possible step to keep a watch on every nook and corner ahead of the global summit.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi led the patrol on a bike, accompanied by approximately 45 police personnel. The police have tightened security in sensitive areas including



Jahangirpuri, Red Fort, Delhi University area, Adarsh Nagar, Model Town, and regions along the Outer Ring Road. In addition to these, the police have also enhanced patrolling around temples, mosques, gurdwaras, and churches. Amid all ongoing security arrangements, a video of a Delhi Police team patrolling Raj Ghat area on a tractor has emerged on social media.

In a video shared on the social media, three policemen can be seen patrolling on a tractor near the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial complex in Raj Ghat. While two officers sat in front, third policeman could be seen standing at back. Earlier in day, an anti-sabotage mock drill was conducted by the Indian Army ahead of the G20 Summit in national Capital.

India's G20 presidency people-driven movement, asserts Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Mega G 20 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted that India's presidency over it is a people-driven movement, aimed to bridge divides, dismantle barriers and build a world where unity prevails over discord and shared destiny eclipses isolation.

Penning an article for several newspapers, the Prime Minister said Indian presidency of G 20 has seen the biggest participation from the African countries.

"Our presidency has not only seen the largest-ever participation from African countries but has also pushed for the inclusion of the African Union as permanent member of the G20."

Modi said under Indian presidency G 20 has turned a people's movement and a world unifying effort.

"It has become a people-driven movement. Over 200 meetings will have been organised in 60 Indian cities across the length and breadth of our nation, hosting nearly 100,000 delegates from 125 countries by the end of our term. No presidency has ever encompassed such a vast and diverse geographical expanse," said the Prime Minister.

"As the G20 president, we had pledged to make the global table larger, ensuring that every voice is heard and every country contributes. I am positive that we have matched our pledge with actions and outcomes," Modi said in his article.

The Prime Minister said that the Voice of Global South Summit, which witnessed participation from 125 countries, was one of the foremost initiatives under India's presidency.

In the write-up, the prime minister said an interconnected world means interlinked challenges and noted great concern among many countries that the progress on SDGs (sustainable development goals) is off-track.

The G20 2023 action plan on accelerating progress on SDGs will spearhead the future direction of the G20 towards implementing them, he said.

In India, living in harmony with nature has been a norm since ancient times and it has been contributing its share towards climate action even in modern times, he said.



Modi, however, noted that many countries of the Global South are at various stages of development and asserted that climate action must be a complementary pursuit.

"Ambitions for climate action must be matched with actions on climate finance and transfer of technology," he said. "We believe there is a need to move away from a purely restrictive attitude of what should not be done, to a more constructive attitude focusing on what can be done to fight climate change."

In 2015, he said, the International Solar Alliance was launched and now, through the Global Biofuels Alliance, an India-led initiative,

the world will be helped in energy transitions in tune with the benefits of a circular economy.

He said democratising climate action is the best way to impart momentum to the movement.

Just as individuals make daily decisions based on their long-term health, they can make lifestyle decisions based on the impact on the planet's long-term health, he said.

"Just like Yoga became a global mass movement for wellness, we have also nudged the world with Lifestyles for Sustainable Environment (LiFE)," he added.

"Due to the impact of climate change, ensuring food and nutritional security will be crucial. Millets, or Shree Anna, can help with this while also

boosting climate-smart agriculture. In the International Year of Millets, we have taken millets to global palates," Modi said.

Noting that technology is transformative, he said it also needs to be made inclusive.

"In the past, the benefits of technological advancements have not benefited all sections of society equally. India, over the last few years, has shown how technology can be leveraged to narrow inequalities, rather than widen them," he added.

That India is the fastest-growing large economy is no accident as its simple, scalable and sustainable solutions have empowered the vulnerable and the marginalised to lead its development story, he said.

From space to sports, econ-

omy to entrepreneurship, Indian women have taken the lead in various sectors, he said.

He said, "They have shifted the narrative from the development of women to women-led development. Our G20 Presidency is working on bridging the gender digital divide, reducing labour force participation gaps and enabling a larger role for women in leadership and decision-making."

Modi said the G20 presidency is not merely a high-level diplomatic endeavour for India. "As the Mother of Democracy and a model of diversity, we opened the doors of this experience to the world," he said.

Today, accomplishing things at scale is a quality that is associated with India, and the G20 presidency is no exception, he said.

Committed to ensuring India hosts successful G20, says US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As President Joe Biden is set to hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 8 and attend the G20 Summit on September 9-10 in New Delhi, the US has said it is committed to ensuring that India hosts a successful G20 Summit.



The White House made this assertion ahead of President Biden's departure for New Delhi. India is hosting the annual G20 Summit in New Delhi on September 9 and 10. Biden, 80, will travel to New Delhi on Thursday to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit.

On Friday, the president will participate in a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi and on Saturday and Sunday, he will participate in the official sessions of the G20 Summit.

"We commend Prime Minister Modi for his leadership of the G20 this year and we are committed to helping ensure that India has a successful G20 host as they host (the summit) this year," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference late Wednesday.

"So, that's going to contin-

ue to be our commitment. During Prime Minister Modi's visit here in June, the President (Biden) and the prime minister shared their determination to deliver on shared priorities at the summit," she said in response to a question.

"The President is very much looking forward to continuing that work with the Prime Minister and other leaders later this week as we head out tomorrow," Jean-Pierre said.

On Biden's bilateral meeting with Modi, she said, "We are going to have more to share as we get closer to tomorrow... We are committed to making this a successful summit. We'll certainly have more information to share, certainly on the bilateral with the prime minister."

At a press briefing, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Biden is commit-

ted to working with emerging market partners to deliver big things together. "That's what we believe the world will see in New Delhi this weekend," he said.

America's commitment to the G20, Sullivan said, has not wavered, and it hopes the Summit in New Delhi will show that the world's major economies can work together even in challenging times.

"So, as we head into New Delhi, our focus is going to be on delivering for developing countries; making progress on key priorities for the American people, from climate to technology; and showing our commitment to the G20 as a forum that can actually, as I said before, deliver," he said.

"And thanks to the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and India's presidency, we hope we'll be able to do all of those things," Sullivan said.

We consider requests from countries to change names as they come: UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

Amidst ongoing war of words between the ruling BJP and the Opposition over President Droupadi Murmu's G20 dinner invite referring to her as 'President of Bharat', the United Nations (UN) has said it considers requests from countries to change their names as and when the world body receives them.



Deputy Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Farhan Haq late Wednesday cited the example of Turkey changing its name to Turkiye last year.

"Well, in the case of Turkiye, we responded to a formal request delivered to us by the Government. Obviously, if we get requests like that, we consider them as they come," he said in response to a question on reports that India's name could be changed to Bharat.

A row erupted in India on Tuesday after invitations for a G20 dinner were sent out by President Murmu, describing her position as 'President of Bharat' instead of the custom-

ary 'President of India', with the opposition accusing the Narendra Modi government of planning to drop India and stay with just Bharat as the country's name.

Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday told his ministerial colleagues to avoid the political row around the Bharat issue, noting that it has been the country's ancient name.

He spoke on the issues during his interaction with the Union Council of Ministers in which he laid down the dos and don'ts to be observed by them during the upcoming G20 summit.

He asked them to remain in the national capital during the mega exercise and discharge any duty assigned to them to ensure that visiting dignitaries are not put to any inconvenience.

Congress takes swipe at Govt on absence of leaders at G20

Putin, Xi's absence raises lot of questions which Jaishankar should answer: Khera

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday took a swipe at the government over the heads of State of Russia and China not coming for the G20 Summit, saying their absence raises a lot of questions which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar should answer.



Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera also said that when such events with large expenditure are organised by the prime minister, it is the external affairs minister's responsibility to ensure that all heads of state attend.

Asked about the Congress' views on the G20 Summit that is going to be held in the national capital from September 9-10, Khera said India has had the honour of getting the rotational presidency of G20.

"Very good events being organised on a large scale but the absence of two very important countries, heads of states, gives rise to a lot of questions and the hope that the Minister of External Affairs will respond to these

questions," Khera said.

Taking a swipe at Jaishankar, Khera said he likes to comment on a lot of issues and hopefully will also speak about issues of his department. "We want to advise him, that when the PM organises such big events with such large expenditure, the minister has a responsibility to ensure that all heads of state participate in it and benefit for India comes out of the rotational presidency," the Congress leader said.

The Chinese foreign ministry had announced earlier this week that President Xi Jinping will not attend the G20 Summit in New Delhi

and the delegation will be led by Premier Li Qiang.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had earlier conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi his decision not to attend the G20 Summit in person as he has to focus on the "special military operation" in Ukraine.

The G20 Summit is scheduled to be held in Delhi on September 9 and 10 with US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, among others, expected to attend the meeting of developing and developed countries.

Rahul's yatra effort to 'rebuild our broken collective conscience', says Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Describing the Bharat Jodo Yatra as a people's movement, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday said the foot march by former party chief Rahul Gandhi was not just a physical endeavour but a sincere effort to "rebuild our broken collective conscience".



On the first anniversary of the party's Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra, Kharge said it continues to fight the menace of hate and hostility in society through a conversation.

Rahul, who is currently on a European tour, said the yatra will continue till hatred is eradicated and India is united.

The yatra saw 3500 km from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, starting from September 7, 2022 to January 30, 2023.

Sharing a video of moments from the 136-day foot march, Rahul, in a message in Hindi, stated, "The crores of steps of Bharat Jodo Yatra towards unity and love have become the foundation of a better tomorrow for the country. The journey continues - till hatred is eradicated, till India unites. This is my promise!"

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) on Thursday launched the Bharat Jodo leadership programme - an initiative to invite the youth who wish to actively participate in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"Congress is continu-

ously reaching out to people in an endeavour to reclaim our Constitution and protect our Democracy," Kharge said in a statement.

On this day in 2022, the Congress launched the yatra in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, the southern tip of the country.

"The trend of manufacturing irrelevant headlines to divert attention from the real issues of people to hide the agenda of hate and division is a systemic attack on our collective conscience," Kharge said.

The IYC will also organise various programmes to celebrate Bharat Jodo Yatra in the next three months. These will include padayatra, cultural programmes, photo exhibition, sports events and blood donation camps.

"As per the directions of the All India Congress Committee, the Youth Congress will organise Bharat Jodo Padayatra at the state level and district level. We will set up 'Mohabbat ki Dukaan' at state level and district level and will organise social and cultural programmes as well. Along with these, the Youth Congress will also organise sports programmes and blood donation camps," a statement from the IYC said.

Quota should be continued as long as discrimination exists: Bhagwat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Backing reservation policy, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat has said that reservations should be continued "as long as discrimination exists in our society."

"We at the RSS give all support to the reservations provided in the Constitution," he said in an event at Nagpur in Maharashtra where Marathas

are currently agitating for quota.

Bhagwat also said the goal of 'akhand Bharat' (Greater & unified India) would be achieved sooner before the current younger generation gets older.

The RSS head was apparently referring to the integration of Pakistan with India.

The concept of 'Akhand Bharat' visualizes, among others, Pakistan, Bangladesh,



Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Tibet.

Responding to a student's question at the event, Bhagwat

said that this vision (Akhand Bharat) will become a reality before the current young generation ages significantly.

He said that those who separated from India in 1947 now regret their decision and wish to reunite with India.

On the issue of reservations he said it should continue till discrimination exists in society, adding that the RSS organisation "completely supported the

reservations provided in the Constitution."

"We kept our own fellow human beings behind in the social system. We did not care for them, and it continued for 2000 years. Until we provide them equality, some special remedies have to be there, and reservations is one of them," said Bhagwat.

"Hence, reservations have to continue till there is such discrimination. We at the RSS

give all support to the reservations provided in the Constitution," he said.

Bhagwat sought to say that for over 2000 years, certain sections of society had been neglected and left behind in the social system.

"If sections of society faced discrimination for 2000 years, why cannot we (those who did not face discrimination) accept some trouble for 200 more years," he added.

Need to expose manipulations, empower young minds against vape use: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As e-cigarettes have undergone consistent technological upgrades, resulting in devices that are more functional and visually appealing to kids and adolescents, there is a need to expose the manipulations by the manufacturers and empower the impressionable minds to resist these influences, experts have emphasised here.

Though India, in 2019 banned e-cigarettes, "it is becoming an epidemic among the youth, with post-Covid shifts in attitudes and behaviour contributing to substance abuse."

"Such behaviour has been exacerbated by aggressive marketing by international tobacco companies, now focusing on vaping and e-cigarettes and aiming to revive their businesses by targeting younger generations," Professor Amitabh Mattoo, advisor, Think Change Forum an independent think tank, said at an event 'Protecting Our Future Generations: Equipping Educators to Address the Issue of Usage of



New Age Gateway Products among School Going Children' here.

The event was in collaboration with Parwarish Cares Foundation. "A significant concern is the widespread lack of awareness among parents, teachers and children about vaping. Given the gravity of this issue, out-of-the-box solutions are required, as government efforts alone may not be adequate," Mattoo added.

These new age gateway products include all forms of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), heat-not-burn (HNB) products, e-

hookah, among others. The conference featured a panel discussion and a capacity-building session, which led to the formulation of 10 valuable suggestions for educators.

The conference underscored the relentless efforts of major international tobacco companies to reinvent themselves to remain relevant for younger generations.

"Much like technology has permeated various industries, big tobacco firms have also harnessed technological advancements to adapt and regain relevance. E-cigarettes or vaping instruments manufactured by these companies have undergone consistent technological upgrades, resulting in devices that are more functional, sophisticated and visually appealing to children and young adults," the experts noted.

They came up with 10 suggestions for educators and parents to prevent the use of these devices among children. These called for educating children about how marketing manipulates them into experimenting with elec-

tronic gateway devices; reduce demand through active and appropriate communication with educators, parents and children and awareness building with multiple dimensions such as highlighting children who do not vape as heroes or involving affected students or alumni in communication efforts.

The other suggestions included advocating the inclusion of life skills education in schools; harnessing the power of social media influencers and utilising platforms like podcasts to deter children from experimenting with new age gateway products among others.

Sushant Kalra, Director, Parwarish Institute of Parenting said, "Parents and educators are role models and what we are feeding our children is what they have become. We have failed this generation because we as a society have given them this exposure without giving them the right skills to manage the addictive experimentations that children are indulging in today."

giving all support to the reservations provided in the Constitution," he said.

Bhagwat sought to say that for over 2000 years, certain sections of society had been neglected and left behind in the social system.

"If sections of society faced discrimination for 2000 years, why cannot we (those who did not face discrimination) accept some trouble for 200 more years," he added.

Murmu to inaugurate Asia Pacific human rights conference on Sept 20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate the Biennial Conference of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of Asia Pacific on September 20 here.

The Conference is being organized by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) on September 20 - 21, 2023.

The Asia Pacific Forum will also hold its 28th Annual General Meeting on September 20 to discuss the issues of common interest to member countries.

In the conference, more than 1,300 plus delegates from India and abroad are likely to participate.

The conference will be attended by heads, members and senior officials of the National Human Rights Institutions of 23 countries and five observer countries

along with representatives from the Union and State governments, State Human Rights Commissions, Special Rapporteurs, Monitors, various institutions involved in the protection and promotion of human rights in the country, members of civil society and NGOs, human right defenders, lawyers, jurists, academicians, diplomats, representatives of UN agencies an academic institutions, an official release said.

Earlier, in 2002 and 2014, such an AGM of Asia Pacific Forum and conference was held in India.

On September 21 2023, the Biennial Conference will mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UNDHR).

It will also celebrate 30 years of National Human Rights Institutions and the Paris Principles, with a sub-theme on the environment and climate change.

Didi clears Poila Baisakh as Bengal Day; BJP fumes

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid fresh face-offs between the Mamata Banerjee Government and Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose who the Chief Minister calls a BJP's points man the Bengal Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution determining Poila Baisakh or the first day of the month of Baisakh (according to the Bangabda Calendar) as Bengal Day.

The day also celebrated as the Bengali New Year Day usually falls on April 1. The Assembly also passed a related resolution passing Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's 'Banglar Maati Banglar Jal...' as Bengal's State Song.

Even as the resolution was passed by majority vote with 167 members of the ruling Trinamool Congress voting for the motion and 62 of the BJP voting against it the Chief Minister lashed out at the saffron Opposition for following a "communal agenda" by trying to impose June 20 as the Bengal Day which was earlier celebrated at the Raj Bhavan. Alluding to a recent all-party meeting — also attended



amongst others by the experts and members of the civil society and boycotted by the BJP and the Left — Banerjee said "almost 99 percent of the experts have supported our view to celebrate Poila Baisakh as the Bengal Day but some people are trying to impose some other day which has no relation with occasion."

Referring to the BJP's opposition against the stated Bengal Day Banerjee said, "I

support the proposal of making Poila Baisakh as the Bangla Diwas and Rabindranath Tagore's 'Banglar Maati Banglar Jal' the official song of Bengal."

The Chief Minister also said that "People of Bengal don't support June 20, which is synonymous with violence and bloodshed (and) which marked partition as the state foundation day."

She had earlier said that the Centre was trying to "impose



the Day on Bengal which should be forgotten as a day that generated bitterness and hatred ... there are some people (BJP Government) who are trying to trade in hatred for narrow political ends and so they have employed the powers at Raj Bhavan to get their agenda of hatred perpetuated."

Attacking the BJP for threatening to get the "Bill" blocked, Banerjee said "first of all this is not a Bill ... this is a

Resolution ... they do not know the difference between a Bill and a Resolution ... in any case I will see how they can stop us from celebrating this day."

Referring to the Governor she said, "it hardly matters whether he signs the Resolution or not ... we will go ahead with it and the Government will celebrate this Day as Bengal Day," adding, "the people of Bengal will not tolerate if you try to impose

something on us ... let us see who has more strength the elected representatives who have the mandate of the people or the nominated," in an apparent reference to the Governor.

The BJP legislators subsequently walked out of the Assembly and proceeded to the Raj Bhavan to register their protest. Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari said, "the fate of the Bill (Resolution) will be the same as the one related to the Bill making the Chief Minister the Chancellor of the Universities in place of the Governor."

Referring to the "one nation one vote" proposal of the Centre Adhikari said, "if the Bill is passed in Parliament then the TMC will not get any chance of celebrating its own Bengal Day as they will go out of power lock stock and barrel in 2024 only when the Lok Sabha elections will be held with the State elections. Earlier the Governor in a speech written in Bengali launched a scathing attack on the State Government for making an alleged mess of the State's education system.

Mamata hikes MLAs' salaries

Kolkata: With the general elections round the corner Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday got her Government to give a steep salary hike to the legislators and ministers — all to stem floor crossing ahead of the polls a la 2021.

While the monthly salaries of the State Ministers have now been increased from ₹10,900 to ₹50,900, that of the Cabinet Ministers have gone up from ₹11,000 to ₹51,000. The MLAs too will get a matching hike of ₹40,000 per month.

This means that while the legislators will now draw a salary of ₹1.21 lakh per month in place of a monthly ₹80,000, the ministers will receive ₹1.50 lakh in place ₹1.10 lakh that they received earlier. "We have increased the salaries of the MLAs and ministers considering the fact that our salary had been far less compared to

the salary received by the MLAs of other States," Banerjee said. Reacting to the salary hike of the legislators office bearers of State Government employees' associations that had been agitating for the past several months for a DA hike said "this is how this Government takes care of staff who work for implementing their policies."

The government workers had won two lawsuits at State Administrative Tribunal and the Calcutta High Court and an appeal filed in the Supreme Court is presently pending.

"This is a hypocrite Government that can lavish crores on their politicians and grants hundreds of crores to the clubs organizing Pujas, Imams and priests has no money to meet the legitimate demand of its own employees," they added. **PNS**

Cong confident of big win for Chandi's son in Puthuppalli

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A resurgent Indian National Congress staged rallies across Kerala on Thursday in connection with the first anniversary of Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

Hundreds joined the rally at Ernakulam despite heavy rains that lashed across the district since afternoon. What added to the enthusiasm of the Congress workers is the counting of votes of the Puthuppalli assembly constituency in Kottayam district to be taken up on Friday.

The seat fell vacant by the death of former Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Oommen Chandi. His son Chandi Oommen is the party candidate in the triangular contest and he is expected to win with a big majority.

The CPI(M) which looked confident of scoring a surprise victory in the hustings looked tired and worn out by Thursday as party's Kerala secretary M V Govindan alleged a collusion between the Congress and the BJP. "This is an indirect way of

conceding defeat even before the EVMs are opened.

Nobody with right sense of mind will believe his charge that Congress had forged an alliance with the BJP," said V D Satheshan, leader of the Opposition.

The sympathy wave caused by Oommen Chandi's passing away and the good will he had among the electorate cutting across party lines and the clean image of his son Chandi Oommen are being pointed as the reasons behind the confidence of the Congress cadre.

"The CPI(M) is facing unprecedented scams and even Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his family members are not free from charges of corruption.

The second tenure of Vijayan is marked by arrogance of party leaders and ministers," said A Jayashankar, Kerala's leading political critic. Jayashankar said that he would not be surprised if Chandi Oommen wins by a majority of 50,000 votes.

Jaik C Thomas, the CPI-M nominee, who is the main challenger to Chandi Oommen, has been accused of vandaliz-

ing CMS College, Kottayam, a Christian institution of higher learning held in esteem by people irrespective of caste and religions. The video of Jaik C Thomas demolishing class rooms and office have gone viral and it is doubtful whether people in the constituency would select him.

The BJP candidate is all set to finish the race as an also ran because the party is handicapped by the absence of capable leadership. What stood out in the campaign was a lackluster show by Pinarayi Vijayan and his cabinet colleagues.

The BJP leaders said that though there were three candidates in the race, the fight was between the Hindutva party and the UDF candidate supported by the CPI-M. The Congress and the Marxists are alliance partners in rest of the country to usher in an era of secularism and socialism.

The Puthuppalli bypoll result will not make any difference in the constitution of the legislative assembly as the CPI-M is sitting pretty with 99 seats in a House with an effective strength of 141 members.

Give nod for MNREGA fund protest, TMC MP asks Delhi Police

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Aware of the fomenting discontent among the unpaid wagers of Bengal ahead of the general elections and in an apparent bid to transfer the blame at the Central Government's door the ruling Trinamool Congress has once again sought permission of the Delhi Police to hold a dharna at three places in the national Capital to highlight its demands for early release of the MNREGA wages.

MNREGA stands for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act popularly known as 100-days work scheme.

Writing a fresh letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the Parliament Street Police Station, TMC leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien has said that his party wants to hold dharnas or sit-in demonstrations on October 2 and 3, 2023 at Krishi Bhavan ... we are yet to receive a response regarding the same... Request for an update at the earliest." Earlier Abhishek Banerjee had during a month-long yatra of Bengal ahead of

Giriraj Singh, Krishi Bhavan and Jantar Mantar. "The Centre has blocked more than Rs 1 lakh crore rightfully belonging to the State out of that more than Rs 8 thousand crore is on account of the unpaid wages for 100-days' work this is torture on the poor people ... so our leaders including Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee have decided to hold dharnas in Delhi ... thousands of people including workers will go to Delhi to extract their rightful demand," said Bengal minister Jyotipriya Malik.

The letter written by O'Brien reads "With reference to my letter dated August 31, 2023, requesting for permission for the All India Trinamool Congress to hold a dharna ... from 10 AM to 6 PM on October 2 and 3, 2023 at Krishi Bhavan ... we are yet to receive a response regarding the same... Request for an update at the earliest." Earlier Abhishek Banerjee had during a month-long yatra of Bengal ahead of

J&K Valmiki community slam lack of representation in local polls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Valmiki community is seething in anger in Jammu and Kashmir, post abrogation of Article 370, several marginalized communities were granted their voting rights including members of the Valmiki community.

But now as the election machinery is gearing up to hold maiden Urban Local Bodies' polls in Jammu and Kashmir the members of the Valmiki community claimed they have been deprived of their right to elect their own community member despite having the majority of voters in the municipal ward of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC).

Referring to the draft reservation proposal unveiled by the Chief Electoral Officer in the Union Territory on September 4, 2023, Gharu Bhatti Chairman, Valmiki Samaj Sabha, Jammu-Kashmir said, "We are residents of ward no 20 falling under the jurisdiction of Jammu Municipal Corporation.

In 2018 the same ward was reserved for Schedule caste

candidates. At that time we did not have voting rights. Post abrogation when we were granted voting rights after a six-decade-long struggle we have been deprived of the opportunity to elect our own representative."

Bhatti said that as per the draft reservation notification of Municipal bodies, the same ward No 20 of Jammu Municipal Corporation has been categorized as 'Open'.

Bhatti said, "We have submitted our objections (online) in response to the draft to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

On Friday, we will be visiting the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K to submit the hard copy of the objections. As per the draft reservation notification, 358 municipal wards out of 1,119 were reserved for women, and objections and suggestions were sought from the stakeholders till September 9, 2023.

The list of reserved wards for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women in open, SC, and ST categories have been made on the basis of

population data. Referring to the sentiments in the municipal ward, Gharu Bhatti said, there is a great hue and cry among the members of the Valmiki community, especially the youth.

Sharing the highlights of objections filed, Bhatti said for the first time the Valmiki youth had the opportunity to represent the community and address the issues and demands of the people by contesting the Urban Local body polls. "Unless ward no 20 is reserved for the SC community we won't be able to elect our own representative."

Sharing statistical details, Bhatti also claimed the population of the Valmiki Community in ward No. 20 under the Gandhi Nagar Assembly constituency is around 2000-3000 people (highest) in Gandhi Nagar forming around 1800-1900 voters.

As per the electoral roll list 2023 published by the office of CEO, J&K this population alone (Valmiki Community) amounts to 50 per cent of the voters from this ward.

RSS chief should tell Centre to hold caste census: RJD leader

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments supporting reservation, RJD leader and MP Manoj Jha on Thursday said he should tell the Government to agree for a caste census.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief on Wednesday in Nagpur had said discrimination exists in society, and reservations should continue as long as inequality persists. "... We at the RSS give all support to the reservations provided in the Constitution," he had said. The RJD leader said, "They are the followers of

(former RSS chief MS) Golwalkar... But I'm happy at least that they have started thinking according to the Constitution."

"They call themselves a social organisation, but they are a political organisation and they run the government... Why are you quiet on the caste census," he said referring to the RSS, which is the ideological fountainhead of the ruling BJP at the Centre. Jha said the RSS chief should tell government to conduct a caste census. "Tell the government to agree for a caste census. Otherwise what you said is mere lip service to make headlines," he said.

Nix genealogy clause: Quota activist to Maha Govt

PTI ■ JALNA/AURANGABAD

Quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday asked the Maharashtra government to drop the clause of genealogy while giving Kunbi caste certificate to Marathas in central Maharashtra. The GR issued on Thursday stipulates that Kunbi caste certificates would be issued only after community members provide genealogical records from Nizam-era.

On Wednesday, the state cabinet decided that Kunbi caste certificates would be issued to Marathas from the region who possess revenue or education documents from the Nizam era that recognise them as Kunbis. Marathwada was part of the erstwhile Nizam-ruled Hyderabad kingdom before it became part of Maharashtra. The GR was issued after the cabinet decision

protest site, he welcomed the GR but sought removal of the condition of providing genealogical records while issuing Kunbi caste certificate to Marathas from Marathwada in central Maharashtra. The GR issued on Thursday stipulates that Kunbi caste certificates would be issued only after community members provide genealogical records from Nizam-era.

On Wednesday, the state cabinet decided that Kunbi caste certificates would be issued to Marathas from the region who possess revenue or education documents from the Nizam era that recognise them as Kunbis. Marathwada was part of the erstwhile Nizam-ruled Hyderabad kingdom before it became part of Maharashtra. The GR was issued after the cabinet decision

and a copy of the order was sent to the quota activist by a senior government official. Jarange argued that such a condition should be dropped to ensure fair access to reservation benefits.

Kunbis, a community associated with agriculture-related occupations, are grouped under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category and enjoy reservation benefits in education and government jobs.

After the cabinet decision, Maratha community members from Marathwada recognised as Kunbis can avail of OBC quota. Former state minister Arjun Khotkar met Jarange and urged him to end his indefinite fast. In response, Jarange conveyed his willingness to end the hunger strike only after the amendment

sought by him is made in the GR. Speaking on the occasion, Khotkar stated, "We are committed to this resolution and I have provided this in writing. I have come on behalf of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde." Khotkar extended an invitation to Jarange to come to Mumbai for further discussions on the quota issue.

"The Chief Minister has entrusted me with the responsibility of escorting Jarange and his delegation to Mumbai. We will engage with legal experts to discuss the matter thoroughly," he said.

Khotkar claimed Jarange gave a positive response for discussion on Maratha reservation issue. The cabinet decision came after protests by members of Maratha community across state in view of police action on pro-quota protesters in Jalna

False tsunami alert triggers panic in Goa; probe ordered



PTI ■ PANAJI

A siren giving a warning about tsunami erroneously started playing from the Early Warning Dissemination System at Porvorim near here, triggering panic among the local residents, an official said on Thursday.

The siren started sounding alert after 9 pm on Wednesday and it continued for more than 20 minutes, local residents said. Whether siren went off due to any technical error or any other reason is being probed, with a state minister saying that he has sought a report into it.

The Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) is installed on a hillock at Porvorim in North Goa on the outskirts of state capital Panaji.

Talking to reporters on Thursday, North Goa District Collector Mamu Harge said, "It was a false warning as there was no such intimation of tsunami from any of authorities." "There was no mock drill or anything. I have personally checked and found out that there was no warning either from Indian Meteorological

Department (IMD) or Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)," she said. The collector said she has directed the state Water Resources Department (WRD) to find out why the siren started playing from EWDS.

People living in nearby areas said siren created panic among locals. Talking about it, local resident Avinash R said, "We were on a walk after dinner when we heard siren. Initially we panicked, but we soon realised that it could be a mock drill."

When contacted, state WRD Minister Subhash Shirodkar said he has sought a report from his office, which will be received by this evening. North Goa District Disaster Authority said in a social media post, "There are certain reports of Siren alerting Early Warning Dissemination System at Porvorim of a Tsunami alert.

It is clarified that no such Alert of Tsunami is issued by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)." "The citizens are requested not to panic," it added.

Dahi handi: 77 hurt in Mumbai, 11 in Thane

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As many as 88 revellers were injured in various "dahi-handi"-related incidents in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane, even as the people celebrated the Krishna Janmashtami celebrations amid rains in the metropolis and neighbouring districts Thursday.

While 77 people were injured during "human pyramid" formations done as part of the "dahi-handi" celebrations in various parts of Mumbai, 11 people were injured in similar mishaps in Thane. Of the 77 injured, 18 persons were treated and allowed to go, while the remaining injured persons are



A devotee climbs atop a pyramid formed by fellow devotees to break 'Dahi Handi' during the Krishna Janmashtami festival, in Mumbai, on Thursday **PTI**

undergoing treatment at the various hospitals in Mumbai. In Thane, the injured are being treated at Thane district civil hospital and Kalwa hospital.

With no restrictions on height of the pyramid and minimum age of participants, there was a lot of enthusiasm among the "dahi handi" revellers. So much so that at some places, Govidas — as Dahi-handi are popularly known as — formed human pyramids 9 to 10 levels which are more than 40 feet in height. The "human pyramids" were formed at many places including Goregaon, Borivali, Dadar, Worli, Kala chowki, Jogeshwari, Ghatkopar, Mulind, neighbouring Thane

city, Kalyan, Navi Mumbai and Palghar district. The "dahi-handi", which is tied to rope fixed at a height, contains a mixture of milk, curd, dry fruits and prize money for Govindas break them. The ritual involving "dahi-handi" symbolises the manner in which young Krishna stole butter from an earthen pot suspended from the ceiling.

Like every year, there was considerable fervour and verve among the revellers in the early part of the day. Slogans like "Govinda ala re..." and "Gvoinda re Gopala, Bol Bhajrang Bali ki jai, Go Go Govinda..." rent the air, as boisterous revellers — better known as Govindas — climbed human

pyramids to break the traditional "dahi-handis". Ahead of the crucial Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), all the major political parties used "Dahi handi" as an occasion to reach out to people across Mumbai. The moneyed party BJP sponsored 400 such "Dahi-handis" across Mumbai.

The mishaps have over years become a common feature during Krishna Janmashtami celebrations, despite height and age restrictions imposed by Bombay High Court in past. As many as 113 revellers were injured in various "Dahi-handi"-related incidents in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane last year.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Time to keep head

The unease between the US and China casts a shadow on the G20 Summit

Hours before it is scheduled to get under way with its avowed agenda of fostering cooperation and encouraging dialogue among the world's 20 major economies on a gamut of critical issues, the G20 Summit in New Delhi seems to have run into some unpleasant weather. This new challenge — escalating tensions between the United States and China — has the potential to overshadow the well-intentioned agenda. To begin with, Chinese President Xi Jinping's decision to skip the summit has harmed the interests of the global community as this could have been a good opportunity for him to discuss solutions to the ongoing trade war with the US. Xi and US President Joe Biden could have met on the sidelines to iron out their differences; that opportunity is now lost. The US-China ties, have been marked by stiff economic competition and political differences on world issues. The G20 Summit has historically provided a platform for major economies to come together and foster camaraderie and dialogue. To their credit, the US and China have over the years been able to put their differences on the backburner and find common ground on issues of global significance, such as climate change and economic stability. But recent developments have cast a pall over their interactions. One of the major bones of contention between the US and China is trade.



To compound matters, geopolitical differences between the US and China have widened, especially with the South China Sea dispute. Taiwan and Hong Kong have long been sore points between these world powers. Then there is the growing proximity of the US with India, which is frowned upon by China. These

issues have already led to accusations and counter-accusations, adding to the distrust. Despite his wife's illness, Joe Biden has decided to attend the Delhi Summit but, on the other hand, Xi has conveniently chosen to ignore the importance of this G20 meeting on Indian soil. Perhaps releasing the "Standard Maps" with Arunachal Pradesh as part of China just ahead of the G20 Summit was a clear indication that China intended to play spoilsport. To make things worse, China has raised several objections over the 'Delhi Declaration', proposed to be adopted by the G20 leaders at the Summit. It objected to the use of words "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," and joined Russia in opposing the inclusion of two paragraphs condemning Moscow's military action against Ukraine. Besides, the unresolved US-China geopolitical rivalry threatens to expand to other areas such as technology, where concerns about data privacy, cybersecurity and the role of Chinese tech companies in stealing information have added to the tensions. The G20 should have been an ideal venue to discuss and establish norms for the digital age. As the host, India faces a daunting task: Balancing the interests and concerns of both the US and China to foster an environment conducive to meaningful dialogue. For its part, the Indian leadership must strive to create an atmosphere encouraging constructive engagement.

PICTALK



Devotees take part in a 'palki yatra' to celebrate the Janmashtami festival, in Bhopal

Udhayanidhi Stalin's diatribe is uncalled for



PRAFULL GORADIA

He should also realise that the ideology now influencing India has grown from the country's soil and going against it is bad politics

Udhayanidhi Stalin sought the eradication of Sanatana Dharma from the country, comparing it to diseases like dengue or COVID-19. Unfortunately, an MLA and son of a chief minister should be so ignorant and irresponsible. Does he not know that his and his father's namesake Josef Stalin, despite his overwhelming power, could not abolish inequality? Rather, he widened the gap in wealth between the rich and the poor in a much larger number of people. The only difference was that most of the wealth of those who had it had to be in Switzerland (i.e., Swiss banks) to sustain the economic chastity of Stalin's Soviets, Lenin's legacy and Marx's prophecy.

The communist experiment from Cuba in the West to China in the East has ranged from blood-soaked disasters to miserable flops. If Udhayanidhi knows all this, I am sorry, he is neither ignorant nor irresponsible but is an apostle of doubtful intentions. Perhaps he wishes to overtake Josef Stalin and become as great as Mao Zedong or match the current strongman Xi Jinping, and take over all conceivable assets of Tamil Nadu, including land, and administrative apparatus in the state, much like the Chinese Communist Party which owns virtually everything, including the armed forces; the country and its people, i.e., the Chinese, own very little. Otherwise, why should we wish to eradicate Sanatana Dharma and all its adherents?

If it is only for the sake of equality, this is not possible, as we have shown. The reason is simple — every individual's karma is different and therefore, his/her bhagya (fate) is separate. It is scientific to realise that the output would be according to the input; the result will be dependent on the cause.

If Udhayanidhi Stalin studies his state property, he may well find that more of its citizens have faith in Sanatana Dharma and adhere to the Hindu mode of worship. The problem with his understanding is that the Hindu is mature and seldom reacts; he prefers to ignore. That is why



Muslims were able to rule large parts of India for some seven hundred years, with the Hindu civilization surviving almost intact. Two centuries of British rule too left Hindus largely unscathed.

Now is the time when Hinduism is reawakening; hence it is a wholly wrong time for Udhayanidhi to try and provoke Sanatana Dharma and hope to ensnare it. Nor is it the time to pamper the anti-Hindus; they are nowhere near the majority. It is, therefore, not only bad politics but wholly wrong politics as well. The paucity of Hindu reaction has misled the junior Stalin; it equally misled the communist parties as well as the Congress and others. The strategy authored by Jawaharlal Nehru, who claimed he was a Hindu only by accident of birth, a Muslim by culture and an Englishman by education and upbringing might have paid dividends then.

Jawaharlal Nehru's ultimate legacy was a European successor. Stalin ought to realise that now, the Hindu is reacting to assert his rights. Or else, how is a Yogi ruling Uttar Pradesh? And how very effectively? The TN chief minister's son should also realise that the



THE NEW WIND IS NOT CONFINED TO INDIA. THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS A PRIME MINISTER OF HINDU BIRTH WHO HAS NO HESITATION IN PROCLAIMING "JAI SHRI RAMA" AT CAMBRIDGE

ideology now influencing India has grown from the country's soil. That is why Hindus are taking to it like fish to water.

The new wind is not confined to India. The United Kingdom has a Prime Minister of Hindu birth who has no hesitation in proclaiming "Jai Shri Rama" at Cambridge. The USA has more than one Presidential candidate for the election of 2024. A significant number of global corporations based in the USA are headed by Indian Chief Executives who are Hindu by faith. The World Bank is headed by a chief of Indian origin. These are all men and women whose family origins date back to Sanatana Dharma. There is a phenomenon that causes this new tide in the affairs of the human world, as they become more educated and aware. Human beings are not satisfied with prescriptions dictated by prophets and messiahs. This is rather like the Ten Commandments of Prophet Moses. They would like to discover spirituality themselves, which Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma enables by not insisting upon either God or the Devil, but upon karma.

Since Udhayanidhi and his spokespersons are harping on equality, and wish to eradicate Sanatana Dharma because its adherents do not enjoy equality, let me again draw his attention to the prescription of Karl Marx, which spawned many communist regimes in the world in the form of countries that fell under the sway of this ideology, all of them striving to implement it rigorously and oftentimes, harshly. The only result was that the economies of all these countries crashed to the ground; China and North Korea have systems that are anything but Marxist, yet call themselves communist. That is the price equality extracted from the people on whom it was sought to be imposed. Udhayanidhi's neighbouring state Kerala continues to flirt with equality. But how many Malayalis are equal? Intelligent and capable as they are, are they progressing? The reality is that if they want to do well in life, they have to emigrate from Kerala to be able to flourish.

(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

DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO CREATE RIFT

Sir — It is hard to believe that the DMK leaders are unaware of the implications of their statements on 'Sanatan Dharma.' Therefore, it may be possible that this is a part of the game plan to create differences between the North and the South. The BJP government does not have much to show in the South, and the party leadership is doing all they can to make the South Indians feel like second-hand citizens. That is the reason why the PM has instructed the party to be careful in its response and ordered that only the party spokespersons should speak on the affair. Because this could escalate into a North-South conflict. While casteism exists in the South too, it is more egalitarian than in the North. Moreover, it is rather irresponsible behaviour from a politician of a ruling party which could escape into a major crisis dividing people on religious lines. One fails to understand why Stalin has failed to give his statement on the matter. He should immediately tender an apology to the people.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

Sir — The childish controversy over 'India vs. Bharat,' fueled by the media and clueless ministers, has entertained the nation for the last few days. To set the record straight, the controversy was not triggered by the name; it was sparked by the juvenile departure from convention. Not only does the very first article in the Constitution state, "India, that is Bharat, is a union of states," but throughout the Constitution, 'India' is used, not 'Bharat.' Even the Hindi version of the Constitution, authenticated by the Constituent Assembly, reads, "Bharat arthat India," signifying that the two names are interchangeable in translation. So, where was the need for Rashtrapati Bhavan to issue a dinner invitation in English on behalf of the 'Rashtrapati of Bharat,' instead of the conventional 'President of the Republic of India'? In

Bharat more appropriate than India



It is well known that 'Bharat' is derived from 'Bharata,' the ancestor of Pandavas and Kauravas who ruled India. According to the Puranas, Bharat is described as a geographical area that lies between the oceans in the

South and the Himalayas in the North, now called India. It can be further supported by words and slogans like 'Bharatmata, Bharatakhanda, Bharatavarsha, Akhand Bharat, Mahabharat, Mera Bharat Mahan, Atmanirbhar Bharat.' The first stanza of our national anthem contains the word 'Bharat.' The term 'Bharat' appears in Jain and Hindu mythologies. The word 'India' was first used by the Greeks in the 5th Century BCE, while Bharata ruled the country before the Mahabharat war in 3102 BCE. So, 'Bharat' evolved before 'India.' We want to get rid of the British legacy. Thus, renaming 'India' as 'Bharat' can be justified and looks appropriate. We have renamed cities, roads, etc., so why not the country? Politicizing the issue does not benefit anyone. Not the name, but the work of a country matters.

Dr O P Rao | Hyderabad

Hindi, the President has always been addressed as "Bharat ke rashtrapati," and most Indians are comfortable using India in English and Bharat in Hindi. The union government, however, had told the Supreme Court in 2015 that it had no plans to change the country's name. The country is known as both India and Bharat, the court was told, and Article 1 of the Constitution said as much. A similar PIL in 2020 was junked by the Supreme Court. Changing the name of the country will require a Constitutional amendment and possible ratification by states. A resolution in Parliament is not enough. A change of name from India to Bharat would unleash chaos and put an end to the enormous brand value that India enjoys across the world, warn commentators.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF GAURI

Sir — September 5, 2023, marks the 6th death anniversary of journalist Gauri Lankesh, whose gruesome murder sent

shockwaves through India's body politic. The cowardly act was one of countless attempts to stifle free speech in India for years. Ms. Lankesh, who was the editor of a Kannada tabloid and a fearless independent journalist, and one who gave voice to many causes and always stood for justice, had paid the price for dissent. Distressingly, the investigations are slow, and booking the culprits for the barbaric crime still remains a distant dream. Ms. Lankesh will ever be remembered as a fearless journalist, one who fought not just corruption but also bigotry and the purveyors of communal hatred. She might have fallen to the bullets, and the ink in her pen might have drained forever, but her brand of intrepid journalism will live on, which can never be subjugated by vitriolic right-wing fringe communal groups.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Gender justice in India needs a fresh look

Gender equality is fundamentally related to sustainable development and globally accepted as a necessity for the promotion of human rights



MAHESH TIWARI

The rapid increase in the suicide ratio of men due to family problems and marriage-related issues is at an alarming stage. About 800,000 (Eight Lakh) people die by suicide worldwide every year. In the year 2021 in India, 1,64,033 (One Lakh Sixty-Four Thousand Thirty-Three) people have committed suicide according to the data provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The rate of suicide is 12 per one lakh population which is the highest rate of deaths from suicide since 1967. As per the World Health Organisation report dated 07.09.2021, suicide is an emerging and serious public health issue in India. The suicide rate per 1,00,000 people compared to other countries is 10.5 per 1,00,000 while the suicide rate for the world as a whole is 11.6 per 1,00,000 people. Suicide rates in India have been rising over the past five decades. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data published in 2021 (Accidental Deaths in India 2021) about 1,64,033 people have committed suicide during the year 2021 across the country. Out



of which almost 81,063 people who ended their lives were married men, while 28,680 were married women. Around 33.2% of men ended their lives because of family problems and 4.8% due to marriage-related issues in the year 2021. This year, a total of 1,18,979 men have committed suicides which is about (72%) and a total of 45,026 women have committed suicides which is about (27%). Family problems in the form of domestic violence or other physical abuses against men in a domestic setting also constitute an offence, but at present laws applicable to address the issues of domestic violence are not gender-neutral and vary between men and women. A man who intends to report domestic violence faced by him finds it difficult to approach a suitable forum where he could report the matter because no one is authorized to register the

complaint of a man who is suffering from domestic violence. It is wrathful to mention here that "The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005" protects the woman only who suffers any type of violence inflicted by her husband or his family including female members. So it has been presumed while enacting the said act that the male could never be a victim of domestic violence and is the offender only. The existing laws do not even recognise domestic violence against the LGBTQ Community as the law protects only women under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. Countries like the UK AND Wales, the US, Canada, Australia, and Germany have laws protecting both men and women including the LGBTQ Community against domestic violence. In the absence of gender-neutral laws so far as domestic violence is concerned, even a boy, who is above 18 years, old has no legal remedy to address his grievances in case he suffered mental, emotional, physical, economic, or sexual abuse. Each such incident results

in a violation of the fundamental rights of Equality before the law, the Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, and the Right to life and personal liberty. It is a clear violation of the fundamental rights available to every citizen of India under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the constitution and also a violation of Section 2(d) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Human dignity is the most supreme attribute of society. Every human being at the end of the day strives for the dignity to which he/she is entitled. The constitution of India also provides that every citizen irrespective of their caste/ creed/sex/ origin should not be deprived of their human dignity. Gender equality is fundamentally related to sustainable development and globally accepted as a necessity for the promotion of human rights. Therefore, such violations attract a legal remedy through suitable legislation and the creation of a mechanism for its enforcement, for the protection of these rights. (The writer is an Advocate in the Supreme Court of India. Views are personal)

FIRST COLUMN

THE STAGE IS SET FOR G20 SUMMIT

Xi and Putin would be conspicuous by their absence



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The G20 leaders' summit in New Delhi this week takes place, at an important juncture in civilisational collective history. India under the PM's vision of democratising the G20 event has held 200 meetings in nearly 60 cities of India, showcasing the rich cultural diversity of India, introducing new topics of mutual joint action, such as climate finance, sustainable growth tourism etc., while subtly sending out key messages on the geopolitical front.

China with which India, doesn't share the best of relations due to the military standoff in Ladakh and frequent tiffs in the Indian Ocean region, skipped the G20 meetings in Arunachal Pradesh and Kashmir, directly challenging India's sovereign rights over her territory. China also released a standard map last week claiming many parts of India including Arunachal Pradesh as its territory, a stern disagreement to engage with India bilaterally and diffuse the border situation. China is extremely keen to create its world order, which it claims would not be dictated by US-centric geopolitics. Towards this, it has successfully lobbied to include 6 new nations in the BRICS group, keeping its agenda in mind and creating a mini version of the G20 platform. The inclusion of UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which hold strategic interests for China and India, in their bilateral capacities is a push towards a greater say in Arab world affairs.



Meanwhile, China and the US are at major loggerheads in their bilateral relationship, especially with high-end technology that can be used for military purposes by China. The US has a technological advantage in terms of innovation and design, while most of the manufacturing for these products takes place in China. Two successive governments in the US, including the current one have tried to de-risk themselves from China, as the fear grows that Chinese could be using sophisticated US tech for their military operations. China is a leader in current technologies such as 5G, however, due to geopolitics, major tech consumers including India are trying to de-risk themselves from Chinese tech. The US and India have banned entry of any new Chinese hardware in their critical infrastructure sectors deployed for 5G networks. Add to this, the anti-US and western bloc views taken by China on Ukraine, especially on G20 platforms. China and Russia entered into, a no boundaries relationship immediately before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Chinese premier visited Russia on a state visit, immediately after Covid restrictions were removed to reiterate the special relationship it has with Russia. Towards proving its friendship with Russia, China has stalled most of the joint outcome statements in ministerial meetings under India's G20 presidency in the past year, sometimes under flimsy pretexts. It is worthwhile to note that both Chinese and Russian presidents skipped the G20 leaders summit in India this week, creating a challenge for a consensus-based joint leaders outcome document.

The real reason Chinese premier Xi didn't come to India-led G20 leaders to summit in New Delhi is that he did not want to hold a bilateral meeting with US President Biden. China considers itself a giant in global affairs and wants India to be relegated to a weak nation status. The recent bonhomie between the US and India on crucial strategic issues, including a gradual shift of New Delhi towards the US-led military and geo-political bloc, gets constant critique from China. The US and India have been working together to create a consensus-based fair, transparent, democratic framework and policy outlook in the Indo-Pacific region. The QUAD, an alliance of four nations consisting of Australia, India, the US and Japan, are fully focused on the Indo-Pacific region and increasingly trying to coordinate together on key affairs including emerging technologies. It is this backdrop, which makes Bharat's grand show for the G20 summit under its presidency, a crucial one, which shines the beacon on the state of world affairs for many more years to come.

(The writer is a policy analyst)

Towards qualitative and effective democracy

The idea of one nation, one election is just one of the many reforms that the country must undertake to strengthen democracy



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

The Prime Minister deserves all compliments for forming a committee to study much-needed aspects of the One Nation-One Election in the country. Frequent elections can be avoided by reducing or extending the terms of assemblies by up to one year to hold any elections only once a year in a month considered best suited by various aspects. Any by-election or even regular civic or panchayat election may also be held in this 'election month'.

The idea of holding simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and all state assemblies can be practical only by eliminating chances of mid-term elections which require the Prime Minister/Chief Ministers to be simultaneously elected with the Speaker and Deputy Speaker by secret and compulsory vote of members of the Lower House through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) equipped with VVPAT on nominations signed by at least 34-percent members. Such an elected PM/CM may be removed by the same process but with the compulsion of naming an alternate leader in the same motion. Members not opting to vote may lose voting rights in the House even though they retain membership of the House.

No person should be allowed to contest from more than one constituency or for both Parliament and state assembly. A sitting MP or MLA should resign first from his/her earlier seat before filing a nomination for the other seat. Provision should be there of auto-termination of membership of a Parliamentarian just on taking oath in a state as minister (or Chief Minister) and vice-versa.

Secret voting for Rajya Sabha elections should be restored but through EVMs equipped with the VVPAT system. Since Legislative Councils in states do not serve any purpose, the Constitution should be amended to abolish the provision of Legislative Councils. Only those not having contested any election in life should be appointed nominated members of the Rajya Sabha. Persons who have not contested any election in their lifetime may only be appointed as governors. No MP or MLA should retain any type of post in their party or even in society. Ministerial strength should be reduced to 10 per cent of the strength of the lower House. The Post of Parliamentary Secretaries should be abolished.

Security-losing persons should be barred from contesting elections for the next six years. 'None-of-the-above' (NOTA) option should be made practically useful by barring all candidates getting votes less than 'NOTA' from contesting any future election even though in case NOTA winning in any constituency, next to NOTA may be declared elected but only for that term. Thereafter he may lose the right to contest any election in a lifetime.

President and Vice President should be simultaneously elected by all MPs and MLAs in the manner the President is elected but through EVMs equipped with VVPAT on nominations signed by at least 34 per cent of MPs to ensure direct elections. In case of a vacancy caused at the post of President, the Vice President may be made President for the rest of the term. But in case of a vacancy caused at the post of a Vice President, an interim Vice President may be elected by MPs



SECRET VOTING FOR RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS SHOULD BE RESTORED, BUT THROUGH EVMs EQUIPPED WITH THE VVPAT SYSTEM

(The writer is a Guinness Record Holder for letters in newspapers and an RTI consultant)

only. Persons once posted on these posts and also as state governors must quit active politics forever. Otherwise, all their post-retirement benefits including pension and government-accommodation may be withdrawn.

To avoid the usual delay in approving poll reforms by the Parliament, the Election Commission should be empowered to implement poll reforms by giving one-year notice to Parliament. If Parliament does not disapprove reforms proposed by the Election Commission within the stipulated one year, these should be taken as approved by the Parliament. Election Commissioners should be selected by a 3-member committee also consisting of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha.

Immunity to elected representatives should be withdrawn even from legislative proceedings because, in the infamous JMM-bribery case, even the Apex Court expressed its inability to act against guilty ones because their bribed act to vote for Narasimha Rao-government was considered to be immunised being under Parliamentary proceedings. Lok Sabha mildly punished its member Rajesh Manjhi for taking his lady-friend as his wife on a foreign trip at government expense by just barring him from a few sittings of Lok Sabha. The presence of an absconding Parliamentarian from court summons or warrants at Sansad Bhawan even for attending the session, should be immediately informed to concerned police authorities.

Absconding members must not be allowed to leave Sansad Bhawan till the execution of summons/warrants is complete. Parliamentarians and legislators with attendance less than say 75

per cent in the House should not be allowed to contest any elections for the next six years. Curious case of George Fernandez having been elected to Rajya Sabha despite having lost all his memory even calls for some minimum medical-fitness certificate before allowing him to contest elections. An RTI response reveals that even the oath for being a member of the Rajya Sabha was read by a party colleague of George Fernandez!

Parliamentarians should be required to fill all their particulars in their bio-data including details of their assets, name of spouse/s etc. to be put on the public domain of the websites of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. This will check several malpractices like hiding the name of the additional spouse like was done by Dharmendra when he did not disclose the name of Hema Malini as his wife. Salaries/perks of MPs can be withheld till they provide all these particulars. Rules of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha should be rewritten stringently by encoding fixed punishments for Parliamentarians for not following rules and norms and snatching discretionary powers of Chairpersons and Parliamentary committees.

The rule should be to make all deductions of government dues like of water, electricity, telephone, rent or any other from salary/perks/pensions etc. payable to them. Likewise, pensions and other payables should be held till former Parliamentarians/Ministers do not vacate government accommodations. Defaulters should be barred from contesting any next elections or holding any official post till all dues are cleared against them, and non-entitled government-accommodations are vacated. It is a shame that even persons posted as

Prime Minister had been defaulters of dues for the use of Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft for non-official purposes. Either the Prime Minister or the political party sponsoring that Prime Minister on post should deposit advance money for the use of IAF aircraft for non-official use. Since political parties are not complying with the CIC-verdict bringing these under the purview of the RTI Act, all direct/indirect government funding including tax-exemptions, subsidized land or leased government accommodations, free voters' list and free Doordarshan/ Radio timings etc. should be abolished. Political parties not having contested any election in the last five years should be de-recognised.

Live TV debates between prominent leaders and Prime-Ministerial/Chief-Ministerial candidates can replace mega-budgeted rallies. Since even the Election Commission opposed opaque Electoral Bonds, these must be transparent to avoid these becoming a tool to get favours from the concerned governments. Sections 13A, 80GGB and 80GGC of the Income Tax Act on contributions received by and made to political parties should be abolished to prevent the whitening of black money by political parties getting themselves registered but not contesting elections. Corruption-generating MPLADS should be abolished. Pensions to MPs and MLAs have no logic when it has been done away with government servants. Persons with more than two children should not be allowed to contest elections. It should be compulsory for every political party to give at least one-third of party-tickets to women till the legislation of the Women-Reservation Bill.

Building resilience towards a sustainable and secure future

The G20 recognises the global significance of malnutrition and its implications for public health and social well-being

Climate change is real and an undeniable threat to our entire civilization. The growing climate crisis, rapidly degenerating soils, drying aquifers, extinction of agro-biodiversity, and highly volatile markets have raised doubts if it is possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals when only seven annual harvests remain until 2030.

Anthropogenic climate change has slowed down global agricultural productivity by 21% in the last 50 years. Climate change is driven primarily by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, industrial processes, and agricultural activities. Agriculture is in the midst of numerous global



ML JAT

(The writer is the Global Research Program Director Resilient Farm and Food Systems International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT))

challenges, including food security, environmental sustainability, and climate change mitigation. Agriculture is both vulnerable to and a contributor to climate change. For addressing global agricultural challenges such as meeting the food and nutritional demands of the growing population, climate change, water scarcity, and low agricultural productivity, a shared vision leading to collective action by the global community is crucial. In this respect, the Agricultural Working Group (AWG) of the G20 under India's presidency has taken some futuristic and innovative initiatives.

The declaration of the Year 2023 as the International Year of Millets is timely and signifies the role of millets in providing solutions to global

food and nutritional challenges. Millets which are increasingly being acknowledged as 'nutri-cereals' have many health benefits and are also climate-resilient crops that can be grown in low rainfall, low soil fertility conditions, requiring low inputs, and have comparatively low water and carbon footprints compared to many cereals.

In this context, India's unique G20 initiative - MAHARISHI (Millets and Other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative), will play a crucial role. The MAHARISHI initiative through its Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) and Agricultural Working Group will make significant contributions to improving global agriculture

by building climate resilience and reducing environmental footprints. The initiative must focus on technological advancements, climate adaptation, inclusive policies, global partnerships, capacity building, and fostering South-South learning. Through such unique initiatives, the G20 can further advance its mission of achieving holistic livelihoods to meet the needs of agriculture in a changing world.

The MAHARISHI initiative and the 'Shree Anna' millet campaign aim to promote the cultivation and consumption of millets which are nutrient-dense, drought-tolerant, and resilient. These crops have several advantages in combating malnutrition in terms of nutrient density, diversifying diets, and providing food and

nutritional security during times of drought to the local communities, and poor and unreached populations.

The G20's MAHARISHI initiative aims to strengthen collaborations with international organizations like the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Their shared commitment is to combat malnutrition through scientific research. This research includes efforts to enhance crop varieties, making them more productive, nutritious, and resilient. Additionally, the initiative focuses on promoting sustainable agricultural practices, advancing digital agriculture, building capacity, and advocating for policy changes. We need to enhance our efforts to support agricul-

tural communities in adapting to changing climate conditions. This includes promoting the use of drought-resistant crops, implementing improved soil and water management techniques, and adopting low-input technologies. Sustainable practices like crop rotation, agroforestry, and organic farming should be encouraged, as they are both environmentally friendly and economically viable. These practices play a crucial role in reducing soil degradation and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

The G20, as a platform for major economies, recognizes the global significance of malnutrition and its implications for public health, economic development, and social well-being. Collaborating with

international organizations like ICRISAT allows the G20 to leverage scientific expertise and innovative solutions to address malnutrition effectively.

ICRISAT's Role
ICRISAT, as a renowned international agricultural research institute working on millets and other nutrient-dense crops for over 50 years, has been pivotal in addressing malnutrition and food insecurity through crop improvement, climate resilient agriculture, feed-fodder initiatives, nutrition-sensitive farming practices, integrating biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services. ICRISAT plays a key role in developing climate-resilient crop varieties and advising on adaptive strategies for farmers.

Australia, China open first high-level dialogue in 3 years

AP ■ TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

Australia and China opened their first high-level dialogue in three years on Thursday in a sign of a slight thaw to relations between countries that have clashed on everything from human rights to COVID-19 origins to trade.

"I welcome the recent positive developments in the bilateral relationship, but we know that there is more work to do," said Craig Emerson, the head of the Australian delegation and a former trade minister.

The dialogue being held in Beijing will focus on trade, people-to-people links, and security.

China's former Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said the two countries should work together, but added that "we should adhere to the liberalization of trade and jointly oppose the Cold War mentality, bloc confrontation and trade protectionism".

Beijing often uses those terms in opposing the actions of Western countries, particularly the US.



During the freeze in relations with Beijing, Australia formed a nuclear partnership with the US and the United Kingdom that enables Australia to access nuclear-powered submarines.

Australia's current Foreign Minister Penny Wong has sought to stabilize the two countries' relationship since her party won elections last year.

On Thursday, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony

Albanese also met with China's Premier Li Qiang at the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Indonesia, describing the engagement as positive.

"I told Premier Li that we would continue to cooperate where we can disagree where we must, and engage in our national interest," Albanese said to reporters, according to a statement from his office, saying he would visit China

later this year at the invitation of China's leader Xi Jinping.

China's and Australia's relations had sunk to low depths during the pandemic. The previous Australian government passed laws that ban covert foreign interference in domestic politics, barring Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out Australia's 5G network due to security concerns, and calling for an independent investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, China effectively blocked out Australian barley in 2020 by imposing an 80.5 percent tariff, widely regarded in Australia as punishment. China also put tariffs on Australian wine, beef, and coal, as well as other products. China recently lifted the tariff against barley.

Australia is also hoping to see a breakthrough in the cases of five detained Australians in China, among which is Cheng Lei, a journalist, who has been imprisoned for three years. "We continue to advocate for positive progress on the cases of Australians detained in China," Emerson said.

800 rescued from floodwaters in Greece after rainstorms

AP ■ ATHENS

More than 800 people have been rescued over the past two days from floods in Greece, the fire department said Thursday, after severe rainstorms turned streets into raging torrents, hurling cars into the sea and washing away roads.

The rainstorms have also hit neighbouring Bulgaria and Turkey, leaving 14 people dead in the three countries, including three people in Greece.

Fire department spokesperson Vasilis Vathrakogiannis said swift water rescue specialists and divers from the department's disaster response units, as well as the army, were participating in rescue efforts and were trying to reach remote areas despite roads having been washed away.

The flooding follows on the heels of devastating wildfires that destroyed vast tracts of forest and farmland, burned homes and left more than 20 people dead.

The flooding on Thursday was concentrated mainly in the central towns of Karditsa, where people were reportedly seeking safety from rising water levels on the roofs of their



homes. More rain was forecast for later in the day.

In some areas, floodwaters were higher than 2 metres, Vathrakogiannis said. Tracked vehicles and boats were being used to help evacuate people, but the boats were unable to reach some areas due to the large volume of debris and the strength of the torrents of floodwaters. Frequent lightning meant helicopters were unable to fly, he added.

Government spokesperson Pavlos Marinakis said some areas received more than twice the average annual rainfall of Athens in the space of 12 hours.

Defence Minister Nikos Dendias cut short a trip to Dubai and was returning to Greece "to oversee the greatest contribution of the Armed Forces in dealing with the consequences of the severe weather," he announced on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis postponed his annual state of the economy speech and a news conference scheduled for the weekend in the northern city of Thessaloniki in order to visit the flooded areas.

Police have banned traffic from three regions, including on the island of Skiathos, and have sent numerous emergency phone alerts to people in several parts of the country to avoid venturing outdoors and to move away from basement and ground floor areas of buildings.

On Wednesday, repeated rainstorms also hit the Greek capital, flooding streets and turning part of a major avenue in the city center into a river of mud that swept people off their feet.

Hunt on after terror suspect escapes from London prison

PTI ■ LONDON

A manhunt is on across airports and ports of the UK on Thursday after a terrorist suspect escaped from a London prison where diamond merchant Nirav Modi, who is wanted in India on fraud and money charges, has also been lodged for over three years.

Former British Army soldier Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, who was awaiting trial on charges of breaching the UK's Official Secrets Act at Wandsworth Prison in south-west London, escaped allegedly by clinging to the undercarriage of a delivery van.

The Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command issued an urgent public appeal on Wednesday to help trace the suspect following his escape from one of the UK's largest and overcrowded prisons.

"We have a team of officers who are making extensive and urgent enquiries in order to locate and detain Khalife as quickly as possible," said Commander Dominic Murphy, Head of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command.

"However, the public can help us as well and should anyone see Khalife, or have any information as to where he might be, then please call 999 immediately. I also want to reassure the public that we have no information which indicates, nor any reason to believe that Khalife poses a threat to the wider public, but our advice if you do see him is not to approach him and call 999 straight away," he said.

The suspect is thought to still be in the UK and is believed to have connections to the Kingston area in south-west London.

UK Justice Secretary Alex Chalk said he had called a meeting with the governor of Wandsworth prison to ensure "all necessary steps" had been taken to "secure the prison and progress the investigation".

First opened in 1851, HMP Wandsworth is classed as a category B men's prison which is a level below high-security prisons in the country.

It holds prisoners taken directly from courts in the local area after sentencing as well as those on remand awaiting trial.

Nirav Modi, 52, has been imprisoned there since his arrest on an extradition warrant in March 2019.

'Catholic convents sheltered Jews during WWII'

AP ■ ROME

Researchers have discovered new documentation that substantiates reports that Catholic convents and monasteries in Rome sheltered Jews during World War II, providing names of at least 3,200 Jews whose identities have been corroborated by the city's Jewish community, officials said on Thursday. Researchers from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust research institute and Rome's Jewish community released the findings at an academic conference Thursday held at the Museum of the Shoah, part of Rome's main synagogue.

The documentation doesn't appear to shed any new light on the role of Pope Pius XII during the Nazi occupation of Rome. Historians have long debated Pius' legacy, with supporters insisting he used quiet diplomacy to save Jewish lives and critics saying he remained silent as Roman Jews were rounded up and deported from the Vatican's backyard.



Rather, the new documentation provides names and addresses of people who were sheltered in Catholic institutions during the war, which had only previously been reported in vague terms and numbers by Italy's preeminent historian of the period, Renzo De Felice, in a 1961 book, according to a joint statement from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Yad Vashem and Rome's Jewish Community.

The documentation was discovered in the archives of the Biblical Institute, which is affiliated with the Jesuit-run Gregorian University. It lists more than

4,300 people who were sheltered in the properties of 100 women's and 55 men's religious orders. Of those, 3,600 are identified by name, and research in the archives of Rome's Jewish community "indicates that 3,200 certainly were Jews," the statement said.

"Of the latter it is known where they were hidden and, in certain circumstances, where they lived before the persecution. The documentation thus significantly increases the information on the history of the rescue of Jews in the context of the Catholic institutions of Rome," the statement said.

China will send delegation to North Korea to celebrate its founding as nations foster ties

AP ■ SEOUL (SOUTH KOREA)

A Chinese delegation led by Vice Premier Liu Guozhong will visit North Korea to participate in celebrations for its 75th founding anniversary, which is on Saturday, the North's state media said Thursday.

The report came amid speculation that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is preparing to visit Russia soon for a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that could focus on North Korean arms sales to refill Russian reserves drained by its war on Ukraine.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the visit by Liu's delegation comes at the invitation of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party.

It didn't specify the events the Chinese officials would participate in or whether they would meet Kim.

North Korea didn't immediately say whether a Russian delegation was also invited for the celebrations, which are expected to be highlighted by a

parade of North Korean militia units.

A US official said Monday that Washington expects Kim to make a trip to Russia within this month to meet Putin as the Kremlin tries to acquire military equipment for its war in Ukraine.

According to some US reports, the meeting could happen as early as next week in the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, where Putin is expected to attend an annual economic forum that runs from Sunday to Wednesday.

South Korean intelligence officials believe Russia and North Korea may arrange a "surprise" route for Kim's visit to avoid potential venues reported by the media, according to lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum, who attended a closed-door briefing with officials from Seoul's National Intelligence Service.

In exchange for providing Russia with artillery shells and other ammunition, North Korea could seek badly needed energy and food aid and advanced weapons technologies, analysts



say. There are concerns that potential Russian technology transfers would increase the threat posed by Kim's growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles that are designed to target the United States and its Asian allies, South Korea and Japan.

Amid deepening nuclear tensions with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo, Kim has been trying to boost the visibility of his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he seeks to break out of diplomatic isolation and have North Korea be a part of a united front against the United States. Kim in July invited delegations led by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and

Chinese Communist Party Politburo member Li Hongzhong to a huge military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, where he rolled out his most powerful weapons, including intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the US mainland.

A day before the parade, Kim took Shoigu on a tour of a domestic arms exhibition, which demonstrated North Korea's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine and added to suspicions the North was willing to supply arms to Russia.

Speaking at a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Wednesday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol urged all UN member states to fulfill their obligations under existing Security Council resolutions to maintain sanctions against North Korea designed to limit its nuclear capabilities, including a ban on arms trade with the country, his office said in a statement. It did not say whether Yoon specifically mentioned Russia while expressing those concerns.

Delton Cables Limited
CIN: L31300DL1964PLC004255
Regd. Office : Delton House, 4801, Bharat Ram Road, 24, Darya Ganj, New Delhi - 110022
Website : www.deltoncables.com, E-mail : cs@deltoncables.com

Notice
Notice is hereby given that 58th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the members of Delton Cables Ltd. ("Company") is scheduled to be held on Saturday, September 30, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. through Video Conferencing ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM"), to transact the business(s) as specified in AGM Notice thereof.

Notice is also hereby given that pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Companies (Management & Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Monday, September 25, 2023 to Saturday, September 30, 2023 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of aforesaid AGM.

Notice of the 58th AGM along with the Annual Report for the financial year 2022-23 was sent by electronic mode to those members whose email addresses are registered with the Company/Depositories.

As per Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements), Regulations, 2015 as amended from time to time, the Company is pleased to provide its members the facility to cast their vote electronically, through e-voting services provided by Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL), on all resolutions proposed to be considered at the aforesaid AGM.

Further, the facility for e-voting shall also be available at the AGM. The members who have already cast their vote through remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM through Video Conferencing ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") but shall not be entitled to cast their vote at the AGM.

Mr. Vaibhav Sharma, Company Secretary in whole-time practice, Proprietor of M/s Vaibhav Sharma & Associates, Practising Company Secretaries, has been appointed as Scrutinizer to scrutinize the remote e-voting process and the e-voting at AGM in a fair and transparent manner.

All the members are hereby informed that:

- i. The Ordinary Business(s) and the Special Business(s) as set out in the Notice of 58th AGM of the Company may be transacted through voting by electronic means;
- ii. The remote e-voting period commences on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 (10:00 a.m. IST);
- iii. The remote e-voting period ends on Friday, September 29, 2023 (5:00 p.m. IST);
- iv. Cut-off date is Saturday, September 23, 2023;
- v. Any person, who acquires shares of the Company and becomes member of the Company after dispatch of notice by the Company and holding physical/demat shares as on the cut-off date i.e. September 23, 2023, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at helpdesk.evoting@cdsindia.com or call on toll free no. 1800 22 55 33. The same procedure may be followed by members holding shares in Demat/Physical mode who have not registered/updated their Email IDs with verification details such as folio no., DP ID/Client ID, PAN (scanned copy), demat account statement. However, if a member is already registered with CDSL for remote e-voting then existing user ID and password/PIN for casting vote is to be used. If a member forgets password, the same is to be reset by using "Forgot User Details/Password" option available on www.evotingindia.com.
- vi. The members may note that:
 - A. remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond Friday, September 29, 2023 (5:00 p.m. IST);
 - B. The facility for voting through e-voting shall be made available at the AGM of the Company and members attending the AGM who have not already casted their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to vote at the AGM;
 - C. a member may participate in the AGM even after exercising his right to vote through remote e-voting but shall not be allowed to vote again;
 - D. a person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date i.e. September 23, 2023 only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as e-voting at the AGM;
- vii. The Notice of 58th AGM of the Company is available on the Company's website (www.deltoncables.com) and CDSL's website (www.evotingindia.com); and
- viii. in case of any queries before or during the AGM, members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for members and e-voting user manual available at www.evotingindia.com, under help section or write an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdsindia.com or contact Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Sr. Manager, (CDSL) or call on toll free no. 1800 22 55 33.

The information contained in this notice shall also be available on the website of the Company (www.deltoncables.com) and on the website(s) of BSE limited (www.bseindia.com).

For Delton Cables Limited
Sd/-
Vikas Rawat
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

Place: New Delhi
Date: 07.09.2023

OK PLAY INDIA LIMITED
CIN No: L28219HR1988PLC030347
Regd. Office: 17-18, Roz-Ka-Mao Industrial Estate, Tehsil Nuh, District Mewar, Haryana. - 122103
Website: www.okplay.in, Email: info@okplay.in
Tel: 011-46190000, Fax: 011-46190090

Notice of 34th Annual General Meeting, Book Closure and Remote E-Voting Information

NOTICE is hereby given that the 34th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the members of OK Play India Limited will be held through Video Conferencing ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") on Saturday, the 30th day of September, 2023 at 1.30 p.m. to transact the Ordinary and Special Business, as set out in the Notice of AGM. The Notice of the Meeting, Annual Report for the financial year ended March 31, 2023 and remote e-voting details have been sent in electronic mode to all the members whose e-mail IDs are registered with the Company/RTA/Depository. The date of completion of email of the notices to the shareholders is September 6th, 2023.

In case you have not registered your email ID with the Company/ Depository, please follow below instructions to register your email ID for obtaining annual report for FY 2022-23 and login details for e-voting.

Physical Holding : Send a request to Registrar and Transfer Agents of the Company, MAS Services Limited at info@masserv.com providing Folio number, Name of the shareholder, scanned copy of the share certificate (Front and Back), PAN/ Self attested scanned copy of PAN Card), AADHAR (Self attested scanned copy of Aadhar Card) for registering email address.

Please send your bank detail with original cancelled cheque to our RTA (i.e. MAS Services Limited, T-34, 2nd Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-110020) along with letter mentioning folio no. if not registered already.

Demat Holding : Please contact your Depository Participant ("DP") and register your e-mail address as per the process advised by DP. Please also update your bank detail with your DP. These documents are also available on Company's website www.okplay.in for download by the members. Notice is hereby given in compliance with the provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 as amended and Regulation 44 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that the Company has offered e-voting facility for transacting all the business by National Depository Services (India) Limited (NSDL) through their portal www.evoting.nsdl.com to enable the members to cast their votes electronically. The remote e-voting period commences on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 (09:00 a.m.) and ends on Friday, September 29, 2023 (05:00 p.m.). During this period members of the Company, holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut-off date of September 23, 2023, may cast their vote by remote e-voting. Any person, who acquires shares and becomes member of the Company after dispatch of the notice and holding shares as of the cut-off date i.e. September 23, 2023, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or RTA, MAS Services Limited at info@masserv.com. Members facing any technical issue in login can contact NSDL helpdesk by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or call at toll free no. : 1800 1020 990 and 1800 22 44 30. However, if the members are already registered with NSDL for remote e-voting then they can use their existing user ID and password for casting their vote. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL for voting thereafter. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently. The facility for voting through e-voting shall be made available at the AGM and the members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again. Mr. Puneel Kumar Pandey, Practising Company Secretary (Membership No. A29848 & CP No. 10913) has been appointed as Scrutinizer for the e-voting process. The detailed procedure for remote e-voting is contained in the Notice of the AGM. Any query/grievance relating to e-voting may be addressed to Ms. Meenu Goswami, Company Secretary, OK Play India Limited, Plot No. 17-18, Roz-Ka-Mao, Industrial Estate, Tehsil-Nuh, District-Mewar, Haryana-122103, Email: meenu.goswami@okplay.in. NOTICE is also hereby given pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013, Rule 10 of the Companies (Management & Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that the Register of the Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from September 24, 2023 to September 30, 2023 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of taking record of the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

For OK Play India Limited
Sd/-
Meenu Goswami
Company Secretary

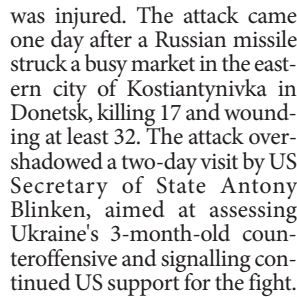
Place: New Delhi
Date : 07 September, 2023

5 drones shot down, including one targeting capital: Russia

AP ■ MOSCOW

Five drones were shot down over three Russian regions overnight, with one targeting the capital, officials said Thursday. There were reports of no casualties.

Meanwhile, Russia launched a fourth day of air attacks on the Ukrainian port city of Izmail, located on the Danube river. Oleh Kiper, regional Governor of Odesa, said infrastructure was damaged in the attack, including grain silos, and one person



was injured. The attack came one day after a Russian missile struck a busy market in the eastern city of Kostiantynivka in Donetsk, killing 17 and wounding at least 32. The attack overshadowed a two-day visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, aimed at assessing Ukraine's 3-month-old counter-offensive and signalling continued US support for the fight.

One drone targeted Moscow, but was shot down southeast of the city without causing any damage or injuries, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

Two more drones were shot down over the southern region of Rostov, which borders Ukraine, said regional Governor Vasily Golubev. The debris fell in the centre of Rostov-on-Don, the region's capital, damaging several cars and shattering windows in three buildings, Golubev said. One person sought medical assistance.

Two other drones were shot down over the Bryansk region, which also borders Ukraine, Governor Alexander Bogomaz reported. Drone debris damaged a railway station and several cars, he said.

3 sailors reach land safely after sharks nearly sink their catamaran

AP ■ CANBERRA

Three round-the-world sailors treached land safely Thursday after sharks nearly sank their catamaran in the Coral Sea. Both of the inflatable hulls on their 9-metre boat were damaged in several attacks by what were thought to be cookiecutter sharks - a small species not considered dangerous to people.

Aerial photos of the men's rescue showed major damage to the boat, which was nearly submerged and a front section of one hull was completely missing. He said the crew had prepared for sharks, but not for such numbers. "There were many. Maybe 20, maybe 30, maybe more," Beryozkin told Seven News television.

Sudan's army chief travels to Qatar for talks with emir as conflict rages

AP ■ CAIRO

Sudan's army chief left for Qatar on Thursday for talks with the country's emir, making his third international trip since fighting broke out between the military and a rival paramilitary force in April, Sudanese state media said.

Sudan plunged into chaos almost five months ago when long-simmering tensions between the military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, escalated into open warfare on April 15.

Burhan planned to hold talks with Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, in the Qatari capital, Doha, according to the state-run SUNA news agency.

Acting Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq and Gen. Ahmed Ibrahim Mufadel, head of the General Intelligence Authority, accompanied him on the trip, SUNA said.

The visit comes amid a flurry of similar diplomatic meetings convened in Egypt and South Sudan. Burhan held talks about the conflict with South Sudan's president, Salva Kiir, on Monday in Juba. Last week, the general met with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt in the Egyptian coastal city of el-Alamein. Burhan's first trip abroad since the conflict broke out. Few details were made public about either trip.

The conflict in the northeast African country is estimated to have killed at least 4,000 people, according to the UN human rights office.

Activists and doctors on the ground say the toll is likely far higher.

The fighting has displaced more than 5 million people, according to the most recent figures produced by the UN's International Organisation for Migration.

Despite international efforts, the conflict has shown few signs of easing. Formal peace negotiations mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia in the kingdom's coastal town of Jeddah were adjourned in late June with both mediators publicly calling out the Rapid Support Forces and the army for continually violating agreed-to truces.

There have been at least nine cease-fires between the army and the RSF since the fighting broke out.

'Trump White House adviser acted above law'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A White House adviser to President Donald Trump acted as if he were "above the law" when he refused to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, prosecutors argued at his trial Wednesday.



Peter Navarro was charged with two counts of contempt of Congress, but his lawyer argued he didn't ignore the House Jan. 6 Committee. Instead, Navarro told members to contact Trump about what might be protected by executive privilege, the attorney said.

A judge has found the privilege argument alone isn't a defense against the charges because Navarro couldn't show evidence that the former Republican president had invoked it.

Both sides rested after committee staffers testified about sending the subpoena and Navarro's response. Closing arguments and jury deliberations are expected Thursday.

Navarro, a senior trade adviser, was subpoenaed in February 2022 by the House panel investigating how and

why a mob of Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol and interrupted the certification of the presidential vote for Joe Biden, a Democrat. Navarro had promoted Trump's baseless claims of mass voter fraud, and the committee thought he might have more information about any connection those claims had to the attack, prosecutor John Crabb said.

But Navarro didn't hand over any emails, reports or notes. When the date came for him to testify before the committee, he didn't show up, Crabb said. Even if the president had invoked executive privilege, Navarro should have come before the committee, answered what questions he could and cited privilege when he couldn't answer, he said. "It wasn't voluntary. It wasn't an invitation. A subpoena is a legal requirement," Crabb said. "We are a nation of laws and our system doesn't work if

people believe they are above the law."

Defense attorney Stanley Woodward told the jury that Navarro did get in touch with committee staffers, but asked them to talk to Trump to see what information the president intended to be protected by executive privilege. That never happened, he said.

"The evidence in this case will not show that Dr. Navarro was willful in his failure to comply," Woodward said. He pushed back on efforts to link Navarro closely with the Jan. 6 attack and said the prosecution's opening arguments were like a movie trailer that promises more than the show delivers: "It's like one of those movies where you get nothing after the preview," he said.

Navarro, a former economics professor, faces up to a year behind bars if convicted. He is the second Trump aide to face criminal charges after refusing to cooperate with the House committee. White House adviser Steve Bannon also made an executive privilege argument but was convicted of two counts of contempt of Congress and sentenced to four months behind bars.

Will pardon all peaceful January 6 protesters: Vivek

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has vowed that he will pardon all peaceful January 6 protesters if he gets elected as the next US president in 2024.

The 38-year-old Indian American entrepreneur has gained traction after he denounced the US Justice Department for its "political persecution" of non-violent protesters at the Republican primary presidential debate last month.

"America now has a two-tiered justice system: Antifa and BLM rioters roam free while peaceful January 6 protesters are imprisoned without bail. Biden's 'Department of Injustice' has executed over 1,000 arrests for nonviolent offenses related to January 6, casting a dark shadow over Lady Justice and the foundational principles of our legal system," he said in a statement.

"To unify this country, I commit as president to pardon all Americans who were targets of politicised federal prosecutions and those denied due process. This includes all peaceful, nonviolent January 6 protesters who were denied their constitutional due process



rights," he said on Wednesday.

The January 6 riot saw more than 2,000 people enter the US Capitol as lawmakers certified the results of the 2020 election, in which President Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump.

The mob stormed the Capitol following a speech from Trump, who was speaking at a rally not far from the Capitol grounds. In his speech, Trump claimed election fraud and called on then-Vice-President Mike Pence to overturn the results.

The riot led to the biggest police investigation in US history with hundreds of people accused of criminal offenses.

Ramaswamy said he will end the weaponisation of police

power in America and noted that every Republican candidate must be clear on hard issues.

He said on Sunday that while he expects to become the party's nominee for the November 2024 US elections, he will vote for Trump if the former president secures the nomination.

He also expressed his intention to pardon Trump, who currently faces an array of legal challenges, should he be elected as President of the United States.

"If Donald Trump's the nominee — yes, I will support him, and if I'm the president, yes, I will pardon him because that will help reunite the country. But it's not the most important thing I'm going to do as the next president. It is the table stakes for moving this country forward," Ramaswamy told ABC news.

Following his impressive performance in the inaugural Republican primary presidential debate last month, Ramaswamy, an entrepreneur-turned-politician, has experienced a surge in popularity, competing alongside fellow Indian American rival Nikki Haley, the former Governor of South Carolina.

Prosecutors seeking new indictment for Hunter Biden

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Federal prosecutors plan to ask a grand jury to indict President Joe Biden's son Hunter by the end of the month, according to court documents filed Wednesday.

The exact charges the president's son would face were not immediately clear, but appeared related to a gun possession charge in which he was accused of having a firearm while being a drug user. He has also been under investigation by federal prosecutors for his business dealings.

U.S. Attorney for Delaware David Weiss, newly named a special counsel in the case, referred to a seeking an indictment before Sept. 29 in a status report required by Judge Maryellen Noreika.

Defense attorneys have argued that an agreement sparing Hunter Biden from prosecution on a felony gun charge remains in place. It was part of a plea deal on misdemeanor tax offenses that fell apart during a court appearance in July.

Biden was charged in June with two misdemeanor crimes of failure to pay more than USD 100,000 in taxes from over USD 1.5 million in income in both 2017 and 2018.

Mexico ends federal ban on abortion, patchwork of state restrictions remains

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

A Mexican Supreme Court ruling that invalidated all federal criminal penalties for abortion continued a regional trend of widening access to the procedure but left in place a patchwork of varying state restrictions.

The high court ordered on Wednesday that abortion be removed from the federal penal code, and will require the federal public health service and all federal health institutions to offer abortion to anyone who requests it.

That will mean access for millions of Mexicans. The Social Security Service and other federal institutions provide health care to most people who work

in the formal economy. "No woman or pregnant person, nor any health worker, will be able to be punished for abortion," the Information Group for Chosen Reproduction, known by its Spanish initials GIRE, said in a statement.

Abortions are not widely prosecuted as a crime, but many doctors refuse to provide them, citing the law.

Some 20 Mexican states, however, still criminalise abortion. Those laws were not affected by the Supreme Court ruling, but abortion rights advocates will likely ask state judges to follow its logic.

Celebration of the ruling soon spilled out onto social media.

"Today is a day of victory and justice for Mexican women!" Mexico's National Institute for Women wrote in a message on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. The government organisation called the decision a "big step" toward gender equality.

Senator Olga Sanchez Cordero, a former Supreme Court justice, applauded the ruling, saying on X that it represented an advance toward "a more just society in which the rights of all are respected". She called on Mexico's Congress to pass legislation in response.

But others in the highly religious country decried the decision. Irma Barrientos, director of the Civil Association of the Rights of the Conceived, said



Opponents will continue the fight against expanded abortion access.

"We're not going to stop," Barrientos said. "Let's remember what happened in the United States. After 40 years, the Supreme Court reversed its abortion decision, and we're

not going to stop until Mexico guarantees the right to life from the moment of conception."

The court said on X that "the legal system that criminalised abortion" in Mexican federal law was unconstitutional because it "violates the human rights of women and people with the ability to gestate".

The decision came two years after the court ruled that abortion was not a crime in one northern state. That ruling set off a slow state-by-state process of decriminalising it.

Last week, the central state of Aguascalientes became the 12th state to drop criminal penalties.

Abortion rights activists will have to continue seeking legalisation state by state, though

Wednesday's decision should make that easier. State legislatures can also act on their own to erase abortion penalties.

For now, the ruling does not mean that every Mexican woman will be able to access the procedure immediately, explained Fernanda Diaz de León, sub-director and legal expert for women's rights group IPAS.

What it does do - in theory - is obligate federal agencies to provide care to patients. That's likely to have a cascade of effects.

Diaz de León said removing the federal ban takes away another excuse used by care providers to deny abortions in states where the procedure is no longer a crime.

Myanmar scribe gets a 20-year sentence

AP ■ BANGKOK

A court in Myanmar sentenced a photojournalist for an underground news agency to 20 years in prison with hard labor for his coverage of a deadly May cyclone's aftermath, the media organisation said Wednesday.

The sentence given Sai Zaw

Thaika, a photographer for the independent online news service Myanmar Now, appeared to be the most severe for any journalist detained since the military overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

The press freedom group Reporters Without Borders said in April that Myanmar is the

world's second-biggest jailer of journalists, behind only China. The country ranks near the bottom of the group's 2023 World Press Freedom Index, placing 176th out of 180 countries.

Myanmar Now, which operates underground, reported that a military tribunal tried, convicted and sentenced Sai Zaw Thaika, 40, during the first

court hearing since he was detained in the western state of Rakhine.

The proceedings took place inside Insein prison in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, where the photographer was jailed after his arrest. The news agency said Sai Zaw Thaika was allowed no family visits and denied legal representation.

Japan launches rocket carrying X-ray telescope to explore origins of universe, lunar lander

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan launched a rocket Thursday carrying an X-ray telescope that will explore the origins of the universe as well as a small lunar lander.

The launch of the HII-A rocket from Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan was shown on live video by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, known as JAXA.

"We have a liftoff," the narrator at JAXA said as the rocket flew up in a burst of smoke then flew over the Pacific.

Thirteen minutes after the launch, the rocket put into orbit around Earth a satellite called the X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission, or XRISM, which will measure the speed and makeup of what lies between galaxies.

That information helps in studying how celestial objects were formed, and hopefully can lead to solving the mystery of how the universe was created, JAXA says.

In cooperation with NASA, JAXA will look at the strength of light at different wavelengths, the temperature of things in space and their shapes and brightness.

David Alexander, director of the Rice Space Institute at Rice University, believes the mission is significant for delivering insight into the properties of hot



plasma, or the superheated matter that makes up much of the universe.

Plasmas have the potential to be used in various ways, including healing wounds, making computer chips and cleaning the environment.

"Understanding the distribution of this hot plasma in space and time, as well as its dynamical motion, will shed light on diverse phenomena such as black holes, the evolution of chemical elements in the universe and the formation of galactic clusters," Alexander said.

Also aboard the latest Japanese rocket is the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, a lightweight lunar lander. The Smart Lander won't make lunar orbit for three or four months after the launch and would likely attempt a landing early next year, according to the space agency.

Central African Republic faces humanitarian crisis: UN

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Central African Republic is facing a humanitarian crisis with 2.4 million people in need of assistance and the UN's USD 534 million appeal only 36 per cent funded, a UN official said on Wednesday.

Mohamed Ag Ayoya, deputy special representative for the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, told a news conference that 10 years of conflict have displaced half a million people within the country while 700,000 have fled to neighbouring countries.

Mineral-rich but impoverished CAR has a population of 6 million.

But Ayoya said CAR has also opened its doors to 38,000 returnees and asylum-seekers from Chad, and more recently to 18,000 returnees and asylum seekers from another neighbour, Sudan, where a conflict between rival generals and their supporters is now in its fifth month.

Ayoya stressed that CAR "is not just a humanitarian crisis, it's also actually a protection and a gender crisis".

Advertisement for Northern Railway One Station One Product scheme, detailing application procedures and station lists.

Public Notice regarding insolvency resolution process for Teriyaki Builders Private Limited, including details of creditors and submission requirements.

Advertisement for Gian Life Care Limited, providing contact information and details of their services.

Advertisement for Gian Life Care Limited regarding the 5th Annual General Meeting (AGM), including notice details and voting procedures.

ASEAN-India focus on rice, millets to ensure food security

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Agreeing to exchange information on rice and acknowledging the multiple benefits of millets, the ASEAN-India Summit held here on Thursday decided to strengthen cooperation on food security and nutrition through promoting mutual trade and investment.

The Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India in the 'ASEAN-Indian Joint Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises' declared to "exchange information on national policy frameworks, particularly for rice and other priority crop commodities."

Rice is a staple and critical component of regular diet for billions of people across Asia. The challenges are many, including the changing climatic conditions, especially lower rainfall that has shrunk rice production, and other factors.

In his address at the 20th ASEAN-India summit here in the Indonesian capital, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the 10-nation grouping as the epicentre of growth as the region plays a crucial role in global development.

The statement also welcomed the 'ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises' adopted on September 5, 2023, and committed to maintaining and supporting ASEAN as the epicentre of global growth and "to increase concerted efforts between ASEAN and India in sustaining supply in the food trade supply chain despite disruptions."



Through the September 5 statement, the ASEAN nations had agreed to ensure "unimpeded trade and flow of agricultural products and essential farm inputs" by facilitating logistics and transport distribution, refraining from imposing unjustified trade barriers, restrictions and other trade-distortive measures."

The ASEAN-Indian Joint Leaders' Statement also acknowledged the nutritional richness, climate resilience, health benefits and ecological sustainability of millets.

"(The ASEAN-India) support efforts to mainstream the cultivation and harvesting of millets for ensuring global food security, promoting biodiversity and transforming agri-food system," the statement read as the focus on millets coincided with the International Year of Millets with millets use and production pushed globally and domestically by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The members of the ASEAN recognised the interconnectedness and vulnerabilities of the Indo-Pacific region in the face of regional and global challenges, such as the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, heightened volatility in the global financial market, and geopolitical tensions that impact among others, the global food and energy security, "all of which could potentially affect economic and trade relations between ASEAN and India."

As per preliminary ASEAN data, the two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and India reached USD 77.0 billion in 2019, while total FDI inflows from India amounted to USD 2.0 billion, placing India as ASEAN's sixth-largest trading partner and eighth-largest source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners.

Aimed at strengthening cooperation on food security and nutrition, through promoting trade & investment, and sharing of information, experience, and best practices in the food, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, the ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement said it also agrees to "encourage financing climate-friendly technologies."

These climate-friendly technologies would be encouraged in partnership with Multilateral Development Banks and development finance institutions on ASEAN-India mutually agreed terms, and adopting a climate-smart approach based on agricultural system models for sustainable agricultural production, the statement said.

Mcap of BSE-listed firms climb to fresh all-time high of ₹319.10 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms climbed to a fresh all-time peak of Rs 319.10 lakh crore on Thursday, driven by an optimistic trend in equities, where Sensex recorded its fifth straight day rally.

The BSE benchmark recovered all the early lost ground and finally ended with a gain of 385.04 points or 0.58 per cent at 66,265.56.

In the past five sessions, the benchmark has jumped 1,434.15 points or 2.21 per cent.

The buoyancy in equities helped the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reach a new record high of Rs 3,19,10,019.04 crore. Investors wealth also climbed Rs 9.50 lakh crore in five days.

"After a volatile start, markets rebounded sharply to maintain their upward bias for



the fifth consecutive session, even as foreign inflows continued to be patchy amid falling rupee and global economic uncertainty. Today's rally came despite weakness across the Asian and US markets, as investors remain upbeat about India's long-term growth prospects," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

From the Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro jumped 4.26 per cent to emerge as the biggest gainer, followed by IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Power Grid, NTPC, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank and Wipro.

Among the indices, capital goods rallied 2.29 per cent, industrials climbed 1.55 per cent, realty jumped 1.44 per cent, bankex gained 1.12 per cent, utilities (1.04 per cent), financial services (0.97 per cent) and energy (0.96 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the only laggard. "The domestic market initially opened with a lacklustre performance, influenced by weak global cues. However, as the day progressed, a decline in US bond yields and crude oil prices injected some positivity into the market. "This optimism was most prominent in banking stocks. Interestingly, mid-and small-cap stocks managed to retain investor interest even though their valuations are relatively high," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

"The domestic market initially opened with a lacklustre performance, influenced by weak global cues. However, as the day progressed, a decline in US bond yields and crude oil prices injected some positivity into the market. "This optimism was most prominent in banking stocks. Interestingly, mid-and small-cap stocks managed to retain investor interest even though their valuations are relatively high," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Industry concerned over data reporting requirements under EU's carbon tax

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian industry from sectors like steel has flagged its serious concerns over the 'burdensome' work of data reporting requirement to comply with the European Union's carbon tax decision and has urged the government to take up the matter with the EU, an official said.

The issue was flagged in a meeting called by the commerce ministry on September 6. The government and industry held discussions on implementation issues regarding the European Union's move to impose carbon tax or carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM).

Industry is of the view that the data sharing exercise is burdensome as the EU is seeking a lot of information. "Second, the industry also



stated that the EU is also seeking commercially sensitive information. They want reduction in this reporting requirement. We discussed all those issues as to how that reporting will be done, we are trying to understand their problems," the official added.

According to think tank GTRI co-founder Ajay Srivastava, CBAM imposes massive data compliance requirements on Indian exporters. "For every consignment,

exporters have to share hundreds of thousand data points, explanations, and methods used with EU counterparts. Neglect or misreporting leads to stiff penalties," Srivastava has said, adding, with low level of domestic data capture, Indian firms need to set up systems first before reporting data.

The official also said that the power ministry is working on the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS). India is pressing the European Union for a mutual recognition agreement for these CCTS certificates as it helps the domestic players.

The September 6 meeting was attended by senior officials from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, ministries of Finance, Power, Steel and Mines, besides representatives of the steel and engineering sector.

The meeting was a follow-up of a similar meeting held in May where the industry was asked to be ready for the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM). The tax would have an adverse impact on India's exports of metals such as iron, steel and aluminium products to the EU.

Stock markets extend gains for fifth day; Sensex revisits 66K

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex climbed over 385 points to reclaim the 66,000 mark on Thursday, propelled by robust buying in index majors HDFC Bank, L&T and SBI amid a weak trend in global equities.

A decline in crude oil prices in the international market also supported the domestic equities, traders said.

Rising for the fifth straight day, the BSE Sensex recovered all the early lost ground and finally closed with a gain of 385.04 points or 0.58 per cent at 66,265.56. During the day, it hit a low of 65,672.34 and a high of 66,296.90.

The Nifty advanced 116 points or 0.59 per cent to settle at 19,727.05.

"Markets extended recovery on the weekly expiry day and gained over half a per cent. The tone was range bound in the first half however a sharp surge in the select heavyweights turned the bias



in favour of bulls as the day progressed," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

From the Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro jumped 4.26 per cent to emerge as the biggest gainer, followed by IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Power Grid, NTPC, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank and Wipro.

and Hindustan Unilever were the major laggards.

"Benchmark Indices staged a smart afternoon rally today with the help of PSU and Infrastructure stocks. With a 13.5 per cent share of the market capitalisation, PSU companies have seen a robust jump from just over 9 per cent in 2021 even as several midcap state-owned entities have seen a multi-fold rise in their stock values during this period.

"ETF flows during the late afternoon also helped large-

caps recover lost ground," S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.79 per cent, and smallcap index jumped 0.40 per cent.

Among the indices, capital goods rallied 2.29 per cent, industrials climbed 1.55 per cent, realty jumped 1.44 per cent, bankex gained 1.12 per cent, utilities (1.04 per cent), financial services (0.97 per cent) and energy (0.96 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the only laggard. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading in the green in early deals. The US markets ended in negative territory on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.72 per cent to USD 89.95 a barrel.

"The domestic market initially opened with a lacklustre

performance, influenced by weak global cues. However, as the day progressed, a decline in US bond yields and crude oil prices injected some positivity into the market.

"This optimism was most prominent in banking stocks. Interestingly, mid-and small-cap stocks managed to retain investor interest even though their valuations are relatively high. Nonetheless, the persistently weak trade data from China continues to cast a shadow over the global market's outlook," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,245.86 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

In the previous session on Wednesday, fag-end buying helped the BSE benchmark climb 100.26 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 65,880.52. The Nifty advanced 36.15 points or 0.18 per cent to end at 19,611.05.

Rupee falls 9p to settle at all-time low of 83.22 against US dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee depreciated for the fourth straight day and settled 9 paise lower at its lifetime low of 83.22 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday amid a firm American currency and elevated crude oil prices.

Positive trend in the domestic equity markets, however, provided a cushion to the rupee, according to forex traders.

Crude oil breached the USD 90 per barrel mark after oil producing countries agreed to extend supply cut till December this year while dollar stayed firm on safe-haven demand.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.15 against the dollar and traded in the range of 83.12 to 83.22 against the greenback. It ended at the lowest level of 83.22 (provisional)



against the dollar, registering a fall of 9 paise from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee settled 9 paise lower at 83.13 against the dollar. Earlier, the Indian currency had closed at the same level of 83.13 on August 21.

The domestic unit has declined 60 paise since Monday when it had closed 9 paise lower at 82.71 against the greenback. On Tuesday, the unit had plunged 33 paise, the sharpest fall this week.

"We expect rupee to trade with a negative bias on strong dollar and elevated crude oil prices. Disappointing European

data may further support dollar. Rising US treasury yields and concerns over global economic growth may also weigh on rupee," Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.09 per cent to 104.95.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.39 per cent lower at USD 90.25 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex closed 385.04 points or 0.58 per cent higher at 66,265.56 points while the broader Nifty jumped 116 points or 0.59 per cent to end at 19,727.05 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,245.86 crore, according to exchange data.

INBRIEF

DDA'S CYCLE WALK PROJECT: A PRO ECOLOGY INITIATIVE

New Delhi: The Cycle Walk project is envisioned as a Pro Ecology initiative as a part of the Climate Change Resilience effort of the Government to serve the twin purpose of strengthening the forest and Master Plan greens as well as creating a safe dedicated walking and cycling track for citizens to engage meaningfully with the beautiful city forests and Master Plan greens of Delhi. The Leg A of the Cyclewalk project starting from Sangam Vihar to Malviya Nagar Metro Station, imagines planting of thousands of Indigenous trees and transplantation of a few trees within the forests.

POWERGRID ORGANISES OSOWOG AT SHANGRI-LA

Gurugram: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) organised a seminar on "Transnational Grid Interconnections for One Sun, One World, One Grid" (OSOWOG) at Hotel Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi in the run up to the G20 event to be held in Delhi. The gathering was virtually addressed by RK Singh, Minister of Power, New & Renewable Energy.

VIT-AP WINS BASKET BALL TOURNAMENT

Amaravati: VIT-AP University Men's Basketball team won the Inter University Invitational Basketball Ball tournament organised on the occasion of National Sports day on August 29. Inter University Invitational Basketball Ball tournament organised by Vignan University. VIT-AP University Men's Basketball team defeated University, SRM University, MB University, Vignan University and VIGNAN LARA and clinched the championship trophy.

VIT-AP Vice chancellor SV Kota Reddy with Men's Basketball team who won Gold Medal in the Inter University Invitational Basketball Ball tournament

Cost of vegetarian thali up 24% in Aug on higher tomato prices: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Higher tomato prices pushed up the cost of vegetarian thali by 24 per cent in August compared to the year-ago period, according to a report.

The cost, however, eased marginally when compared to July, Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics monthly 'Roti Rice Rate' report said on Thursday.

In August, the cost of a vegetarian thali declined marginally month-on-month on a high base and was elevated year-on-year for the second time this fiscal, primarily because of firm tomato prices.

The cost of a non-vegetarian thali rose 13 per cent year-on-year, it added.

Of the 24 per cent rise in the vegetarian thali cost, 21 per cent can be attributed solely to the price of tomato, which rose 176 per cent year-on-year to Rs 102 per kg in August compared to Rs 37 per kg in the same month last year, the report said.



As per the report, for non-vegetarian thali, the increase was less as the price of broilers, which contributes to more than 50 per cent of the cost, is estimated to have risen a moderate 1-3 per cent year-on-year.

A 17 per cent decline in the price of vegetable oil and 14 per cent in potatoes in August as against the year-ago period, cushioned the cost of both thalis to an extent, it said.

The report said the prices of thalis could drop in September as tomato retail price has halved month-on-month to Rs 51 per kg.

Also, the cost of a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder, which was Rs 1,103 in August, has been cut to Rs 903 from September, could provide more relief to consumers, it added.

'Huge potential to increase exports of organic agri goods'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is a huge potential to increase exports of organic agri products as the global market stood at about USD 135 billion and India's shipments are only over USD 700 million, a top government official said on Thursday.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that the industry should also work on improving the quality and standards of these products. "Organic food segment is an important area. We need to work on this. The world market is about USD 135 billion and India's share is USD 700 million, so there is a huge potential in this... We are focusing on the sector," Barthwal said here while inaugurating a fair of organic products - BIOFAC INDIA at India Expo Mart in

Greater Noida. It was organised by APEDA.

He also said that there is a need to promote Indian standards of these goods and comply with the standards of importing countries.

The secretary urged the industry to promote the logo of India organic as it would help in promoting the credibility of the products in the international market.

He added that there are several goods which India is producing organically like avocado and passion fruit and there is a need to increase awareness about these domestically-produced products.

"Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority should run a campaign about these products which are available in India," Barthwal said.

Dhoni-daughter bonding on 'Mann Ki Shanti'

New Delhi: Zed Black announced the launch of its latest TVC campaign for premium incense sticks featuring the cricketing legend and former captain of the Indian cricket team MS Dhoni.

"Mann Ki Shanti" is not

just a TVC campaign, it's a heartfelt endeavour to bring attention to the value of daily prayers in maintaining mental and emotional equilibrium," said Ankit Agrawal, Director, Mysore Deep Perfumery House & Zed Black.

Reliance's Performax Activewear eyes 5-fold growth in 3 yrs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Retail expects a five-fold growth in its sportswear business in the next three years, led by a spurt in sporting activities, increasing awareness for a healthy lifestyle, and a growing economy, a company official said on Thursday.

Reliance Retail, part of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries, on Thursday announced a partnership of Performax with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to become the official kit and merchandise sponsor of the Indian football team.

To be part of the transfor-

mation journey when people are looking at sporting events beyond cricket and visualising sports as a carrier, Reliance Retail with its sportswear brand Performax is proving an affordable option, said its Fashion & Lifestyle President & CEO Akhilesh Prasad.

Though the current market size of sportswear is very small in India and largely dominated by local brands, Prasad said it has huge room for growth and Reliance Retail looks itself as a "catalyst" for this by providing affordable quality products in comparison to the leading international brands operating in the segment.

'Women leadership for India growth'

New Delhi: Women in India have exhibited extraordinary leadership aptitude and qualities, propelling their careers to pinnacles of success despite formidable challenges.

Appreciation, such as the CII Corporate Women Leadership Awards not only recognise individual accomplishments but also serve as a powerful testament to the remarkable contributions of women in driving innovation, growth, and sustainability within the corporate sphere, said Rumjhum Chatterjee, ex-Chairperson, CII Northern Region.

Alcaraz defeats Zverev to reach semis

AP ■ NEW YORK
Top seed Carlos Alcaraz defeated Alexander Zverev in straight sets on Wednesday to cruise into the US Open semi-finals and keep his title defence on track. The Spaniard will play third seed Daniil Medvedev on Friday for a place in the final after sweeping Zverev aside 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in another clinical performance. Alcaraz was not at his spectacular best but dominated at critical moments with Zverev perhaps feeling the effects of a 4hr 41min outing in the last 16 in the tournament's longest match so far. The world number one converted all four of his break points, while Zverev failed to take any of his five chances. "I'm feeling really comfortable playing on this court, playing in New York," said Alcaraz, who has dropped just one set en route to the last four. "I'm feeling strong. I think I'm ready for a great battle against Medvedev." The 20-year-old Alcaraz is now 24-1 in his last four Grand Slams

going back to the start of last year's US Open. His only loss in that time came to Novak Djokovic in the French Open semi-finals. Zverev sensed an opportunity when he twice brought up break point in the seventh game, but Alcaraz held firm and then rubbed salt in the wound by smashing a volley at the net to dart 5-3 ahead. A comfortable service game earned Alcaraz the set and he didn't wait long till to hammer home his advantage, whipping a crunching backhand to break for a 2-1 lead in the second set. The top seed punished a Zverev double fault by breaking once more for 5-2, cemented with a one-two combination of blistering forehands. Alcaraz snuffed out a break point in the second game of the third set, thwarting Zverev twice more two games later -- continuing the theme of raising his game throughout when it mattered most. He needed no second invitation when another opening presented itself on Zverev's serve at 4-all, slashing a wicked forehand to close in on victory before serving it out for a spot in the semi-finals.



DANIIL WINS
Daniil Medvedev defeated fellow Russian Andrey Rublev 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 in scorching conditions Wednesday to reach his fourth US Open semi-final and set up a meeting with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz. Third seed and 2021 champion Medvedev rallied from a break down in all three sets as he condemned a frustrated Rublev to a ninth straight Grand Slam quarter-final loss. Medvedev will play Alcaraz for a place in Sunday's final after an energy-sapping duel against the eighth-ranked Rublev as the temper-

ature hit 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius) in New York. At one point during the third set Medvedev muttered to a nearby TV camera "one player is going to die and they're going to see" as he grabbed a towel mid-game. "The conditions were brutal. The only good thing is that both players suffer, so it's tough for both of us," Medvedev said after the 2hr 48min encounter, during which the extreme heat policy was in effect. However, it only applies at the conclusion of the third set in the men's tournament when players are allowed to leave the court for 10 minutes. "At the end of the first set I kind of couldn't see the ball anymore. I kind of just played with sensations," added Medvedev. Medvedev arrived at his post-match press conference with visible red blotches on his face, the result he said of towelling down regularly after points. "Because we are sweating so much and use a lot of towels, I have no skin left on my nose, and here it's red, but it's not because of the sun so it's not like you're burned but I have no skin left." "I just saw Andrey in the locker room and his face very red, and it's also not because of the sun so I guess it's the same. That tells everything, like we left everything out there." "Not thinking about health" Rublev accepted the roasting heat and humidity were uncontrollable factors and part of the challenge. "I'm not even thinking about my health," he said. "At this moment, these moments I'm thinking that, I don't know, I need to fight. Doesn't matter how is tough. I mean, the sport is not easy. And you need to be ready for everything that can happen." "I know he never gives up. The thing is he knows I never (give up) too," said Medvedev. "A few moments in the third set he was up a break. "I couldn't wait to go to the cold shower, but the thing about that is when you come out either you can't move because your body blocks or you feel better." "I just thought I don't care, I'm just going to do it, but I didn't need to, so I am going to do it now."

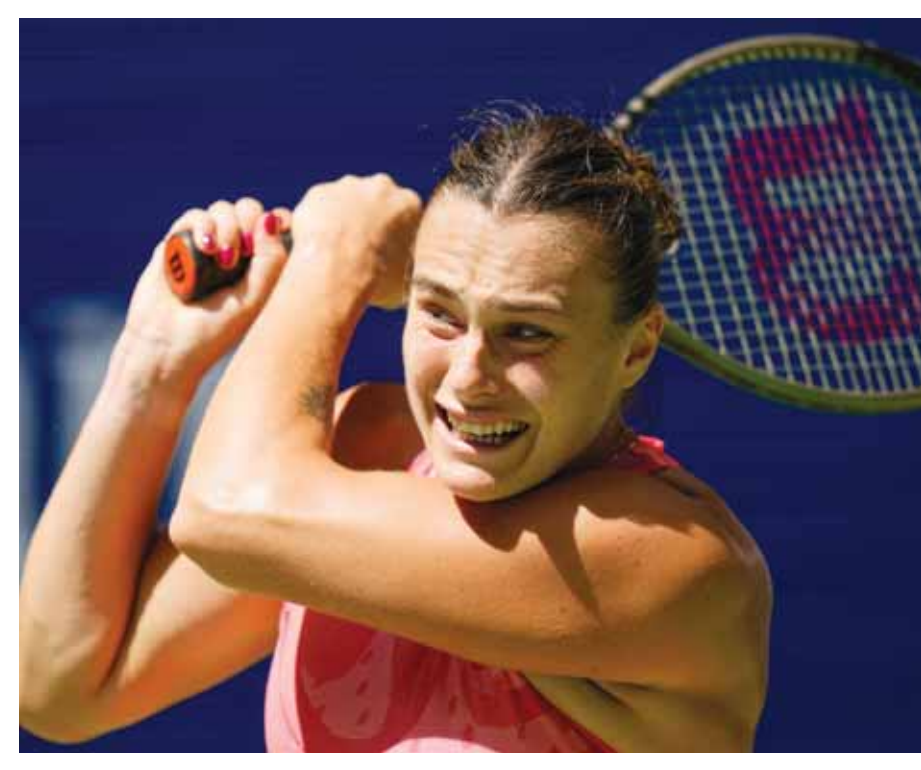


Osaka to return for 2024 Aus Open

AP ■ NEW YORK
Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka plans to return to tennis in time for the 2024 Australian Open, saying Wednesday her break from the sport "really fueled a fire in me". The 25-year-old Japanese star gave birth to daughter Shai in July and hasn't played since September 2022, when she made her last tournament appearance at the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo. In an interview with ESPN at the US Open on Wednesday, Osaka replied "yes" when asked if she would be in Melbourne at the start of next year. Osaka, who participated in a mental health forum with swimming legend Michael Phelps at Flushing Meadows, said she was anticipating making a full-time return to the women's tour in 2024. "It's definitely way more tournaments than I used to play," said Osaka. "I think it's because I realise like I don't know how the beginning of the year is going to go for me," she explained. "I don't know the level of play and I think I kind of have to ease into it, so at the very least I'm going to set myself up for a very good end of the year." The top ranked player in the world in 2019, Osaka -- who grew up in the United States -- is now ranked 603rd. She has won four Grand Slam singles titles with triumphs in the Australian Open in 2019 and 2021 and the US Open in 2018 and 2020.

Sabalenka beats Zheng to reach US Open last 4

AP ■ NEW YORK
Aryna Sabalenka stayed on course for her second Grand Slam title of the season after pummeling China's Zheng Qinwen in straight sets to reach the US Open semi-finals on Wednesday. Australian Open champion Sabalenka -- who will take over as world number one next week -- booked her place in the last four with a 6-1, 6-4 victory in 1hr 13min. The Belarusian second seed will face Madison Keys of the United States in the last four. "I think I definitely played great tennis today," said Sabalenka, relying on a dominant serve to overwhelm Zheng. Sabalenka was assured of replacing Iga Swiatek at the top of the women's rankings after the Polish No.1 crashed out of the US Open on Sunday. However Sabalenka said she is not thinking about her new-found status as the world's top player just yet. "Of course I'm happy... it's incredible for me and my family. "But I have some things still to do in New York this year and I'll think about becoming No.1 after the US Open."



AUSTRALIAN OPEN CHAMPION ARYNA SABALENKA, WHO WILL TAKE OVER AS WORLD NUMBER ONE NEXT WEEK BOOKED HER PLACE IN THE LAST FOUR WITH A 6-1, 6-4 VICTORY IN ONE HOUR AND 13 MINUTES
Sabalenka has now reached the semi-finals at the last five Grand Slam events she has played in, a run that started at last year's US Open. She was within a point of reaching the French Open final in June, and lost in three sets in the Wimbledon semi-finals in July. Sabalenka says those losses left her more battle-hardened for her campaign in New York. "I had a couple of really tough losses this year, but as I said, we're not losing; we're learning," Sabalenka said. "I just have really strong belief that all those tough matches that I lost will help me in the future in other tough matches, other tough battles." Rising Chinese star Zheng had been dreaming of pulling off another upset after reaching her first Grand Slam quarter-final by downing last year's finalist Ons Jabeur in the fourth round. But the 20-year-old 23rd seed never looked like toppling the hard-hitting Sabalenka, who threatened to run away with the match after a blistering start in which she

Zheng added. "Today I didn't handle it well. That's why I couldn't break her even once." **KEYS STUNS VONDROUSOVA**
Madison Keys of the United States stunned Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova to reach the semi-finals of the US Open on Wednesday. Keys, a US Open finalist in 2017, produced a disciplined performance to clinch a 6-1, 6-4 victory in 1hr 26min on the Arthur Ashe Stadium. The American 17th seed will play second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus on Thursday for a place in the final. Czech ninth seed Vondrousova, who made history in July after becoming the first unseeded woman to win Wimbledon, was left ruing an inability to convert any of nine break points against Keys. Keys by contrast seized every opportunity that came her way, converting all three break points she earned to advance to the last four of a Grand Slam for the sixth time. Keys said the home support had helped her survive Vondrousova's nine break points. "I love playing here, in front of a home crowd -- you never feel like you can't get out of any situation," Keys said.

Ronaldo 'wants more' with Portugal

AP ■ LISBON
Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo said Wednesday he wants to go "even further" after becoming the first player to score 850 career goals with Saudi club side Al-Nassr. "I want more," the forward told a press conference before training with the national side at Oeiras, on the outskirts of Lisbon, ahead of upcoming European Championship qualifiers. "As long as I play I want to set the bar very high, I have to think big," continued the 38-year-old. Ronaldo marked his 200th international cap last June by scoring the only goal in Portugal's victory over Iceland, which allowed the Selecao to stay top of Group J in Euro 2024 qualifying. On Friday, the 2016 European champions will play Slovakia in Bratislava and Luxembourg three days later at the Algarve stadium, in the south of Portugal. "I really want to win these two matches. If we win we will practically qualify," said the five-time Ballon d'Or winner. Asked about his rivalry with Argentina's Lionel Messi, Ronaldo replied that the two "respected each other" and he believes they have "changed the history of football". Ronaldo this year marks his 20th anniversary in the national side, saying he was "proud" of this "longevity". "I want to continue, because I feel good and useful but anything can happen," he said, adding for now he wanted to "enjoy the moment" and set himself the goal of "having an excellent Euro".



Gray leaves Everton for Saudi club Al-Ettifaq

AP ■ LONDON
Demarai Gray has left Everton for Al-Ettifaq ahead of Thursday's transfer deadline in the Saudi Pro League. The 27-year-old forward is the latest Premier League player to head to the Gulf nation, joining former Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson at the club managed by Steven Gerrard. Gray's departure from Goodison Park for an undisclosed fee, reported to be £8 million (\$10 million), comes after the deterioration of his relationship with Everton manager Sean Dyche. The winger aired his grievances on Instagram, saying it was "difficult to play for someone who doesn't show you respect as a person". Dyche responded by saying Gray had effectively gone on strike, making clear he did not want to train as he believed he had secured a move away.



Havertz 'relaxed' over 'bumpy' Arsenal start

AP ■ LONDON
Arsenal forward Kai Havertz said on Thursday he was staying calm despite his "bumpy" start in north London following his big money move from Chelsea. Speaking on international duty at a press conference in Wolfsburg ahead of Germany's friendly with Japan on Saturday, Havertz told the media he was "clearly busy" trying to integrate with his new side. "I think so far in my career I had phases here and there where things were a little bumpy -- and of course I know that you (media) after four matchdays will just point out the negatives, and a lot of bad stuff will be written," he said. "It's not the first time I've come to a new club and so I know that it can take a bit longer and so I am relaxed about it." With no goals or assists in his first four Premier League games for Arsenal, Havertz has come under fire, prompting manager Mikel Arteta to defend him. After withdrawing Havertz 56 minutes into Arsenal's 2-2 draw with Fulham in late August, Arteta said the forward had "already done really good things" but admitted the final touch was missing. "In a lot of situations he should have scored a lot of goals already this season. That's the thing that is missing there," said Arteta. Arsenal, who finished runners-up to Manchester City in the Premier League last season to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in six seasons, have three wins and a draw so far this season. "It's only my second month there, so that's why I'm relatively relaxed," added Havertz. The 24-year-old, who scored the winner in Chelsea's 1-0 win over Manchester City in the 2021 Champions League final, moved to Arsenal in the summer for a reported fee of 75 million euros (\$80 million).

ISL start clashes with Asiad as organisers announce schedule

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The Indian Super League schedule was announced on Thursday amid doubts over the release of a few India players by clubs for the Asian Games later this month. The league clashes with the Hangzhou Asian Games where the football competition begins on September 19 and continues till October 7. The ISL 2023-24 kicks off on September 21 with the match between Kerala Blasters and Bengaluru FC in Kochi. League organisers FSDL announced the fixtures of the first half of the ISL till December 29. The 12-team ISL, now the country's top-tier league, will be in its 10th edition. The 22-member Indian men's squad for the Asian



Games has players from 10 ISL clubs and it is learnt that some of them are reluctant to release all their players. Out of the 22 players named in the squad, six are from Bengaluru FC, three from Mumbai City FC, while FC Goa, Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Odisha FC and Kerala Blasters have two each. Newly-promoted Punjab FC, Chennaiyin FC and Hyderabad FC have one each. All India Football Federation (AIFF) Secretary General Shaji Prabhakaran had on Monday written to the 10 ISL clubs to release their players selected for the Asian Games, keeping the "national interest in mind". It is, however, not mandatory for the clubs to release players as the Asian Games do not fall in any FIFA international match window. The last such window before the Asian Games is from September 4 to 12. League Shield winners Mumbai City FC, who will feature in the AFC Champions League (ACL) later this year, will begin their campaign on September 24 against NorthEast United in Guwahati. The ISL League Shield winners will, however, not get a berth in the ACL, the continent's top-tier club competition, from 2024 onwards. After a recent restructuring, Indian clubs will no longer get an ACL berth but will be given spots in AFC Cup, the second-tier league in Asia. ISL knock-out champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant of Kolkata face debutants Punjab

FC, who were promoted this season after winning the I-League, at home on September 23. The first Kolkata derby of the season between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal will be played on October 28. The system of I-League winners getting promotion to the ISL begins this season. No matches are being scheduled during the FIFA international break windows of October 9-17 and November 13 to 21. The current ISL schedule is for up to the 12th round matches and the fixtures of the second phase of the home-and-away format league will be announced later. The matches will start at 8pm. On double-header days, the first match will start at 5:30pm.

Bhajji questions Chahal's absence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Arshdeep Singh should have been picked in the 15-member squad for the upcoming ODI World Cup, said former Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on Thursday.

Chahal and Arshdeep were overlooked from the Indian squad, which was announced by the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee on Tuesday.

"I think there are two people missing in this team. First, Yuzvendra Chahal, and second, Arshdeep Singh. Because a left-arm seamer, if he can bring the new ball inside, it makes it useful in the game," Harbhajan said during a virtual press conference organised by Star Sports.

"If he can get two wickets early in the game, I'm not saying that right-handers can't do that, but a left-hand seamer can get an actual angle to get the wicket."

Citing the example of Australia's Mitchell Starc, he said: "You can see how Shaheen Shah Afridi or Mitchell Starc, they have a huge impact on the game."

"When Australia won the World Cup, Mitchell Starc had a huge impact on the games; he sent Brendan McCullum out on the first ball. Incoming ball, with that speed, coming into a right-hander is always challenging."

Backing Chahal's inclusion, Harbhajan said: "Chahal is a proven match winner, someone who has taken more number of wickets than any other spinner, and if he was



playing for any other country, I think he would have been in the playing XI all the time. "Despite proving so much, I think he should be in the team. If I was part of the management, I would definitely keep him in the team. Because we are all stakeholders of Indian cricket. And we want Indian cricket to do well. "These two guys could have been very handy in the World Cup, especially in conditions where they know what to do and how to take wickets. So, I believe these two guys, simply in India, have missed it."

Harbhajan said he was astonished to see no right-arm spinners in the squad. "We have chosen two left-arm spinners, and both of them will never play in the same match. The day Ravindra Jadeja plays, Axar won't. "And it's also possible that when there are a lot of left-handers in the opposition, Jadeja may not even bowl.

That day, you need a bowler who can take the ball away of the left-arm batters. "So, Chahal and Arshdeep should have been in the team, but in whose place could be a big debate. "When you are picking three spinners, it should have been a combination of left-arm plus an off-spinner or leg-spinner. But I'm astonished when you are neither picking a leg-spinner nor an off-spinner, and taking two left-armers."

Harbhajan sees Suryakumar Yadav as the X-factor in the Indian team for the upcoming World Cup and said he is the most impactful middle-order batter in India right now. "Despite not able to recreate his T20 magic in the ODI format, Suryakumar, who is the world's No 1 T20I batter, managed to hold onto his spot in the 15-member squad for the World Cup that had led to a debate over the exclusion of Sanju Samson and rising

allrounder Tilak Varma. "Suryakumar is a complete package. In the number where he bats, I don't think there is any other better player than him in India. What he can accomplish at No 5 or 6, even Virat (Kohli), Rohit (Sharma), or Sanju (Samson) cannot replicate," he said.

An ace of 360-degree hitting, Suryakumar is going through a lean patch and has not scored a fifty in his last 18 innings.

"Many would say what he has done in ODIs? But the impact he has made in T20s is enough. If plays an impactful innings that would make the difference," the 43-year-old said.

"When you bat from the 35th over, you need a game where you can find the gaps in the field, and nobody is better than Surya in doing that. He needs just 30 balls to change the game.

"Given a choice, I will make him play every time. You can't waste such a talent like Surya."

Harbhajan said the onus would be on senior duo of Rohit and Virat to give the team a good start.

"A lot will depend on Rohit and Virat Kohli and how they bat because Shreyas has just come back from an injury.

Ishan Kishan looked good. KL Rahul will play or not, we don't know. Hardik Pandya will also play a key role like Rohit or Virat.

"So, I believe they will all have to come together, play some amazing kind of cricket to lift the Cup. Otherwise, it will be very challenging to be honest.



Rahul trains with Team India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Team has started to prepare for their second match with Pakistan in the Asia Cup in the Super Four stage which will be played on Sunday in Colombo.

India had an intense practice session ahead of their clash with arch-rival Pakistan on Thursday.

KL Rahul who had missed the first match against Pakistan in the Asia Cup after he picked up a niggle, also joined the nets. He practised for both left-arm pacers and right-arm pacers, keeping in mind the quality bowling attack of the Pakistan side. He spent the

longest time in the nets to be fully prepared for his comeback match.

Shubman Gill also faced a few balls in the nets with right-armers. He was mainly focusing on playing swing balls.

Indian head coach Rahul Dravid who earlier expressed the need for India to bat a little deeper, threw balls at Shardul Thakur to prepare him to bat in the end overs to bring depth to the batting order. Dravid was also seen having a chat with Shardul about his batting during the nets session.

Virat Kohli and captain Rohit Sharma took rest from the optional practice session.

India lose to Iraq in penalty shootout

PTI ■ CHIANG MAI

A Sunil Chhetri-less India conceded a late goal off a debatable penalty to miss out on their first ever win over higher-ranked Iraq who won via penalty shootout in the Kings Cup here on Thursday.

India were leading 2-1 till the 79th minute when the referee awarded a soft penalty to Iraq after their striker Aymen Ghadban was squeezed by two defenders in the box during a tussle to get on to a high cross.

It did not look like a clear-cut penalty but Ghadban himself stepped up to take the kick from the spot and scored to level the match 2-2 and take it to the penalty shootout.

Iraq then won 5-4 in the shootout with Brandon Fernandez failing to score as his



kick hit the post and went out. Under the tournament's rule, the match will be decided via penalty shootout if the scores are levelled in the regulation time and there will be no extra time play. It was a creditable show by the Indian team, which was without their talismanic striker and captain Chhetri, who missed the tournament

after becoming a father recently. India played on equal terms against Iraq, ranked 70th in the FIFA chart (as against their 99th), for the most part of the semifinal match. Earlier, Mahesh Naorem had given India the lead in the 16th minute before Karim Ali equalised in the 28th minute, also from a penalty goal.

India took the lead in the 51st minute with Iraq captain and goalkeeper Jalal Hasan conceding an own goal with a howler of an effort.

Iraq were reduced to 10 men in the injury stoppage time as Zidane Iqbal was sent off for elbowing Brandon Fernandez but India could not capitalise much on that as the regulation time ended within a minute and there was no extra time of play.

The loss ended India's 11-match unbeaten streak this year. India had played seven matches against Iraq earlier with the 'Lions of Mesopotamia' winning six times, while one game had ended in a draw.

The two teams played last in November 2010 in an international friendly match when Iraq won 2-0.

Merwe & Ackermann headline Netherlands' ODI World Cup squad

PTI ■ NIEUWEGEIN

Experienced duo of Roelof van der Merwe and Colin Ackermann earned a recall as the Netherlands announced their 15-member squad, led by Scott Edwards, for the upcoming ODI World Cup scheduled to be held in India starting next month.

The duo was not part of the team during the Qualifiers, where the side finished as runner-up.

Both van der Merwe and Ackermann have enough experience on the international stage. While Ackermann finished as the side's second-highest run-scorer during the T20 World Cup last year in Australia, Merwe has looked good across departments.

The Dutch would be hopeful of opener Max O'Dowd playing to his utmost potential, besides expecting all-rounder Bas de Leede to contribute to the fullest in both departments.

Also, Vikram Singh is expected to play a key role with the bat, having finished as the



highest run-scorer during the Qualifiers.

The Netherlands, coached by Ryan Cook, will play a couple of warm-up ties against Australia (September 30) and India (October 3) before getting its campaign underway versus Pakistan three days later in Hyderabad.

It will be the side's fifth appearance in the event, having failed to make it past the group stage on all previous four instances.

Netherlands squad: Scott Edwards (c), Max O'Dowd, Bas de Leede, Vikram Singh, Teja Nidamanuru, Paul van Meekeren, Colin Ackermann, Roelof van der Merwe, Logan van Beek, Aryan Dutt, Ryan Klein, Wesley Barresi, Saqib Zulfiqar, Shariz Ahmad and Sybrand Engelbrecht.

England & New Zealand set for ODI series

AP ■ CARDIFF

England and New Zealand are preparing to meet on the ODI stage for the first time since their wild, never-to-be-forgotten Cricket World Cup final more than four years ago.

This time, it is in the calmer surroundings of a four-match series serving as a warm-up for the World Cup starting in India next month.

Still, there's plenty riding on it.

Just ask Harry Brook.

In a surprise and arguably premature selection, Brook - one of England's most explosive batters - was left out of the provisional 15-man squad for the World Cup that was announced in mid-August. A preference for more versatile middle-order batters such as Dawid Malan and Liam Livingstone was the reason given by selector Luke Wright.

How Brook has made the team's leadership squirm. In his next three innings, he has smashed a 42-ball 105 not out in The Hundred competition before an unbeaten 43 and then 67 in the first two matches of the T20I series against New Zealand.

It came as little surprise that England white-ball coach Matthew Mott suddenly left the door open to last-minute



changes to the World Cup squad. Brook was added on Wednesday to the group for the ODI series against New Zealand starting in Cardiff on Friday.

In theory, he has been drafted in as cover, with Jonny Bairstow a doubt with pain in his right shoulder sustained in the fourth T20 against New Zealand, won by the tourists to tie the series at 2-2.

A couple of others might be sweating on World Cup places, too. Malan appears the most vulnerable of the specialist batters, while the form of all-rounder Liam Livingstone - as big a hitter as Brook, but less reliable - has started to come under scrutiny. New Zealand doesn't name its World Cup squad until Monday, and the team had good news this week when captain Kane Williamson was declared fit enough to be included after injuring his knee in the Indian Premier League.

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