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NEW DELHI, SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹4



DHARMA STIRS ROW

Kashmir burns, yet again

On plea against college circular, Madras HC says Sanatan Dharma encompasses eternal duties to nation, king, parents, gurus, poor

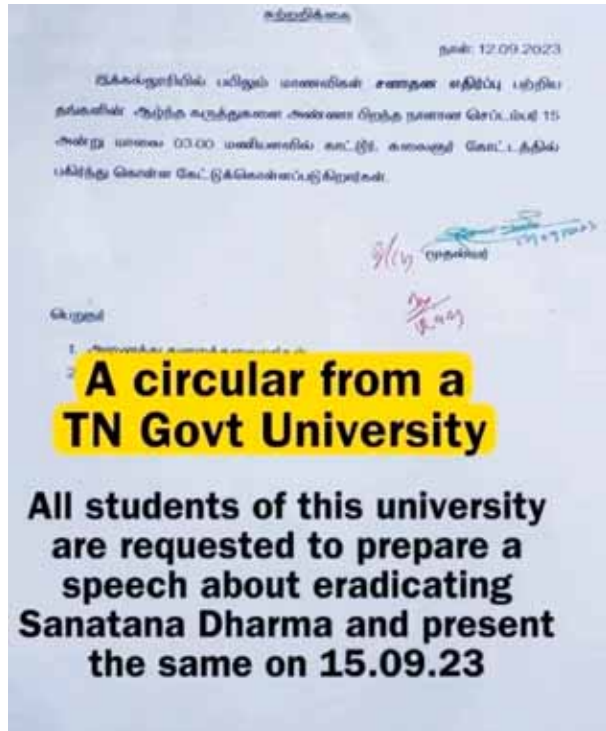
DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

With a political controversy over "Sanatan Dharma" already on a "boil", a circular by a Tamil Nadu Government college inviting students to share their opinions through a speech on "Sanatan Dharma" is likely to stir another round of storm when the Special Session of Parliament begins on Monday.

Amid the intensifying political debate over Udayanidhi Stalin's assault on "Sanatan Dharma", the Madras High Court on Saturday issued significant remarks.

The High Court said that the concept of "Sanatan Dharma" encapsulates a set of eternal duties, including duty to the nation, to the king, to one's parents and gurus, and care for the poor, among others.

The comments came from Justice N Seshasayee, who was hearing a petition filed by one Elangovan, challenging a circular issued by a local government Arts College. The college



asked students to share their thoughts on the topic "Opposition to Sanathana".

According to the Justice, amid the ongoing turmoil over the Sanatan Dharma issue, an idea seems to have gained ground that Sanatan Dharma is solely about promoting casteism and untouchability. This particular notion is strongly rejected by the judge.

A senior official from the Union Education Ministry stated



September 3 that had led to a massive uproar in the political and social circles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to step in asking his party members and full Cabinet to counter such attacks made on the ancient religion of the universe.

The circular typed in Tamil language dated September 12, 2023, a copy of which is with *The Pioneer*, was issued by Thiruvalluvar Government College asking students for a speech on Sanatan Dharma to celebrate the birth anniversary of late

students to present speeches on their views regarding Sanatan Dharma as part of the observance of Arignar Anna's birth anniversary on Friday, September 15.

Not only this, sources confirmed that a DMK MLA from Thiruvarur, K Poondi Kalaivanan, asked students of a women's college to speak at an anti-Sanatan Dharma event.

"We call our country Mother India. Feminism has been belittled by the Sanatana Vadis who have infiltrated our country. It was only after the conquest of Dravida that women rose. For example, women got the right to vote, the right to wear a blouse, the right to property, and the right to education," Kalaivanan said in his letter, a copy of which is with *The Pioneer*, addressed to the principal of Thiru Vi Ka Govt Arts College.

Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister Ponmudy also made an anti-Sanatan remark at the same conference on September 2, in which Udhayanidhi affirmed that Sanatan Dharma should be eradicated.

"The INDIA bloc was formed to fight against the principles of Santana Dharma. We may have our differences among us but the 26 parties in the alliance are united in the fight against Santana Dharma but we need political power for that," Ponmudy said.

Violating the existing truce agreement with India, the Pakistan Army on Saturday targeted forward Indian posts and quadcopters along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector of Baramulla district after the Indian Army neutralised three terrorists while they were attempting to infiltrate inside the Indian territory taking advantage of the adverse weather conditions.

India and Pakistan Armies had agreed to cease firing along the LoC from February 24-25, 2021 "in the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders".

Meanwhile, anti-terrorist operations continued for the fourth day in succession in the Garol forest area of Kokernag in the South Kashmir district of Anantnag. Bad weather and intermittent rain in the forward area hampered the ongoing operations launched to flush out terrorists behind the killing of two Army and one J&K police officer on Wednesday.

The Army's northern commander Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the operational situation near the site of the gunfight that has been going on for four days.

Security forces have been chasing the terrorists, believed to be two or three in number, since Wednesday. On the fourth day of the operation, drones and helicopters were used to track and neutralise the



terrorists, officials said.

The drones and helicopters were deployed to keep surveillance in the hilly terrain and pinpoint the locations of the terrorists in the forest in Gadole in the Kokernag area of the south Kashmir district, the officials said.

As the assault was resumed on Saturday morning, the security forces fired several mortar shells towards the forest, they said.

Lt Gen Dwivedi was briefed by the ground commanders on the high-intensity operations, in which hi-tech equipment is being used for surveillance and delivery of firepower, along with the high impact of precision fire being used by the forces.

Brigadier PMS Dhillon told the media that the operation at Hathlanga in the Uri sector along the LoC was launched early Saturday after specific inputs about infiltration attempts by Pakistan-based outfits.

All Party meet on Session today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Special Parliament Session, the Government has scheduled a meeting with the floor leaders of all parties on Sunday. The purpose is to brief them and listen to their perspectives, as Opposition parties are concerned about the possibility that the Government may introduce a new agenda, catching them by surprise.

The "tentative agenda" for the five-day Special Session of Parliament starting on September 18 was unveiled on Wednesday night, with the Government listing a discussion on the Parliamentary journey of the past 75 years and the passage of five Bills in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, which includes the controversial Bill on the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and other Commissioners that was introduced in the Rajya Sabha during the last Monsoon session.

The Special Session, which

is unusual in its timing, is likely to see the proceedings of Parliament move from the old building to the new one. Speculation is rife that the Session may deliberate on issues ranging from "One Nation, One Election", changing the country's name to "Bharat" from India, the women's reservation issue, Uniform Civil Code, to announcing the date of the Lok Sabha polls.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier claimed that the Government might advance the Lok Sabha polls and they may be held concurrently with elections to five State Assemblies, including those of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh. On "One Nation, One Election", the Government has already set up a committee with former President Ram Nath Kovind at its head to examine simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, legislative Assemblies, and panchayats.

The Opposition has alleged

Congress presents united INDIA face

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the Mallikarjun Kharge-led Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Saturday focused more on the prospects of the newly formed coalition of Opposition parties called "INDIA".

In his opening remarks at the newly constituted CWC, Kharge said that 27 INDIA bloc parties stand together on fundamental issues of importance. After three "successful" meetings, the Opposition alliance is moving forward to combat the "anti-people and anti-democratic BJP Government".

Kharge alleged the BJP is resorting to vindictive action against Opposition parties in response to this development within the INDIA bloc.

In attendance at the meeting were Kharge, former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, and general secretaries KC



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with party leader Rahul Gandhi during Congress Working Committee Meeting in Hyderabad on Saturday

Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh, among others.

Congress leaders deliberated on preparing a comprehensive roadmap to ensure the party's victory in the upcoming Assembly polls in five States and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress called for an immediate start to the

Census process along with a caste survey to secure the rights to health, education, employment, and food security for the deprived sections of society.

By holding this crucial meeting in the Telangana capital, the party aims to convey that it will exert maximum effort to dislodge the BRS

Government.

During the CWC meeting and the deliberations at the extended working committee session on Sunday, discussions about party organisation will take place. The meeting will emphasise strengthening the organisation, with discussions on alliances taking place with-

in the INDIA bloc.

Referring to the creation of the State of Telangana following the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014, former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi expressed the grand old party's commitment to the people of Telangana and affirmed that they will always stand by the aspirations of the Telangana people.

Kharge said, "Now, it is time to lead the State into a new era of progress and prosperity. The Congress Working Committee stands ready to write a new chapter of development with dignity for all people of Telangana and our nation."

Rahul emphasised, "The Congress is dedicated to addressing the concerns of the common people and striving to provide them with a government that upholds their rights and aspirations."

While the MPs of the party will return to Delhi for the special session of Parliament after the rally, other leaders, CWC members, PCC presidents, and CLP leaders will disperse to various assembly constituencies on September 18.

Statue of Oneness to adorn Omkareshwar

DEEPAK UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The 108-foot-tall statue of the 8th-century AD philosopher Adi Shankaracharya is scheduled for inauguration in Omkareshwar, Madhya Pradesh, on September 18. This monumental sculpture is famously known as the Statue of Oneness. The multi-metal sculpture portrays Adi Shankaracharya as a 12-year-old boy. Alongside the statue, another notable attraction is a sprawling campus taking shape around it. The project envisions the establishment of a university dedicated to teaching the Indian Vedic philosophy championed by Adi Sankaracharya.

The goal is to disseminate this knowledge both within the country and internationally, employing an organised approach reminiscent of the ancient "gurukul system." "Textbooks based on the Advaita Philosophy of Adi Shkaracharya are already pre-

pared for introduction into school curricula," project officials stated in Bhopal.

Named "Eaktmta Ki Pratima" (Statue of Oneness), this project has garnered significant attention due to its grandeur and spiritual significance. The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has allocated a substantial budget of over ₹2,141 crore for the construction of the Statue of Oneness, symbolising the State's commitment to preserving its rich cultural and religious heritage.

"The project has seen continuity over the years, even when power changed hands — whether it was the Congress or the BJP — without disrupting its progress," officials in Bhopal affirmed. Additionally, an "Advaita Forest" sprawling across 36 hectares in Omkareshwar is also being developed around it.

Before the "Statue of Oneness," two other statues were inaugurated. These



include the "Statue of Unity," standing at 790 feet, dedicated to the first Union Home Minister of the country, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and the 216-foot-tall "Statue of Equality,"

dedicated to Saint Ramanujacharya (1017-1137), who advocated Vishishtadvaita philosophy and rejected caste distinctions. Both of these statues were unveiled in Gujarat

and Telangana, respectively, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This time, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will unveil the icon-

ic statue in Omkareshwar, located approximately 80 kilometres from Indore on the banks of the Narmada river.

The city has long been recognized as a global center for the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, championed by Adi Shankaracharya. The temple town of Omkareshwar is home to one of Lord Shiva's 12 Jyotirlingas and is now envisioned as a global hub for the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. It was in Omkareshwar where Adi Shankaracharya — who traveled all the way from Kerala — met his Guru Govind Bhagwadapad and stayed for four years to receive his education.

Once the entire project is completed, the traffic to Omkareshwar is expected to increase significantly, and as a result, infrastructure facilities from Indore and the surrounding areas are being greatly improved, according to officials.

NIA crackdown finds proof of ISIS links

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major crackdown on the ISIS radicalisation and recruitment campaign, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday raided 31 locations in two southern States, and seized several digital devices and documents, along with Indian and foreign currency.

The anti-terror probe agency is in the process of examining the data contained in the mobile phones, laptops and hard discs seized during the raids conducted across Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

Incriminating books in vernacular and Arabic languages were seized during the searches, besides ₹60 lakh in Indian currency and \$18,200.

The NIA teams swooped down on the premises of suspects in the Tamil Nadu ISIS radicalisation and recruitment case early on Saturday and

raided 22 locations in Coimbatore, three in Chennai and one in Kadayannallur of Tenkasi district in Tamil Nadu.

Another five locations were raided at Hyderabad/Cyberabad, the NIA said in a statement. The case, registered by NIA Chennai under sections the IPC Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 121-A (conspiracy to overawe, by means of criminal force or the show of criminal force) besides provisions of the UAPA related to clandestine operations by a group of individuals to radicalise gullible youth.

"The radicalisation was being carried out in the garb of holding Arabic language classes conducted through their Regional Study Centres. Such radicalisation activities were being flashed online through social media platforms and mobile applications," NIA said.

Continued on Page 2

Ghosi bypoll result an accident, BJP will win all 80 seats in UP in 2024: Maurya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Saturday dubbed the victory of Samajwadi Party candidate in the Ghosi Assembly by-election as an "accident" and asserted that the BJP will win all 80 Lok Sabha seats in the state in the 2024 general elections.



The senior BJP leader also asserted that the OBCs are with the BJP and recalled that in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when the SP, BSP, Congress and others "had contested together", his party secured "51 per cent votes" in Uttar Pradesh. In an exclusive interview to PTI Video, Maurya also felt that Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party leader Om Prakash Rajbhar should not have said that he and Dara Singh Chauhan, who recently returned to the BJP, would join the Yogi Adityanath government. He said anything on Cabinet expansion in the state should come from the chief

BSP, Congress and others "had contested together", his party had won comprehensively. The BJP had 64 members in the Lok Sabha from UP and after the Azamgarh and Rampur LS bypolls, its MPs from the state have gone up to 66. He said when the SP was in government in the state, the BJP, along with allies, had won 73 seats and lost four by a very small margin. Maurya asserted that Uttar Pradesh will contribute to making Narendra Modi the prime minister for the third time with BJP winning all 80 seats in the state.

He said the philosophy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas', as well as the development achieved by the "double engine" government will help the BJP sweep polls. Responding to a question, he said the opposition alliance does not have any issue and is leaderless. "Their agenda is to divide the society. They will not succeed," he said. Maurya said in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when the SP,

He said, "Action in the state is not taken on the basis of religion. Action is based on who has encroached upon the land of the poor." "It is our responsibility as the government to get it vacated," he said, adding the guilty are not protected under the Yogi Adityanath government.

"To another question on people belonging to the caste of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath having influence, Maurya said the CM "is a saint and a saint has no caste". Asked if the Ghosi result shows that the Other Backward Classes (OBC) voters have deserted the BJP, Maurya responded, "OBC were with BJP and will remain with BJP". Out of 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, more than 25 regions are represented by MPs from backward classes. OBC leaders claim that the population of OBCs in the state is up to 56 per cent. OBCs include Yadav, Kurmi, Shakya, Saini, Rajbhar, and Chauhan, among other communities.

India condemns use of bear spray on Sikh school student in Canada

PTI ■ TORONTO

India on Saturday strongly condemned an assault, including the use of bear spray, on a 17-year-old Sikh high school student in Canada's British Columbia province this week and urged local authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action against the perpetrators. The incident took place on September 11 when the Sikh student, who has not been named, was on his way home from school in Kelowna. Kelowna Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said in a statement on September 11 that the attack occurred just before 4 p.m. At a bus stop at the intersection of Rutland Road and Robson Road in the Okanagan city. "Just prior to the bear spray incident, there was an altercation on the bus resulting in those involved being directed off of the bus. After exiting the bus, a second incident occurred where the suspect male deployed bear spray on the victim," the statement said. The Consulate General of India in Vancouver has strongly condemned the assault. "@cgivancouver strongly

condemns assault on an Indian national in Kelowna and requests Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action against the perpetrators. @HCL_Ottawa @MEAIndia," the Consulate said on Saturday in a post on X. On September 13, Kelowna RCMP arrested the young male involved in the incidents that took place on and off a BC Transit bus at the intersection of Rutland Rd S and Robson Rd E on September 11. Investigators will be conducting video analysis and reviewing additional evidence to determine what transpired on the bus prior to all parties being directed off the bus...There is no doubt that the victim was bear sprayed and assaulted by the accused; this has been made quite clear, RCMP said in a statement. The World Sikh Organisation of Canada released a statement condemning the attack and said the Sikh student could not understand why he was attacked in this way. They also say the victim was a newcomer to Canada and was now afraid to return to Rutland Senior Secondary School,

where he studied, or take public transit, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported. Kelowna City Councillor Mohini Singh told CBC News that the student had only been in the city for around five months and spoke little English. She called the attack "totally unacceptable." "He loves going to school. He has a great rapport with his teachers. No problem there," she said. "He is absolutely traumatised. He's in a state of shock." Singh said she went to visit the teenager, and that he was hardly able to lift his head from his chest and only spoke a few words. "This has sent shockwaves through the community," the councillor said. "The Indo-Canadian community is shocked by this... This is absolutely despicable." It's the second attack on a Sikh student in the central Interior city this year. On March 17, international student Gagandeep Singh was also attacked as he left a B.C. Transit bus. At the time, RCMP said investigators were consulting with their hate crimes unit.

FORM No. 3
(See Regulation-15 (1)(a))16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17A, Chandigarh (Additional space allocated on 3rd & 4th Floor also).
Case No.: OA/204/2022
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
Exh. No. 17155
ICICI BANK LIMITED
Vs.
ANWAR SADAT

Shinde-led Government unveils ₹59,000 crore package for Marathwada

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI
With a clear eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Eknath Shinde-led three party-alliance Maharashtra Government on Saturday unveiled a Rs 59,000 crore development package for the backward Marathwada region in the state. Making an announcement



on the eve of the 75th anniversary of Marathwada Liberation Day, Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde said that of the total package money, an estimated Rs 45,000 crore would be utilised for undertaking various development works, while the remaining Rs 14,000 crore would be spent on various irrigation projects in the region. Addressing a joint news conference at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (commonly known as Osmanabad), Jalna, Beed, Latur, Nanded, Hingoli, and

Parbhani. "We have given revised administrative sanctions for 11 major irrigation projects involving an investment of Rs 13,677 crore. The amount sanctioned will pave the way for bringing eight lakh hectares of land under irrigation," the chief minister said. As part of utilisation of money set aside for the irrigation projects, the state government has chalked out plans to make Marathwada 'drought-free' by diverting water from the state rivers to the Godavari Basin in a project costing over Rs 14,040-crore and irrigating over 8-lakh hectares of land in the region. Of the development package, the state government has set aside Rs 1,076 crore for women empowerment programme. "In all, 12 lakh women would be benefitted

from the programme," Shinde said. Of the total package, the state government would spend Rs 21,580 crore on water resources projects, Rs 12,938 crore on public works department works, Rs 3,318 crore on animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries projects, Rs 1,608 crore on planning, Rs 1,028 crore on transport and Rs 1,291 crore on rural development. The chief minister said that the state government would implement Rs 2,540 crore drinking water distribution system, introduce 1,197 e-buses in the revenue division of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and set up a sports university would at Aurangabad at a cost of Rs 656.38 crore. It would also incur Rs 188.19 crore for introducing an Intelligent Traffic Management System in the

national highways passing through Aurangabad. The other projects listed in the package include renovation of Sant Dnyaneshwar Park in Paithan, a high-level dam in Shanidevgaon in Vijapur for irrigation and revamping religious places including Grishneshwar Temple, Tulja Bhavani Temple, Shri Udagar Baba's Samadhi, Murdeshwar Temple and Saibaba Temple in Pathri which is the birthplace of the revered saint whose samadhi temple is in Shirdi, Nashik. While replying to a question on the controversy over news reports that the chief minister and his two deputies were splurging money by staying five-star hotels at Aurangabad, the chief minister said: "Just for your information, we are staying in the state-run

guest houses and not five-star hotel as is being reported in a section of the media." Meanwhile, the Opposition Congress came down heavily on the Shinde-Fadnavis-Ajit Pawar government for not declaring drought in Marathwada. "Though the state government has announced a Rs 59,000 crore package for Marathwada region, in reality the people of the region have not got anything. It is merely just a game of numbers. We will only know what the government has done once the public gets something in their hands," Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said. "Marathwada is reeling under severe drought, and the cases of farmer suicides have increased in the region. In such circumstances, it was essential to declare a drought

in Marathwada region, in reality the people of the region have not got anything. It is merely just a game of numbers. We will only know what the government has done once the public gets something in their hands," Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said. "Marathwada is reeling under severe drought, and the cases of farmer suicides have increased in the region. In such circumstances, it was essential to declare a drought

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2) TATAMOTORS_TSIGNA5530 REG. NO. UP13CT9160-YOM-2022
3) TATAMOTORS_TSIGNA5530 REG. NO. HR38AE5267-YOM-2022
4) TATAMOTORS_TATAACE REG. NO. DL1LAG3526-YOM-2022
5) TATAMOTORS_TATAACE REG. NO. DL1LAJ4698-YOM-2023
6) TATAMOTORS_TATAACE REG. NO. DL1LAH2551-YOM-2022
7) ASHOK_LEY_AL1615CNG REG. NO. UP17BT2198-YOM-2022
8) TATAMOTORS_TACEGOLD REG. NO. DL1LAH3335-YOM-2022
9) TATAMOTORS_TATA_1512 REG. NO. UP14LT8355-YOM-2022

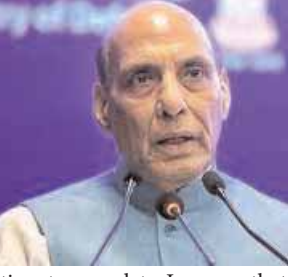
ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110007
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This is to bring to your notice that SHAKUNTALA SHARMA/ ARUN KUMAR SHARMA (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBLUC0003198454 & LBLUC0003272610 located at FLAT NO. B-35/2, 2ND FLOOR, BLOCK-B, WAVE EXECUTIVE FLOOR, WAVE CITY, NH-24, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated August 08, 2023, informing that UPVAL CHADHA HI-TECH DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD. has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication. Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.
Dated: September 16, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited Place: Delhi/ NCR Sd-

ROSHANARA CLUB LTD.
In accordance with section 152 (B) read as with section 160 of Companies Act, 2013, members of Roshanara Club Limited, Roshanara Gardens, Delhi - 110007, are hereby informed that the following members of the Club have notified their intention to stand for the election as members of the Club Committee of Roshanara Club Ltd. at the 102 Annual General Meeting to be held at the Club House, Roshanara Club Ltd, Roshanara Gardens, Delhi - 110007 on Friday the 29th September 2023 at 2.00 P.M.
The members marked with asterisk are the members of the current Club Committee:-
1. * Mr Jasbir Singh Nanda (Ruby)
2. * Mr Manish Aggarwal
3. * Mr Mohit Suri
4. * Dr Amit Garg
5. * Mr Rajan Manchanda
6. * Mr Amrit Pal Singh (Palco)
7. * Mr Naresh Kapoor (Gola)
8. * Mr Akhil Singhal
9. * Mr Kamal Makkar
10. * Mr Rohin Khanna
11. * Mr Rajesh Narang
12. * Kanwar Ajay Singh
13. * Mr Sanjeev Barry
14. * Mr Chandher Pal (Nav Durga)
15. * Mr Ajay Vohra (Hat)
16. * Mr Shiv Shankar Gupta
17. * Mr Dilip Dhunna
18. Mr. Pankaj Kumar
RAJAN MANCHANDA
Director & Hon Gen Secretary (DIN-00457119)
Date: 14.09.2023 37/38 UB, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi - 110007

BrahMos manufacturing in Lucknow likely to begin from March, says Rajnath

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the work on the BrahMos missile manufacturing site in Lucknow is likely to be completed by March next year. Singh was speaking in Gomti Nagar here on the second day of the tour of his parliamentary constituency. "The work on BrahMos missile project is also going on at a fast pace and after next February-March, the missile manufacturing will begin on the soil of Lucknow," the BJP leader said. Developed by an India-Russia joint venture, the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or from land platforms. The work on the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) lab will also be completed soon, Singh said. He said there were 11 other projects in Lucknow that have been undertaken. "Though they will take some



time to complete, I can say that people will see a completely different Lucknow in the next few years," the minister said. During his visit in June, Singh had said that "everything from nuts and bolts to BrahMos missiles would be manufactured in the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC)". "We have created a conducive environment for defence manufacturing through the defence corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. UPDIC has told me that there is a plan to acquire about 1,700 hectares of land for this corridor, of which more than 95 per cent of the land has already been acquired," he had said.

Udhayanidhi should behave, he is a Minister: Sitharaman

PTI ■ CHENNAI

On the Sanatan Dharma row, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin should speak realising his responsibility as a State Minister. Despite witnessing insult to Lord Rama in Tamil Nadu in 1971, Sanatan Dharma did not respond with violence, she said. Speaking to reporters here, the Finance Minister said, "No one has the right to say that he will eradicate a religion and in particular a minister has no such right at all." The oath a person takes before assuming the office of a Minister makes that very clear. To make such a statement in public is most wrong and Udhayanidhi claiming now that he did not give a call for Sanatan Dharma's eradication is not appropriate. "The media has record (footage of the event). What did he say? He said he was happy that the meet is about eradication of Sanatan and not opposition,"



Sitharaman said. Everyone has a right and they may express their views. However, after becoming a minister a person should speak keeping in mind his responsibilities, she underscored. The debate on Sanatan was started by Minister Udhayanidhi, belonging to the DMK, an INDIA bloc constituent and did he initiate that debate eyeing the election (2024 Lok Sabha election)? she wondered. She was answering a question related to criticism by Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi leader Thol Thirumavalavan that the BJP was indulging in Sanatan debate considering polls. "We did not start the debate, it is you who began it."

कार्यालय नगर परिषद पथरिया जिला दमोह
कं./लोक निर्माण/निविदा/2023/228 पथरिया दिनांक 13.09.2023
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु केन्द्रीय ई-रजिस्ट्रेशन प्रणाली से पंजीकृत समस्त ठेकेदारों से ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।
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मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी
नगर परिषद
पथरिया जिला दमोह

Kashmir burns...

From Page 1
He said the three terrorists were neutralised during an eight-hour-long operation. "The first contact was established with the terrorists around 6.40 a.m. The firefight lasted about two hours in which one terrorist was neutralised. While searching for the other two terrorists, one of the terrorists opened fire from hiding around 9.15 a.m, thus re-establishing contact. The firefight lasted about half an hour in which he too was neutralized." The third terrorist was also

engaged by the troops. As he attempted to exfiltrate one of the nearby posts of the Pakistan army provided cover firing. However, the third terrorist fell down towards the enemy side of LoC. While the operation was in progress the quadcopter was also flown to ascertain the whereabouts of the third terrorist. However, "the Pakistan Army post in the near vicinity fired on the quadcopter establishing the support of the Pakistan Army in abetting terrorism & assisting terrorists to infiltrate across LoC," Brigadier PMS Dhillion said.

NIA crackdown finds proof of...

From Page 1
The NIA further said, "Investigations have revealed that the ISIS-inspired agent provocateurs were engaged in propagation of Khalafat ideology, which is inimical to India's constitutionally established principles of secularism and democracy. The group of persons involved in the case had entered into a conspiracy to radicalise and recruit youth who were later found involved in terrorist as well as unlawful acts and activities. One such terrorist attack related to the Coimbatore car bomb blast case of October 23, 2022." Investigations in the case are continuing, as part of NIA's concerted efforts to thwart ISIS attempts to initiate vulnerable and susceptible youth into the terrorist network that is working actively to spread terror in the country with the overarching aim of disturbing and disrupting its peace and communal harmony, it added.

Modi to open Yashobhoomi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Rs 5,400 crore first phase of the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) project, named as "Yashobhoomi", in Dwarka and the extension of Delhi Airport Metro Express line from Dwarka Sector 21 to a new metro station at Dwarka Sector 2 on Sunday.

This ambitious endeavor aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision of providing India with world-class infrastructure to host meetings, conferences, and exhibitions on a global scale. The first phase is built on nearly 8.9 lakh square metres with a built-up area of over 1.8 lakh square metres. The project is being touted as the world's largest Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) facility.

Its convention centre, built across more than 73,000 square metres of area, comprises 15 convention rooms including the main auditorium, the grand ballroom and 13 meeting rooms with a total capacity of holding 11,000 delegates, the statement said. The convention centre has the largest LED media facade in the country. The plenary hall in the centre is equipped with a seating capacity of around 6,000 guests.

The grand ballroom, with a unique petal ceiling, can host around 2,500 guests. It also has an extended open area that can seat up to 500 people. The 13 meeting rooms that are spread across eight floors are envisaged to hold a variety of meetings of different scales, the statement added.

Yashobhoomi also houses one of the largest exhibition halls in the world, it said. The exhibition halls, built across over 107,000 square metres, will be utilised for hosting exhibitions, trade fairs, and business events, and are con-



Modi will inaugurate Phase 1 of the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), known as Yashobhoomi, in Dwarka on Saturday

PTI

nected to a grand foyer space which is uniquely designed with copper ceiling which filters light in the space through the various skylights, it added.

The venue is equipped with high-tech security provisions to ensure safety for the visitors. The underground car parking facility for over 3,000 cars is also equipped with more than 100 electric charging points.

It will also be connected to Delhi Airport Metro Express line with the inauguration of the new metro station 'Yashobhoomi Dwarka Sector 25', the statement said.

The new metro station will have three subways — a 735m long subway connecting the station to the exhibition halls, convention centre, and central arena; another connecting the entry/exit across Dwarka expressway; while third one connecting the metro station to the foyer of the future exhibition halls of Yashobhoomi, the

statement said. According to Delhi Metro, passenger operations on this new extension will be started from 3 pm onwards on the same day, that is, Sunday, September 17.

With the addition of this section, the total length of the Airport Express Line from New Delhi to Yashobhoomi Dwarka Sector-25 will become 24.9 km. Currently services on the Airport Line are available till the Dwarka Sector-21 metro station, which is also an interchange point between the Airport Line and the Blue Line of the Delhi Metro.

In addition to serving the convention centre, this new station will also provide metro connectivity to residents around sector 25 of Dwarka and new sectors along Dwarka Expressway in neighbouring Gurugram. As a result, residents of these areas will be able to reach central Delhi in about half an hour.

Traffic advisory issued

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the inauguration of the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, the Delhi Traffic Police made several restrictions and diversions in the city and issued an advisory Saturday.

The advisory, as shared on X (formerly Twitter), reads, "Traffic Advisory: In view of the inauguration of The India International Convention & Expo Centre (IICC) by PM @narendramodi on 17.09.2023, special traffic arrangements will be effective".

The route from National Highway-48 to Nirmal Dham Nala (UER-II) will be affected during the whole day. The commuters are advised to avoid UER-II (NH-48 to Nirmal Dham Nala), said an advisory issued by the traffic police.

"The commuters are advised to take alternate route for Najafgarh from NH-8: Bijwasan Najafgarh Road, for NH-48 via UER-II from Najafgarh/Dwarka: Take left turn from Dhulsiras Chowk towards Dwarka Sector-23 and can use Road No 224," said the advisory.

"For Gurugram from Dwarka: Dhulsiras Road towards Bannoli village and can use Najafgarh Bijwasan Road. The residents of Dwarka sub-city and west Delhi can use Palam Flyover to reach their destinations. In order to minimise problems, general public are advised to plan their journey in advance," it added.

Soon you can reach Terminal-3 from New Delhi in 15 minutes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Commuters can reach Terminal-3 airport from New Delhi in 15 minutes and 30 seconds with the speed of the Airport Express Line being increased from 110 kmph to 120 kmph from Sunday onwards.

Earlier, it was a little more than 18 minutes. Similarly, Dwarka Sector 25 Metro station from the New Delhi station can be reached in 21 minutes. Earlier the travel time between New Delhi and Dwarka Sector-21 was approximately 22 minutes which reduced to around 19 minutes between these two stations leading to a saving of 3 minutes.

"From September 17 onwards, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is going to operate the Airport Express Line at a massive speed of 120 kilometres per hour," the DMRC said in a statement.

"The plan is to increase the speed to 120 kmph in a graded manner in subsequent months, said Delhi Metro Rail Corporation officials adding, this historic increase in speed of India's fastest Metro corridor gradually from 90 kmph to 120 KMPH has been made possible by meticulous planning and time-bound implementation by Delhi Metro's engineers in consultation with a number of other government agencies and domain experts.

Delhi Metro increased the operational speed of Metro trains on the Airport Express Line from 90 kmph to 100 kmph on March 22 this year, the officials said.

The speed of the trains was further increased to 110 kmph on June 22. "During the non-revenue hours, the overhead equipment (OHE) system was also made suitable for the movement of trains at 120 kmph," the DMRC said. The



average speed of metro trains running on regular corridors such as the Yellow, Blue and Red Line is 40-50 kmph.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first phase of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), named Yashobhoomi, in Dwarka and also the extension of Delhi Metro's Airport Express Line from Dwarka Sector 21 to a new metro station at Dwarka Sector 25 on Sunday.

The extension of Delhi Metro's Airport Express Line from Dwarka Sector 21 to Yashobhoomi Dwarka Sector 25 will become operational from 3 pm onwards on September 17. Sources on Saturday said, the enhanced speed is likely to be implemented on this line after the inauguration of the extension of the Airport Line.

To facilitate the movement of the trains at such a high speed, over 2.6 lakh tension clamps were replaced on the entire corridor.

The bulk of the work was carried out in the night time from 11 pm till 7 am to ensure minimal hindrance to the smooth operation of services. Over 100 workers were deployed at a time for this work, the statement said. Before taking up this mammoth exercise, the efficacy of these clamps was checked on a kilo-

metre-long trial track. Various measurements including vibration and stresses on rails were carried out using advanced instruments on this trial track before implementing the same on the main corridor, officials said.

The estimated timeline for the completion of this task was 18 months. However, the DMRC took the challenge and successfully ensured the completion of the work within just six months, it added.

A highly advanced system consisting of 3D accelerometers and strain sensors was deployed for continuous measurement of vibrations and strains on the tracks at different speed levels. Oscillation monitoring was performed at speeds from 90 kmph to 120 kmph to ascertain smooth movement at higher speed levels, the DMRC said.

Tremendous efforts were put in by DMRC officials to analyse the measurement data at various speeds to understand the behaviour and response of the system, the officials said.

The signalling infrastructure also required verification of all software and safety certifications of the main system and the subsystems at such high speed. The interface testing with rolling stock and passenger information systems was also checked in detail, the statement said.

Noida lift fall toll rises, 4 more die

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four more workers, who were hospitalised after a service lift crashed at an under-construction site in Noida Extension, succumbed to their injuries on Saturday, pushing the death toll in the incident to eight, officials said.

A financial compensation of Rs 25 lakh each has been issued for families of those killed in the incident, a senior officer said. The lift had nine workers in it when it fell from the 14th floor of an under-construction tower at an Amrapali Dream Valley project site in Noida Extension, also known as Greater Noida (West), on Friday morning.

The long-stalled project is being completed by the state-run NBCC under the monitoring of the Supreme Court. "Four workers had died after



the incident on Friday.

Five of them were admitted to the district hospital in a critical condition.

Of these, four more have succumbed to the injuries while one worker is still undergoing treatment," District Magistrate Manish Verma told PTI. The victims have been identified as Arbaaz Ali, 19, from Meerut, Kuldeep Pal, 20, from Kannauj, Maan Ali, 20, from Balrampur and Mohammad Ali Khan, 18, from Amroha, police said in a

statement Saturday. The four workers who died on Friday were identified as Ishfaq Ali, 23, of Bihar's Balrampur district, Arun Tanti Mandal, 40, of Bihar's Banka, Vipot Mandal, 45, of Bihar's Katihar and Aris Khan, 22, of Amroha in Uttar Pradesh.

Of the compensation sum, Rs 20 lakh is from NBCC and Rs 5 lakh from the court's receiver (in the project), Verma said.

"NBCC has already handed over the cheques of the com-

ensation for those killed on Friday and similar compensation would be provided to those who passed away on Saturday," the district magistrate said.

One worker is currently in critical condition in the ICU of a hospital, the district magistrate said, after meeting the victims. He said the police are sealing under-construction buildings near the incident spot as part of the investigation into the case.

Asked about some workers' claims of inadequate safety measures at the project, Verma said, "We are looking into these claims and will have all under-construction sites inspected for safety violations. If any laxity is found in this case that will also come to the fore during investigation and suitable action would be taken against those guilty."

NSUI releases 10-point manifesto

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress-affiliated NSUI on Saturday released a 10-point manifesto, including menstrual leave for the students, a violence free campus and no fee hike, for the September 22 Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) polls.

The manifesto includes issues such as 12 days menstrual leave per semester, a violence free campus, Grievance Redressal Cell, no fee hike, hostel for all, free metro pass, a library that functions round the clock, railway reservation counter on the campus, active placement cell, free WiFi and better infrastructure.

A senior member said the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) will also come up with a separate manifesto in the next two days focusing on issues faced by the Delhi

Delhi University students poll



University female students. Earlier on Friday, the NSUI announced its list of candidates for the DUSU elections.

Hitesh Gulia, a final-year Law Centre-I student, will contest for the president's post. The 23-year-old completed his graduation from Shaheed Bhagat Singh College. Abhi Dahiya has been fielded for the post of vice-president. The 24-year-old is currently pursuing

a Masters degree in Buddhist Studies.

The NSUI has fielded 24-year-old Yakshana Sharma for the post of secretary. The Hindu College graduate is a final-year LLB student at Campus Law Centre. Shubham Kumar Chaudhary, contesting for the post of joint secretary, did his schooling from GD Goenka School in Vasant Kunj.

AISA: DU student kidnapped, person seen with gun

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Students Association (AISA) on Saturday claimed that a Delhi University student has been abducted, and added that "outsiders" were seen within the DU campus. No immediate reaction was available from the DU administration or the Delhi Police on the matter.

"Two dangerous incidents were witnessed today. Firstly, a person was seen holding a gun at KMC College and secondly, an AISA activist and DU student — Aman — were abducted from outside Daulat Ram College," the students group said in a statement. AISA said despite the presence

of an unknown person holding a gun inside the premises of the DU, no action was initiated by the college security. "The person with a gun in his hand was not removed from the university premises, neither was any legal action initiated against him. Such incidents are taking place right under the nose of the Delhi Police and the DU administration," AISA said in its statement.

An AISA activist and DU student was abducted in a black SUV car "with posters of ABVP plastered across its glasses" and was beaten inside the car, it said.

A complaint on the matter has been registered with the Maurice Nagar police, the students group said.

Man stabbed to death, wife hurt in Aali Vihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A group of persons stabbed a man to death and injured his wife in southeast Delhi's Aali Vihar area, police said on Saturday. The deceased had previous enmity with one of the accused, they added.

The police received a PCR call around 9.40 pm on Friday about 4-5 persons barging into a house near JD gym in Aali Vihar and stabbing a person, a senior police officer said.

Arvind Mandal sustained serious injuries as the accused stabbed him in the chest and hand, while his wife Rakha Mandal (43) suffered an injury on her forehead, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Rajesh Deo said.

Both the injured persons were rushed to a hospital by the police, where Arvind died during treatment, Deo said. According to police, Arvind got into an altercation around 5 pm on Friday while taking his son Akash home from school. When they reached Kali Mandir Road in Sarita Vihar, Arvind got into an argument with one Manoj Halder with whom he had previous enmity, the police said.

TMC seeks permission from police to set up tent for MGNREGA workers at Ramlila

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress has written a fresh letter to the Delhi Police and sought permission to set up tents and arrange accommodation for MGNREGA workers from Bengal at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi, who will be sitting on a protest from September 30 to October 4.

In a letter to Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Darya Ganj, Delhi,

TMC MP Derek O'Brien said, "With reference to my letter dated August 30 and August 31, 2023 requesting for permission for All India Trinamool Congress to set up pandals/tents and arrange accommodation/night stay for about 50,000 people at Ramlila Maidan from September 30 to October 4, 2023 for MGNREGA workers from Bengal who will be dharna at different locations in Delhi. We are yet to receive a response regarding same. Request for an update at earliest."

Earlier this month, the TMC leader wrote a letter to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Parliament Street Police Station and claimed that workers from West Bengal have been denied wages under MGNREGA scheme. "With reference to my letter dated August 31, 2023, requesting for permission for TMC to hold a dharna involving workers from Bengal who have been denied wages under MGNREGA scheme," it said.

AAP failed to clear 3 landfill sites, alleges BJP's Harsh

New Delhi: Delhi BJP general secretary Harsh Malhotra has criticised Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Mayor Shelly Oberoi claiming they failed to get the three landfill sites at Bhalasva, Ghazipur and Okhla even partially cleared after being in power in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for almost nine months.

He said here on Saturday all through 2020, 2021 and 2022, Aam Aadmi Party leaders including the Chief

Minister used to allege that the landfill sites are not being cleared due to incompetence and corruption in the then BJP ruled MCDs. They also used to say the day people of Delhi elect us in Delhi we will clear all landfill sites in less than a year, the BJP leader said. Despite its tall pre election promises Aam Aadmi Party which won the MCD election in December, 2022 has failed to clear even 20 percent of the height of landfill sites in nine months, they said. SR

2 steal INSAS rifle; arrested

New Delhi: Two persons have been arrested for allegedly stealing an INSAS rifle from a sentry post in the DDU Marg area. Assistant commandant third NAP/BN (Nagaland Armed Police Battalion) reported on Wednesday that one service INSAS Rifle 5.56 (Indian Small Arms system) with 20 live rounds and a mobile phone was missing from the sentry post at MS Flat, DDU Marg, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Sanjay Kumar Sain said.

During the investigation, police scanned the CCTV footage and zeroed in on two persons who were seen stealing the rifle with cartridge and fleeing the spot in an e-cycle rickshaw, the DCP said. On tracing the e-rickshaw, it was found to belong to Vikas (25), a resident of Nepal, he said.

Police apprehended Vikas and on his instance, arrested his associate Kabir (21) from his home, he added. The stolen rifle along with 20 rounds were also recovered from their possession, Sain said.

Staff Reporter

Rain brings respite from heat, leads to waterlogging

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rain lashed the national Capital and Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) on Saturday, giving a respite from the heat as the minimum temperature settled at 26.9 degrees Celsius here, two notches above the season's average and a marked improvement in the air quality index.

This has led to water logging and traffic congestion was also reported in several parts of the national capital and adjoining NCR. Traffic jams were witnessed outside the Akshardham Temple Metro



Station and on various road stretches including Vikas Marg, Wazirabad road, Kashmeri

Gate, Naraina road. Many areas including Sangam Vihar faced waterlogging the inconve-

nience the locals. The commuters wrote on X about the traffic situation in the national Capital. One of them said that he thought Bangalore's traffic was bad but today, he realised that Delhi is also giving a tough competition to it.

Others said the traffic was heavy from Surya Nagar to Anand Vihar and Madipur to New Multan Nagar, a complete chaos.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature settled at 33.8 degree Celsius, normal during the season. Delhi recorded 0.6 mm

of rain in the last 24 hours which ended at 8:30 AM on Saturday. The relative humidity was recorded at 85 percent at 8:30 AM.

The IMD further stated that light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speed of 30-40 km/h would occur over and adjoining areas of entire Delhi and NCR (Loni Dehat, Bahadurgarh, Ghaziabad, Indirapuram, Noida, Dadri, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad, Manesar and Ballabgarh) on Saturday evening. The IMD has predicted generally cloudy skies with light rain for Sunday.

23 Sainik Schools get approval from Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved setting up of 23 new Sainik Schools in partnership mode to provide quality education to the students in tune with National Education Policy and give them better career opportunities, including joining the Armed Forces.

Giving details here on Saturday, Defence Ministry officials said the Government has approved the initiative of setting up of 100 new Sainik Schools in partnership with NGOs, Private Schools, State Governments in a graded manner class-wise, starting from Class 6th onwards. Under this initiative, Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) has been signed by Sainik Schools Society with 19 New Sainik Schools located all over the country.

Following further evaluation of applications for opening new Sainik Schools under partnership mode, Rajnath has approved setting up of 23 new



Sainik Schools in partnership mode. This initiative has increased the tally of new Sainik Schools under partnership mode functioning under the aegis of Sainik School Society to 42 apart from the existing 33 Sainik Schools already functioning under the erstwhile pattern, they said.

The objectives behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of setting up of 100 new Sainik Schools is to provide quality education to the students in tune with National Education Policy and give them better career opportunities, including joining the Armed Forces. It also gives an opportunity to the private sector to

work hand-in-hand with the government towards nation building by refining today's youth to become responsible citizens of tomorrow, officials said.

These new Sainik Schools, besides their affiliation to respective education boards, will function under the aegis of Sainik Schools Society and will follow the Rules and Regulations for new Sainik schools in partnership mode prescribed by the Society.

In addition to their regular affiliated board curriculum, they will also impart education of Academic PLUS curriculum to the students of Sainik school pattern.

Court convicts woman in Bengaluru fake currency case

Case involves smuggling of huge quantities of fake Indian currency notes from Bangladesh into India via Karnataka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday said a Special Court in Bengaluru has convicted a sixth accused who is a woman in the Bengaluru fake currency case, involving smuggling of huge quantities of high quality fake Indian currency notes (FICN) from Bangladesh into India via Karnataka.

Vanitha alias Thangam has been sentenced to six years of imprisonment under section 489-B (trafficking as genuine, forged or counterfeit currency notes or bank-notes) of the Indian Penal Code, five years imprisonment under Section 489-C (possession of counterfeit currency) of the IPC and two years jail under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC, besides a total fine of Rs 20,000. The sentences will run concurrently.

Karnataka Police had seized high quality Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICNs) of Face Value Rs 2,50,000 from Vanitha in the case, in which



a joint operation by the State police and NIA had originally led to the seizure of fake notes of face value of Rs 4,34,000 from the possession of three accused persons.

The case was initially registered by Karnataka Police as FIR No. 431/2018 under various sections of IPC based on the complaint of an NIA officer. NIA had subsequently re-registered the case and mounted a surveillance and conducted thorough investigation which led to the exposure of the FICN racket headed by the prime accused, Abdul Khadir.

NIA had indicated a potential transaction of fake notes by three persons in Bengaluru.

Between 2016 and 2022, the NIA filed chargesheets against a total of eight persons, of whom three accused, identified as Mohammed Sajjad Ali alias Chachu, M G Raju alias Master and Abdul Khadir, were convicted by the special court.

The trio was sentenced to a similar duration along with a fine of Rs 20,000. Two other accused, Gangadhar Kholkar and Sabiruddin, were subsequently also convicted and sentenced by the NIA Special Court.

Maritime information sharing workshop held in Gurugram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW), hosted by the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram from September 14-16 marked a significant milestone in fostering collaboration among maritime security stakeholders in the region.

The meet was attended by 41 delegates from 26 countries representing both the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA).

Giving details of the workshop, navy officials said here on Saturday it not only fostered knowledge exchange but also strengthened international bonds, reaffirming the commitment of nations to work together towards a safer and more secure maritime environment. The theme of MISW 2023, "Advancing Maritime Security for a Sustainable Future," echoed at Gurugram



for the last three days. The workshop served as an invaluable platform for participants to delve deep into the intricacies of maritime security and the robust information-sharing mechanisms required for success in the endeavour.

The workshop not only nurtured knowledge but also forged a functional understanding of contemporary challenges among all those involved.

In the spirit of India's vision of "Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)," the efforts were brought to the forefront during MISW 23. IFC-IOR's mission aligns seamlessly with the tenets of SAGAR, underscoring the need for security, stability, and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region.

Government of Madhya Pradesh
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief Water Resources Department,
Jal Sansadhan Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar, Bhopal (M.P.)
 Email Id: ceproc.encwrd.bpl@nic.in Tel: 0755-2767635 Fax: 0755-2552406

N.I.T. No. 1025/2023-24/E-in-C/e-tendering Bhopal, Dated 09.09.2023

Bids for following works are invited on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> Last Date of purchase/download of Bid Document and submission of bid is 27-09-2023, 17:30 hrs. Any amendment/modification can be seen only on the website. Detailed N.I.T. and other details can be viewed on above mentioned website.

S. No.	Tender No.	Work	District	Amount (Lakhs)
1.	2023_WRD_306152	Construction work of Khairo, Padriya tank scheme and repair work of Raxapurwa tank under Atal Bhujal Yojana.	Chhatarpur	158.64
2.	2023_WRD_306158	New Electrification work (Extension of 33 KV Line) including Erection and Commissioning of 33/0.433 KV substation with 315 KVA transformer including switch yard equipment at Runj Medium Irrigation Dam. Complete work material and labour at work site as per 'G' schedule and drawing and direction of Engineer-in-charge.	Panna	130.43
3.	2023_WRD_306161	Construction of bridge crossing at RD 1710 m of spill channel in Parkul Medium Irrigation Project.	Sagar	72.90
4.	2023_WRD_306168	Lining work in main canal (R.D. 0.00m. to 15930m.) of Gangulpara Tank & Dongarbudli Tank (R.D. 4280m. to 6770m.) renovation & resectioning of Bund, repair of sluice and waste weir of Man Tank and Shervi No.2 Tank under special repair scheme.	Balaghat	517.89

G-19779/23 Chief Engineer (Procurement)

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sonia Sharma/ Pushpa Sharma/ LBDEL00001088732	Flat No -3, Upper Ground Floor, (Back Side), A- 128, Shalimar Garden, Extn 2, Sahibabad Ghaziabad U P/ September 14, 2023	April 28, 2023 Rs. 4,89,130/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Vandana Sinha/ Kamlesh Kaur Sinha/ LBDEL00003217779	House No Rz F 1/49, 1st Floor Mahavir Enclave Delhi 110068/ September 14, 2023	March 09, 2023 Rs. 34,05,158/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Sunil Moli/ P. V. Shiva/ M E Balakrishnan/ LBDEL00000763534	Property No- 241, Entire First Floor Without Roof Rights, Pocket 6-30, Sector-03, Rohini, Delhi/ September 14, 2023	April 21, 2023 Rs. 4,89,130/-	Delhi & NCR/ Palakkad
4.	Santanu Banerjee/ Gargi Bhattacharjee/ LBDEL00002272956	Flat No. 303, 4th Floor, "Vrindavan Greens" Narmada Tower, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh/ September 14, 2023	March 19, 2021 Rs. 37,97,466/-	Delhi & NCR/ Mathura/ Kanchrapara
5.	Neha/ Amarjit Singh/ LBDEL00002141151	Flat No. 501, 6th Floor, Varindavan Greens Narmada Tower, Gh-01, Gh-02, Chaitanya Vihara, Phase-1, Villagerajpur Bangar Mathura/ September 14, 2023	August 20, 2020 Rs. 7,99,002/-	Delhi & NCR Mathura

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

Date : September 16, 2023 Place : Delhi/NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

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

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

(See proviso to rule 8(6))
 Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Meenakshi Pandey (Borrower), Geeta Pandey (Co-borrower) LBDEL00002081323, LBDFB00005250172	Flat No 3093, 9th Floor Tower 3, ATS Tourmaline, Sector 109, Gurgaon, Area 2150 Sq Ft	Rs. 1,79,46,652/- as on September 04, 2023.	Rs. 1,50,50,000/- as on September 04, 2023. Rs. 15,05,000/-	October 04, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM	October 16, 2023 from 12:00 Noon to 1:00 PM

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>). The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till October 13, 2023 before 05:00 P.M failing which, this/these secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at: ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005 on or before October 13, 2023 before 05:00 P.M and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before October 13, 2023 before 05:00 P.M along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at: ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005 on or before October 13, 2023 before 05:00 P.M. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the e-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited On 8657476284/ 8584874809

Please note that Marketing agencies M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited 2. Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd 3. Hecta Proptech Pvt Ltd have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For further terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date : September 16, 2023 Place : Delhi/NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

2 held in Rajasthan paper leak case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has arrested Babulal Katara, Member of Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) and Anil Kumar Meena aka Sher Singh Meena under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in the Paper Leak case of Rajasthan.

Katara and Meena were produced before the Special Court of PMLA, Jaipur and the court granted the custody of the two accused to ED custody for three days.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIRs/chargesheets registered/filed by Rajasthan Police, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against Katara, Meena and other related persons.

"The investigation revealed that Babulal Katara, RPSC Member, leaked the question paper of General Knowledge of Senior Teacher Grade II Competitive Examination, 2022 to be conducted by RPSC on 21.12.2022, 22.12.2022 and 24.12.2022 at various places in Rajasthan and sold it to Anil Kumar Meena AKA Sher Singh Meena.

'Industries with perceived higher risk safer than healthcare'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Believe it or not, industries with a perceived higher risk, such as the aviation and nuclear industries have a much better safety record than health care does which reports more than 3 million mortalities annually due to unsafe care. In other words, 1 in every 10 patients is harmed in health care.

With an aim to curb these preventable deaths and injuries, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recently released the first-ever patient safety rights charter outlining the core rights of all patients in the context of safety of health care.

The charter also sought to assist governments and other stakeholders to ensure the voices of patients are heard and their right to safe health care is protected. Patient safety is the avoidance of unintended or unexpected harm to people during the provision of health care.

Most of the mistakes that lead to harm do not occur as a result of the practices of one or a group of health and care workers.



Rather, these occur due to system or process failures, underlining the importance of understanding the underlying causes of errors in medical care.

In low-to-middle income countries, as many as 4 in 100 people die from unsafe care. Some of the most common sources of patient harm are medication errors, surgical errors, health care-associated infections, sepsis, diagnostic errors and patient falls, according to the WHO.

A string of factors such as system and organisational factors, technological factors, human factors and behavior besides patient-related factors and others are responsible for these untimely deaths. There

needs to be a shift from the traditional blaming approach to a more system-based thinking, according to the global health body. The charter was announced following a conference on September 12 and 13 at WHO headquarters in Geneva and online which saw participation from all six WHO regions participated in it, including patient advocates and representatives of patients' organisations.

A storytelling toolkit to guide patients and families in sharing their experience related to harmful events within health care and Global Knowledge Sharing Platform that will support the exchange of global resources, best prac-

tices, tools and resources related to patient safety were released at the event.

The majority of patient harm is avoidable and engaging patients, families and caregivers is one of the most essential techniques for minimising harm, the WHO said.

Patient safety is a collective responsibility, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said in a press statement. "Health systems must work hand-in-hand with patients, families, and communities, so that patients can be informed advocates in their own care and every person can receive the safe, dignified, and compassionate care they deserve."

Marine organisms genetically engineered to break down plastic

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a major breakthrough that aims to offer a solution to the growing microplastic pollution in rivers and oceans, a team of researchers have genetically engineered a marine microorganism to break down plastic in salt water.

Specifically, the modified organism can break down polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a plastic used in everything from water bottles to clothing that is a significant contributor to microplastic pollution in oceans.

"This is exciting because we need to address plastic pollution in marine environments," said Nathan Crook, corresponding author of a paper on the work and an assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at North Carolina State University in their paper "Breakdown of PET microplastics under saltwater conditions using engineered Vibrio natriegens." It is published in the AICHE Journal. The paper was co-authored by Stefano Menegatti, an associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at NC State.

"One option is to pull the plastic out of the water and put it in a landfill, but that poses challenges of its own. It would be better if we could break these plastics down into products that can be reused. For that to work, you need an inexpensive way to



break the plastic down. Our work here is a big step in that direction."

The researchers worked with two species of bacteria. The first bacterium, Vibrio natriegens, thrives in saltwater and is remarkable - in part - because it reproduces very quickly. The second bacterium, Ideonella sakaiensis, is remarkable because it produces enzymes that allow it to break down PET and eat it.

The researchers took the DNA from I. sakaiensis that is responsible for producing the enzymes that break down plastic, and incorporated that genetic sequence into a plasmid. Plasmids are genetic sequences that can replicate in a cell, independent of the cell's own chromosome. In other words, you can sneak a plasmid into a foreign cell, and that cell will carry out the instructions in the plasmid's DNA. And that's exactly what the researchers did here.

By introducing the plasmid containing the I. sakaiensis genes into V. natriegens

bacteria, the researchers were able to get V. natriegens to produce the desired enzymes on the surface of their cells. The researchers then demonstrated that V. natriegens was able to break down PET in a saltwater environment at room temperature.

"This is scientifically exciting because this is the first time anyone has reported successfully getting V. natriegens to express foreign enzymes on the surface of its cells," Crook said.

"From a practical standpoint, this is also the first genetically engineered organism that we know of that is capable of breaking down PET microplastics in saltwater," added Tianyu Li, first author of the paper and a Ph.D. student at NC State. "That's important, because it is not economically feasible to remove plastics from the ocean and rinse high concentration salts off before beginning any processes related to breaking the plastic down."

4,000 fans turn up at grand finale of 'All India K-Pop contest'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Korean Cultural Centre India (KCCI) on Saturday hosted the grand finale of the "All India K-Pop Contest 2023" with much fervor, bringing together over 4,000 fans of K-pop and Korean culture at the Thyagaraj Sports Complex here.

The contest, which began as a long-term project in April, saw approximately 11,000 participants in the initial online round, followed by regional rounds held in 11 major cities including Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, and Itanagar, etc. In the semi-finals held here in New Delhi, 12 talented teams advanced to the grand finale. The event was graced by Chang Jae-Bok, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to India and Hong Ju Jeon, MD, LG India which has sponsored the project.

A live video call with the global girl group "X:IN," which includes three Korean members and one each from Russia and India, added to the excitement. "Aria," a member from India, drew attention as the third Indian member of a K-pop group.

The finalists in the dance category included "With Nine" from Itanagar, "Outcasts" from Delhi,

"Serein" from Bengaluru, "Elite" from Chennai, "Axiom" from Mumbai, and "TH7" from Hyderabad. In the vocal category, participants included Prachi Sharma from Delhi, Sai Madhav Rella from Hyderabad, Jaisri Shruti G from Bengaluru, Sruthi Ramnarayan from Chennai, Abhipriya Chakraborty from Kolkata, and Manya Singh from Lucknow.

The grand finale featured a congratulatory performance and judging by the popular Korean idol group "MCND." MCND, a global boy group consisting of members Castle J, Bic, Minjae, Huijin, and Win, made their debut in 2020 and has gained popularity not only in Korea but also in South America, Europe, Japan, and beyond. They performed their hit songs "ICE-AGE" and "Crush," much to the excitement of the audience.

Hwang Il-Yong, the Director of the KCCI said, "We are grateful for the interest and love shown by all the participants in the K-Pop contest and the audience who attended."

"We feel that K-Pop has become a means of communication not only within Korea but also with people around the world. We hope that K-Pop can offer dreams and hope to the youth in India."

Kim inspects hypersonic missiles, warships in Russia

AP ■ SEOUL
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected Russia's nuclear-capable bombers, hypersonic missiles and an advanced warship from its Pacific fleet on Saturday as he continued a trip in Russia's Far East that has sparked Western concerns about an arms alliance that could fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine.
After arriving in the city of Artyom by train, Kim travelled to an airport just outside the port city of Vladivostok where Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and other senior military officials gave him an up-close look at Russia's strategic bombers and other warplanes.
All the Russian warplanes shown to Kim on Saturday were among the types that



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, centre, visits a Russian aircraft plant that builds fighter jets in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, about 6,200 kilometers (3,900 miles) east of Moscow, Russia on Friday.

have seen active use in the war in Ukraine, including the Tu-160, Tu-95 and Tu-22 bombers that have regularly launched cruise missiles.
Shoigu, who had met Kim during a rare visit to North Korea in July, also showed Kim one of Russia's latest missiles, the hypersonic Kinzhal, carried by the MiG-31 fighter jet, that saw its first combat during the war in Ukraine, according to Russia's Defence Ministry.
Kim and Shoigu later travelled to Vladivostok, where they inspected the Admiral Shaposhnikov frigate of Russia's Pacific fleet. Russia's navy commander, Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, briefed Kim on the ship's capabilities and weapons, which include long-range Kalibr cruise missiles that Russian warships have regularly fired at targets in

nologies to advance Kim's nuclear, missile and other military programmes in exchange for providing Russia with badly needed munitions.
Videos released by Russia's Defence Ministry showed Shoigu greeting Kim at the airport along with honour guards lined up near a red carpet. Kim was seen peering at the Kinzhal missile and gesturing and asking questions about the warplanes' capabilities as he discussed technical details with Shoigu and other military officials through translators.
Kim was also seen talking to Shoigu and Yevmenov about a purported nuclear attack submarine the North unveiled last week as they stepped out of the Shaposhnikov frigate.
The visit follows Kim's tour on Friday of a factory producing advanced Russian warplanes.
Comments taken out of context, says Seattle Police officer
The Seattle Police Officers' Guild has defended the callous remarks of its official, who was found making insensitive comments after the horrific death of Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula, saying some viral videos of police actions shared by media were taken out of context.
Kandula, 23, was struck by a police vehicle driven by Officer Kevin Dave when she was crossing a street in Seattle on January 23.
He was driving 74 mph (more than 119 kmh) on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.
In bodycam footage released on Monday by the Seattle Police Department, Officer Daniel Audeker laughed about the deadly crash and dismissed any implication Dave might be at fault or that a criminal investigation was necessary.
In the video, Audeker can be heard saying, "Yeah, just write a cheque. USD 11,000. She was 26 anyway, she had limited value."
"We stand in solidarity with you and have every expectation that the ongoing investigations will bring a measure of justice and accountability," the Chancellor of Northeastern University said in the statement.
"When a group of us are experiencing anguish, we are all in pain. These are the times when we must draw strength from each other and move forward in unity. Next week, we will convene campus gatherings to allow our community to join together in harmony," he added.
India has taken up Kandula's case with the US government as well as with local officials in Washington state.

WORLD BRIEFS

TURKIYE MAY PART WAYS WITH EU: ERDOGAN
Istanbul: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday that Turkey may part ways with the European Union, implying that the country is thinking about ending its bid to join the 27-nation bloc. "The EU is making efforts to sever ties with Turkey," he told reporters before departing for the 78th UN General Assembly in New York. "We will evaluate the situation, and if needed we will part ways with the EU." He was responding to a question about a recent report adopted by the European Parliament, which stated "the accession process cannot resume under the current circumstances, and calls on EU to explore a parallel and realistic framework for EU-Turkiye relations." Turkey applied to join the European Union in 1999, and accession talks began in 2005. Accession negotiations were frozen in 2018 because of "democratic backsliding," according to the European Parliament. Erdogan's statement on Saturday came more than a week after Turkey's foreign minister affirmed his country's resolve to join the EU and urged the bloc to take courageous steps to advance its bid.
GOVT CRITIC GETS 6-MONTH SENTENCE IN EGYPT
Cairo: An Egyptian court sentenced a fierce government critic Saturday to six months in prison over charges that stemmed from an online spat with a former minister and opposition figure. The case drew condemnation from rights groups and renewed global attention to Egypt's poor human rights record. Hisham Kassem, who is a leading official with the Free Current, a coalition of mostly liberal parties, was convicted of slander, defamation and verbally assaulting a police officer, according to Hossam Bahgat, head of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, which represents Kassem before the court. Bahgat said the court in Cairo also fined Kassem 20,000 Egyptian pounds (around \$647). Saturday's verdict is subject to an appeal before a higher court.
MAN DETAINED FOR CLIMBING WALL NEAR BUCKINGHAM PALACE
London: A 25-year-old man was arrested near the stables of Buckingham Palace in London after he climbed the wall to enter the Royal Mews in the early hours of Saturday, Scotland Yard said. The man remains in custody at a London police station after he was arrested under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act for trespassing on a protected site. The Metropolitan Police said that the man did not gain access to the palace grounds at any point. "A man has been arrested in the Royal Mews area adjacent to Buckingham Palace," the Met Police said in a statement. "At 01:25 hrs (local time) on Saturday, 16 September, officers at Buckingham Palace responded to a person climbing the wall and entering the Royal Mews. Following a search, a 25-year-old man was detained by officers outside the stables in the Royal Mews," the statement said.
FINE FOR PHOTOS INSIDE PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE
Kathmandu: The Pashupatinath temple authorities in Nepal have cautioned visitors and pilgrims against shooting photographs and videos inside the main temple premises and warned that the violators will be fined up to Rs 2,000 or may even face action under cybercrime laws. Pashupatinath Temple is a world-famous Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Pashupati in Kathmandu and situated on the banks of the Bagmati River. Thousands of pilgrims from India and across the world visit the temple daily. Taking pictures or videos inside the Pashupatinath temple premises is already prohibited by the Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT), the governing body responsible for overseeing the Pashupatinath temple's affairs, said on Friday.
EX-US DIPLOMAT SENTENCED IN QATAR LOBBYING SCHEME
Washington: A former top US ambassador was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered to pay a USD 93,350 fine on Friday for improperly helping a wealthy Persian Gulf country influence US policy and for not disclosing gifts he received from a disgraced political fundraiser. Richard G Olson, the State Department's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the end of the Obama administration, pleaded guilty last year to illegally providing aid and advice to Qatar while working for Imaad Zuberi, a once prolific political donor who is serving a 12-year prison sentence for tax evasion, campaign finance violations and failing to register as a foreign agent.

Chinese Defence Min's absence from meeting fuels removal speculation

PTI ■ BEIJING
The Friday meeting discussed the political education of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).
Three of the seven-member Central Military Commission (CMC) He Weidong, the commission's vice-chairman; Admiral Miao Hua, who supervises political affairs, and rocket force General Zhang Shengmin, who is in charge of disciplinary issues, attended the meeting, the Post said. Also, not in attendance were General Liu Zhenli, the chief of staff of the joint staff department, and General Zhang Youxia, Xi's trusted ally and the first-ranked CMC vice chair.
He, who chaired the meeting, asked the PLA commanders to strengthen their political conviction and step up combat readiness, the Post reported, quoting the official media. There has been no official explanation for Gen. Li's absence. However, his name still figures as a member of the CMC on the official Chinese Defence Ministry website.
Gen Li's absence followed a major shakeup in the PLA Rocket (missile) Force in which its commander, Li Yuchao, and political commissar, Xu Zhongbo, were both replaced without any official explanation.
Speculation about the missing Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Li Shangfu may have been removed and detained became rife after he was conspicuously absent at the meeting of the Central Military Commission (CMC) here on Friday.
Regarded as a close confidante of President Xi Jinping, Gen. Li has not been seen in public since early this month, and also had not attended the meeting with senior Vietnamese defence officials on September 7 and 8.
Li is the second high-ranking Minister and ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) official to go missing since July this year.
Gen Li was conspicuously missing from the meeting held on Friday of the CMC, the overall high command of the Chinese military headed by President Xi, according to the footage aired on the state broadcaster CCTV, extending an unexplained public absence now in its third week, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Saturday. Besides his Presidency, 70-year-old Xi, regarded as the most powerful leader after Mao Zedong, heads the CPC and the CMC too.

'Jaahnavi Kandula to be awarded master's degree posthumously'

AP ■ SEATTLE
Jaahnavi Kandula, the Indian student who was struck and killed by a speeding police car here will be awarded her master's degree posthumously, the Chancellor of Northeastern University has announced, hoping that the ongoing probe will bring a measure of justice and accountability.
Kandula, a 23-year-old student at Washington State's Northeastern University was struck at a pedestrian crossing on the night of January 23.
Kandula was set to graduate this coming December with a master's degree in information systems from the Seattle campus of Northeastern University. Her family said she was working toward supporting her mother in India.
She was struck by a police vehicle driven by Officer Kevin Dave when she was crossing a street. He was driving 74 mph (more than 119 kmh) on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. In bodycam footage released on Monday by the Seattle Police Department, Officer Daniel Audeker laughed about the deadly crash and dismissed any implication Dave might be at fault or that a criminal investigation was necessary.
read. This week, Jaahnavi's friends and loved ones are enduring the additional pain of new developments related to this tragedy, he noted.
"Callous and insensitive remarks by a Seattle police officer have become public, reopening wounds and deepening our collective heartbreak," Henderson wrote.
He acknowledged that the Indian student community—across all Northeastern campuses—has been especially impacted by this tragedy and its aftermath.
"We stand in solidarity with you and have every expectation that the ongoing investigations will bring a measure of justice and accountability," the Chancellor of Northeastern University said in the statement.
"When a group of us are experiencing anguish, we are all in pain. These are the times when we must draw strength from each other and move forward in unity. Next week, we will convene campus gatherings to allow our community to join together in harmony," he added.
India has taken up Kandula's case with the US government as well as with local officials in Washington state.



In the video, Audeker, who is captured on body camera while discussing the fatal collision, can be heard saying, "Yeah, just write a check. USD 11,000. She was 26 anyway, she had limited value."
Saddened by Kandula's death, Kenneth W Henderson, Chancellor of Northeastern University in a statement issued on the varsity's official Facebook page on Friday said that. Her loss will be felt deeply by students, staff, and faculty. The university plans to award Jaahnavi her degree posthumously and present it to her family.
"In the days following this tragedy, our Seattle campus community joined together in a vigil of remembrance and solidarity. At the time, our dean Dave Thurman wrote of Jaahnavi's tremendous engagement, noting that all on our Seattle campus, "loved her bubbly laugh, sense of humor and infectious personality," the post

Comments taken out of context, says Seattle Police officer

AP ■ WASHINGTON
The Seattle Police Officers' Guild has defended the callous remarks of its official, who was found making insensitive comments after the horrific death of Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula, saying some viral videos of police actions shared by media were taken out of context.
Kandula, 23, was struck by a police vehicle driven by Officer Kevin Dave when she was crossing a street in Seattle on January 23.
He was driving 74 mph (more than 119 kmh) on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.
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In the video, Audeker can be heard saying, "Yeah, just write a cheque. USD 11,000. She was 26 anyway, she had limited value."

Yet another hike in fuel prices prompts furore in Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
Mid double-digit inflation, Pakistan's caretaker government has effected yet another hike in the prices of petrol and diesel taking them to a historic high - over Rs 330 per litre - prompting immediate protests and a legal challenge too.
As on Saturday, USD 1 was equivalent to 296.41 Pakistani Rupee.
The Ministry of Finance on Friday night announced the price hike of petrol by Rs 26.02 and diesel by Rs 17.34 per litre.
After the hike, petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) are costing over Rs 330 at the filling stations, "a psychological barrier that has been crossed for the first time in the country's history," the Dawn newspaper wrote.
The fuel price hike comes on the heels of over 27.4 per cent increase in the rate of inflation in August, putting an unbearable burden on the masses, as petrol and HSD are used by all private and public service vehicles.
The caretaker government on September 1 jacking up the petrol and diesel prices by over Rs 14. The rise is on top of Rs 32.41 and Rs 38.49 per litre increase in petrol and HSD prices since August 15.
Petrol and diesel have become costlier by 20 per cent since the caretaker government took over in August.
Meanwhile, the hike in the petrol and diesel prices has prompted Pakistan's opposition parties to vociferously criticize it even as a judicial activist challenged it in the Lahore High Court.
Rejecting the massive increase in petroleum prices, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) announced sit-ins outside the governors' houses in all four provinces of Pakistan. JI chief Sirajul Haq said the government has made the life of a common man miserable by increasing the petroleum prices on the directions of the IMF, Dunya News channel's website reported on Saturday.

PAF conducts flying exercises in China and Egypt

Islamabad (PTI): The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has carried out two large-scale flying exercises, one each at China and Egypt, and claimed it marked "a significant milestone" in its journey towards emerging as a "formidable air force."
The participation includes PAF's J-10 C and JF-17 lead fighter aircraft, combat pilots, air defence controllers, and technical ground crew, who are actively engaged in the Shaheen-X bilateral Air Exercise hosted by the People's Liberation Army Air Force in China, as well as the Bright Star Air Exercise held in Egypt, Dunya News channel's website reported on Friday.
The annual bilateral China-Pakistan Joint Air Force Training Exercise 'Shaheen (Eagle) - X' is being held at Jiuchuan and Yinchuan in northwest China. The exercise that started last week in August will continue till mid-September.
The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) of China and the PAF have been conducting Shaheen joint exercises since 2011, which are being hosted by both countries on an alternate basis, ChinaMilitary.com said.
Quoting a PAF statement, the Dunya News report further said, "The participation of these fighter jets in Exercise Shaheen-X marks a significant milestone in PAF's journey towards a technologically advanced and formidable air force."
The Shaheen-X exercise in China and the Bright Star Air Exercise in Egypt provide invaluable opportunities for PAF to build upon its operational experience and exchange knowledge with esteemed counterparts from around the world, it said.
Meanwhile, the annual 'Bright Start' exercise for 2023 concluded at the Mohamed Naguib Military Base in the city of Hammam in Egypt.

India condemns attack on Sikh student in Canada

AP ■ TORONTO
India on Saturday strongly condemned an assault, including the use of bear spray, on a 17-year-old Sikh high school student in Canada's British Columbia province this week and urged local authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action against the perpetrators.
The incident took place on September 11 when the Sikh student, who has not been named, was on his way home from school in Kelowna.
Kelowna Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said in a statement on September 11 that the attack occurred just before 4 pm at a bus stop at the intersection of Rutland Road and Robson Road in the Okanagan city.
"Just prior to the bear spray incident, there was an altercation on the bus resulting in those involved being directed off of the bus. After exiting the bus, a second incident occurred where the suspect male deployed bear spray on the victim," the statement said. The Consulate General of India in Vancouver has strongly condemned the assault.
"cgivancouver strongly condemns assault on an Indian national in Kelowna and requests Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action against the perpetrators.@HCL_Ottawa@MEAIndia," the Consulate said on Saturday in a post on X.
On September 13, Kelowna RCMP arrested the young male involved in the incidents that took place on and off a BC Transit bus at the intersection of Rutland Rd S and Robson Rd E on September 11.
Investigators will be conducting video analysis and reviewing additional evidence to determine what transpired on the bus prior to all parties being directed off of the bus. "There is no doubt that the victim was bear sprayed and assaulted by the accused; this has been made quite clear, RCMP said in a statement. The World Sikh Organisation of Canada released a statement condemning the attack and said the Sikh student could not understand why he was attacked in this way.

Libya probes collapse of two dams

AP ■ DERNA
Libyan authorities have opened an investigation into the collapse of two dams that caused a devastating flood in a coastal city as rescue teams searched for bodies on Saturday, nearly a week after the deluge killed more than 11,000 people.
Heavy rains caused by Mediterranean storm Daniel caused deadly flooding across eastern Libya last weekend.
The floods overwhelmed two dams, sending a wall of water several metres (yards) high through the centre of Derna, destroying entire neighbourhoods and sweeping people out to sea.
More than 10,000 are missing, according to the Libyan Red Crescent. Six days on, searchers are still digging through mud and hollowed-out buildings, looking for bodies and possible survivors. The Red Crescent has confirmed 11,300 deaths so far.
Claire Nicolet, who heads the emergencies department of the Doctors Without Borders aid group, said rescuers found "a lot of bodies" on Friday and were still searching.
"It was a big number ... the sea is still ejecting lots of dead bodies unfortunately," she told The Associated Press.
She said massive aid efforts were still needed, including urgent psychological support for those who lost their families. She said the burial of bodies is still a significant challenge, despite some progress in coordinating search and rescue efforts and the distribution of aid.
Authorities and aid groups have voiced concern about the spread of waterborne diseases and shifting of explosive ordnance from Libya's recent conflicts.
Haider al-Saeih, head of Libya's centre for combating diseases, said in televised comments on Saturday that at least 150 people had suffered from diarrhea after drinking contaminated water in Derna.
He urged residents to only drink bottled water, which is being shipped in as part of relief efforts.
Libya's General Prosecutor, al-Sediq al-Sour, said prosecutors would investigate the collapse of the two dams, which were built in the 1970s, as well as the allocation of maintenance funds.
He said prosecutors would investigate local authorities in the city, as well as previous governments.
"I reassure citizens that whoever made mistakes or negligence, prosecutors will certainly take firm measures, file a criminal case against him and send him to trial," he told a news conference in Derna late Friday.

Dozens of Syrians among missing

Beirut (AP): A Syrian dentist, a confectioner who made mouthwatering Arabic sweets, a carpenter.
Syrians from all walks of life had left their war-torn country for the Libyan city of Derna over the past years, looking for work and better opportunities.
Now, dozens of them are missing and feared dead after Mediterranean storm Daniel unleashed catastrophic flooding that tore through the coastal city on Sunday night, wreaking destruction and washing entire neighborhoods out to sea. The death toll has eclipsed 11,000 and more than 10,000 are missing. Five days on, searchers are still digging through mud and hollowed-out buildings in Derna, looking for bodies. According to a war monitoring group, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 42 Syrians have been confirmed dead in Libya while the real number could be as high as 150.

Historic India Club calls last orders in London

London (PTI): The India Club in London, with its early roots in the Indian independence movement as a hub for nationalists and a home away from home for Indians in the country over the years, will close permanently on Sunday.
With its walls adorned with photographs of prominent Indians such as former prime ministers, the Club's founding member was Krishna Menon - who went on to become the first High Commissioner of independent India to the UK. As well as housing one of the UK's early Indian restaurants, India Club quickly transformed into a hub for a rapidly growing British South Asian community in the aftermath of Indian independence.
"We have been completely rushed off our feet since the public found out we were closing on September 17," said Phiroza Marker, the manager of the Club.
"We are closing but looking for new premises in the vicinity to relocate to," she said.
Parsi-origin Yadgar Marker has been running the establishment with his wife Freney and daughter Phiroza since they rescued it from ruin in 1997 as the director of Goldsand Hotels Limited.



Women with beer glasses pose for a photo at the 188th 'Oktoberfest' beer festival in Munich, Germany on Saturday

10 land customs stations to come up in Bihar along Indo-Nepal border: Shah

PTI ■ JOGBANI (BIHAR)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday announced that the Central Government has identified 10 places to establish Land Customs Stations (LCS) in Bihar along the international border to improve bilateral trade between India and Nepal.

An LCS is a facility providing transit, customs, immigration and cargo handling services for goods and passengers travelling between two neighbouring countries.

"The Centre is in the process of establishing a total of 19 Land Customs Stations along the Indo-Nepal border to improve the bilateral trade between India and Nepal. Out of the 19, ten will be established in Bihar," Shah said.

The 10 Land Customs stations will be set up at Galgalia (Kishanganj district), Bairgania (Sitamarhi), Bhimnagar and Kunauli (Supaul), Jainagar (Madhubani) Valmiki Nagar (West Champaran) and several other places.

Shah was addressing a function after inaugurating a newly constructed residential building complex of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) near Jobnani Integrated Check Post in Araria district of Bihar.

Shah said, "The LPAI is working towards taking India's trade relations with neighbouring countries forward and it is



also acting as the key player of the country for friendship and fraternity with neighbouring nations."

He said that over 7,000 trucks move through the post every day and over 14 per cent of the total trade between India and Nepal takes place through this check post of the Land Port Authority.

The government of India is working

on three principles 'coordination, cooperation and collaboration' for further improvement of its trade with Nepal, he added.

The Union home minister also inaugurated the residential building complex of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) in Bihar's Bathnaha virtually.

"The SSB, along with maintaining security on the border of two friendly

countries - Nepal and Bhutan - also works to increase cultural relations," he said.

Shah asserted that the Centre has taken several major steps to improve border infrastructure, bilateral trade, people-to-people connectivity, and village development to boost ties with neighbours.

He said, "There are many border-related issues in Bihar, like infiltration, land grabbing and illegal trade."

These problems can be solved by the central and state governments together and with strict measures with no appeasement policy, he said adding that all these issues will be addressed in the near future.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Centre is building strong infrastructure in the border areas and efforts are on to provide benefits of welfare schemes in border villages while developing connectivity. For Modi-ji, every village at the border is the first village of the country," he said.

Shah said that from the India-China war of 1962 till today, the dedicated soldiers of India's border security forces have not only secured the boundaries but also further strengthened the cultural identity of the villages located in the border areas.

He said, "Whether it is the Covid-19 pandemic or floods, everywhere our border security forces have conveyed the message of humanity to the border areas."

Gen X, Millennials eager to leverage artificial intelligence at work: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With companies adopting new technologies to enhance productivity, a majority of the Millennials and Gen X professionals are curious and eager to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) at work, according to a report.

Over 75 per cent of Millennials and 74 per cent of Gen X professionals surveyed feel that AI will take boring tasks off their plate giving them the time to focus on tasks that excite them, said a report by LinkedIn India.

Meanwhile, 70 per cent of Gen Z are also eager and curious to adapt to the world of AI, the report added.

People born between 1965 and 1980 are referred as Gen X, while Millennials are those born between 1981 and 1996 and Gen Z includes those born between 1996 and 2010.

"While Gen Z and Millennials have always demonstrated greater tech fluency, it's refreshing to see Gen X professionals embrace AI with similar enthusiasm. Professionals from these three generations are tapping into AI's potential to enhance productivity, navigate work challenges, and achieve a meaningful work-life balance.



"Amid these progressive use cases, it's promising to note that professionals of all age groups value soft skills and technical skills equally as they prepare for the future of work," LinkedIn India Editorial Lead and Career Expert Nirajita Banerjee said.

The LinkedIn report is based on a research conducted by Censuswide among 2,045 workers in India aged over 18 years during August 23-29.

Even as there is some hesitation among all age groups interviewed, there is also excitement as Indians are optimistic that AI will positively transform their careers, noted the report.

The report further revealed that 84 per cent Millennials, 82 per cent Gen X and 72 per cent Gen Z professionals interviewed agreed that AI will help them

solve problems or overcome an obstacle at work even with a job-related task which is beyond help.

As AI can take away some of the drudgery of their daily jobs, professionals are hoping to have more job satisfaction and lead an improved quality of life, the report added. According to the report, Millennials (79 per cent) and Gen X (76 per cent) professionals also said that adoption of AI will reduce their workload and will help them achieve greater work-life balance — the highest amongst all generations.

Meanwhile, around 93 per cent Millennials and 89 per cent Gen X professionals also believed that AI will become their invisible teammate in the next five years, said the report.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cloud not for all workloads: Ensono MD

Amid a surge in cloud technologies for enterprises and customer use cases, a senior executive of mainframe-as-a-service company Ensono said cloud is not meant for all workloads.

India Managing Director of Ensono, Raj Bagga spoke to PTI as the company makes a foray into hybrid solutions for enterprise data.

The government recently imposed restrictions on import of micro computers, large or mainframe computers, and certain data processing machines.

Mainframe computers, informally called mainframe, are used by large organizations for bulk data processing for

tasks such as censuses, industry and consumer statistics, enterprise resource planning, and large-scale transaction processing - especially by large companies having sensitive information.

"Earlier, companies used to see the cloud only approach, moving 100 per cent to cloud, but that thinking is changing drastically. People are realizing that cloud is not for all the workloads and suitable for that," Bagga said.

On mainframe technology applications, Bagga said, "Chandrayaan-3's head mentioned that one of the platforms

they used which was making this successful was the mainframe technology. Mainframe is the one wherein we support the large insurance providers, banking, retailers, healthcare, a lot of government sector which run this platform now."

Ensono merged with Wipro-hosted data center business, and Bagga, a Wipro veteran with 26 years of experience, took helm of the company after the acquisition in 2018.

"When Wipro or most Indian IT service providers look at data centre business, they are more into asset light business and they don't want to carry



assets of larger extent because data center and private cloud or mainframe business required a lot of capital investment and

these companies are more interested in an asset light kind of model," Bagga said.

Ensono has grown its rev-

enue by 50 per cent over the last 5 years and increased its India employee base by 26 per cent over the same period, he said.

Headcount of the company has grown from 450 employees in 2018 to over 1,500 in present date, he added.

Ensono's revenue last year touched USD 775 million and is expected to reach USD 900 million this year. Bagga said the company invests about 3 to 5 per cent of revenue in innovation.

Speaking on companies preferring to stick to mainframe technologies amid concerns of enterprise cloud data used for training Generative AI, Bagga

said, "Considering we are a data center provider, so we follow all the security requirement for SCCM to PCI and all the ISO 27,000. All those things we have certified to ensure that our data, data privacy and data risk is mitigated."

Bagga also shed light on Ensono's steering committee for Gen AI headed by their CTO, comprising leaders from all functions, including HR, finance and legal.

The company along with Microsoft Azure is also working on an undisclosed solution for hybrid cloud by which the mainframe kind of services would be sitting in data centers by which one further minimizes the data travelling between the public and private cloud.

Standard Chartered Bank sets up private banking centre in Chennai

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Private sector Standard Chartered Bank has inaugurated its private banking centre in the city, the over-century-old bank said on Saturday.

The Private Banking Centre is the fifth after Bengaluru, New Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

Aimed at serving high net worth and ultra-high net worth clients, the Private Banking Centre offers products, advisory, and insights to manage, grow, and protect personal and business wealth.

"Being one of the oldest global banks in India, we have relationships across multi-generations and therefore we can focus both on a traditional approach while offering bespoke, objective, and holistic advice supported by an open architecture platform," said the Bank's Managing Director and Head Affluent, Private Bank and Branch Network, Nitin Chengappa.

"We are excited to open our new private banking centre in Chennai. Tamil Nadu is a major economic and financial centre, and we see a lot of potential for growth in our private banking business in this region," he said.

With the setting up of the new Private Banking Centre, the clients would get access to a suite of unique investment, wealth, and banking solutions. The Centre also supports them with a private banker, service manager, and also investment specialist with access to a full spectrum of solutions.

On the setting up of the Private Banking Centre, the bank's Head-Private Banking, Pankaj Walia said, India's Ultra High Net worth population is growing rapidly, and there is a huge opportunity in this space. "The country's start-up culture, supported by strong GDP growth and new capital, is creating a new group of billionaires," he said.

The Bank recognises the clients' diverse wealth management needs and hence, brings access to a full spectrum of end-to-end financial solutions, as a global universal bank, for every stage of the client's personal and business journey, Walia said in the release.



Study to assess carbon footprint of tea industry

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Tea Research Association (TRA) has initiated a collaborative study to assess the carbon footprint of the industry, an official said.

Speaking at the 59th Annual General Meeting of TRA, its chairperson Nayantara Palchoudhuri said a committee has been formed by the Tea Board of India to learn the outcomes of the study, and discuss and formulate policies on achieving net zero goals for the industry.

She also urged the FSSAI or the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to devise a rating system for tea in the country.

"As the world is fast adapting to live with the reality of climate change, the issue of carbon offsetting has become important for all countries and industries. For a low-carbon industry like tea, there is much scope for earning carbon credits," she said.

"However, there was no systematic study on the subject. TRA has taken up a collaborative study on life cycle assessment of tea plantations and the factories to scientifically find out the carbon footprint of the industry," she said at the programme on Saturday night.

Once the study is done by the end of next year, TRA can plan future strategies to tackle issues relating to carbon offsetting, she said.

The Tea Board could not be reached immediately for comment.

Joydeep Phukan, the convener of the net zero committee, told PTI, "It has been formed to review the carbon footprint of the industry and align it with India's goal by employing various climate-friendly initiatives."

TRA director A Babu said a new clone, which is climate resilient and good in quality, will be released in 2024.

He said a rapid test kit to detect harmful pesticides in green leaves would be released in November.

Palchoudhuri said compliance with pesticide norms has been a big challenge for certain segments of the Indian tea industry.

"I would like to urge the FSSAI to introduce a system by which tea can be rated according to its compliance standards. This will go a long way in lifting the quality standards of Indian tea," she said.

Asked about the proposal, FSSAI advisor (quality assurance) Satyen K Panda, said, "Such a mechanism can be put in place on a quality basis but it cannot be done on food safety parameters. At present, we are not able to consider such a proposal but we are getting representation from across the sector."

Captain Steel to partner Sourav's Salboni project



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former Indian cricket team Captain Sourav Ganguly, who announced plans to establish an integrated steel plant with his friend at Salboni in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur, will execute the project with the assistance of Captain Steel, a senior official confirmed.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as we embark on the construction of our third steel plant in Bengal. Many may think I only played the sport, but we initiated a small steel plant in 2007, and within five to six months, construction of our new steel plant in Medinipur will start," Ganguly said.

"Sourav is a close friend of ours and we have had a long-standing association. With Sourav's support, we aim to establish a steel plant in West Bengal. We have approached the government with a request for a minimum of 600-700 acres," Captain Steel director Sanjay Gupta told PTI.

"Our goal is to establish a one-million-tonne capacity integrated steel plant with a tentative project cost of Rs 2,500 crore," Gupta said with indications that land has been allocated to them.

Milma's 2023-24 budget anticipates ₹1.22 crore surplus

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (KCMMF), known by its brand name Milma, on Friday adopted a growth-oriented budget for 2023-24.

The Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) adopted the budget pegging the revenue at Rs 680.50 crore and expenditure at Rs 679.28 crore, anticipating a surplus of Rs 1.22 crore during the financial year.

The AGM, held at the KCMMF headquarters here, also adopted resolutions covering a wide range of key issues relating to the milk sector in the state, Milma said in a release.

The budget made allocations for Milma's cattle feed factories at Pattanakkad and Malampuzha, Central Products Dairy at Alappuzha and the headquarters expenses, besides making provisions to ensure remunerative returns to farmers and initiatives to step up productivity.

Milma Chairman, K S Mani, said the surplus budget will definitely help Milma achieve further growth overcoming the challenges on the way.



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IBBI open to innovative suggestions that can reduce delays, help in better recovery

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Urging stakeholders for suggestions that can be incorporated in the policy to help reduce delays, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) chairman Ravi Mittal on Saturday said IBC has evolved over the years and NCLT has been approving over 35 resolutions a month, reducing delays.

"Major objectives of IBC are not only recovery but revival and rehabilitation as well. It was always thought of as a resolution mechanism and not a recovery mechanism," Mittal said while addressing Assocham's 8th National Summit on 'Insolvency and Bank-

ruptcy Code and Valuation'.

"The motto was to bring the company back on track. However, IBC is evaluated based on the recovery mode," he added. Addressing the concerns raised by other speakers on delays and low recoveries by IBC, Mittal said, "We are trying to speed up the process and are open to suggestions from stakeholders. Direct benefit of IBC is recovery, but you know the indirect benefit is even bigger and it is called a behavioural change. It is called the change in creditor and borrower relationship.

Last year the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved the maxi-



mum number of resolution plans, 180, and recovery was 36 per cent, he said, adding that the average recovery was 32 per cent over the last 6-7 years.

IBC, he said, has helped in recovering over Rs 12 lakh crore since 2017.

"We have to be more innovative to reduce delays. Of course, there is a need for an amendment. If we reduce delay then the recovery will be better. Now NCLT is approving 35 plans a month and at this rate, and if it can continue it will definitely reduce delay to a large extent," the IBBI chairman added.

Delays usually happen during the time of approval of the restoration plan when around 30-40 IAs (interim applications) are filed, he stated.

"We are trying to find out or analyse the cause of delays at various levels and are trying to speed up the processes," he added.

Explore new markets to reach \$10 bn exports, spice industry told

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The spice industry should work together to explore new markets, strengthen the existing ones and focus on value-added products to reach USD 10 billion exports by 2030, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

"Currently our total exports of spices is at USD 4 billion. Rather than exporting spice in the raw form only, we should look for value-added products as we go forward. We should start building up more markets by exploring new markets and strengthening the existing ones. We should look at creating factories for value-added products

to reach USD 10 billion exports by 2030 for the spices sector," Goyal said addressing the World Spice Congress 2023.

Citing an example, the minister said, during Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for turmeric grew tremendously because of its medicinal properties and in terms of exports it has the potential to reach USD 2 billion.

"If we focus all our energy on turmeric by developing value-added products, turmeric exports alone have the potential to touch USD 2 billion," he added.

The minister also suggested creating 'Bharat' as a brand or a certification representing high quality and

premium spices products.

"Let's create a 'Bharat' brand or some certification that can help in associating high quality spices products to the country. Don't export any sub-standard products that can harm the image of the country. The industry should focus on innovation, productivity, sustainability and exclusivity and market spices as a premium product when it goes to the world market," Goyal said.

Further, Goyal said that over 35 million (or 3.5 crore) people of Indian origin are living overseas, who can themselves add a lot of value to the spice business.

"Indian diaspora living overseas can help in expanding the spice con-

sumption to others communities. In fact they can become your brand ambassadors and help the industry to grow its market internationally," he stated.

The minister congratulated the Spices Board on conducting the Spice Congress after a hiatus of 7 years and also requested it to organise a world class exposition, symposium and conference of the spice industry in Delhi in 2024, inviting all players and international competitors and buyers to capture the imagination of the world.

"Spices represent the rich cultural heritage of our country. Therefore, the industry should invite all its competitors and buyers from all over the world

in larger numbers in the 2024 edition of the World Spice Congress and also make it into an annual event," he added.

Now is the time for the spices industry to go that extra mile to capture the world market, said the minister.

"As the biggest producer and consumer of spices, we should also encourage other countries to increase their spices consumption. We have a lot to offer, whether it is saffron from Kashmir or Kerala's unmatched black pepper, Gujarat's ginger or Nagaland's chili, there is so much that India has to offer to the rest of the world. We should work to make India the preferred source of spices," Goyal added.

MBAPPE SCORES TWICE BUT PSG LOSE

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain slipped to their first loss of the Ligue 1 season despite a Kylian Mbappe double as an impressive Nice secured a 3-2 victory at the Parc des Princes on Friday, with Terem Moffi scoring twice.

PSG fell behind less than midway through the first half as Moffi found the net following a poor mistake by Mbappe.

The France striker made amends on the half-hour mark, but Gaetan Laborde restored Nice's lead eight minutes after the break and Moffi put another past the ragged hosts.

Mbappe volleyed home to give the reigning French champions hope but Nice held on.

Luis Enrique's PSG, who would have usurped Monaco at the top with three points, instead slipped to third in the early table with eight points from five games, one point behind unbeaten Nice.

"Throughout the match they were fresher than us," said Luis Enrique after his first loss as PSG coach.

"Obviously a defeat hurts, we all have to improve, myself included. But I liked our state of mind.

"Of the three goals, two were deflected. Nice played great football, but I'm not worried and I saw the fans support their team even when they were two goals down."

Nice, backed by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, are hoping to bounce back this term from a disappointing campaign last season when they could only finish ninth in Ligue 1.

"Everything must be perfect to get a result here, the opponents must not be at their level, and we must give a complete performance," Nice coach Francesco Farfoll said.

"Beyond the tactical aspects, I saw a team of warriors."

VERRATTI FAREWELL

Before kick-off, the Parc des Princes bade farewell to Marco Verratti after he ended his 11-year stay at PSG to move



to Qatari club Al-Arabi.

Messages from former teammates including Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Thiago Silva were played on the big screen, while Verratti was allowed a lap of honour around the pitch.

The Italian midfielder made 416 appearances for PSG, winning nine Ligue 1 titles and six French Cups, but failed to help the club to a maiden Champions League triumph.

Nice dampened the party atmosphere by taking a shock lead in the 21st minute as PSG played themselves into trouble at the back.

Mbappe dropped deep inside his own half to take possession but immediately gave it away in a dangerous area and the ball bounced kindly for Moffi

whose shot took a big deflection off Milan Skriniar and spun into the net.

The visitors came close to doubling their advantage when Khephren Thuram's shot was well saved by PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Mbappe made an impact at the right end of the pitch as he grabbed his sixth league goal in four appearances this season, slamming a powerful shot from Achraf Hakimi's cut-back through a poor attempted save from Nice 'keeper Marcin Bulka.

PSG started to dominate but almost went into the break behind when Jordan Lotomba blasted an excellent opportunity over the bar with the final kick of the first half.

Nice did restore their advantage in

the 53rd minute, though, as Moffi played in Laborde to slot past Donnarumma.

Paris continued to ship chance after chance at the back and Moffi all but ended the game as a contest with 21 minutes left.

The PSG defence backed off the Nigerian striker and he took his time before stroking a low finish into the bottom corner from outside the area.

Mbappe acrobatically volleyed into the far corner after good work from substitute Randal Kolo Muani on his debut, but Nice saw out the closing moments with relative ease.

PSG will now have to raise themselves before their Champions League group-stage opener against Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday.

Ten unsure if Sancho will play for Man Utd again



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Erik ten Hag said on Friday he does not know whether exiled forward Jadon Sancho will ever play for Manchester United again.

Sancho has been banished to train away from United's first team after the England international angered Ten Hag when he claimed he was a "scapegoat" after he was dropped for a defeat at Arsenal earlier in September.

Ten Hag has hinted it was not the only incident involving Sancho that was taken into consideration when deciding the punishment.

The 23-year-old spent part of last season training on his

own in the Netherlands after Ten Hag said he was not in the right physical and mental condition to play for United.

Speaking ahead of Saturday's Premier League game against Brighton, the United boss said he did not know how long Sancho's disciplinary procedure would last or whether he will represent United again.

Asked whether the former Borussia Dortmund star would pull on the United shirt again, Ten Hag said: "I don't know. I am sitting here. Tomorrow we have a big game, we are going into a new block of games, many games in a condensed programme. I focus on that."

Sancho was linked with a

move to Saudi Arabia before the transfer deadline but will now remain a United player at least until the window reopens in January.

It is a startling fall from grace for Sancho, who was hailed as one of English football's rising stars when he joined United from Dortmund in 2021.

Ten Hag was clearly irked at having to answer so many questions about Sancho on the eve of an important game for his team, who have made a disappointing start to the Premier League season.

"He is not available, so in this moment, he is not important, because he can't contribute," Ten Hag said.

Ten Hag, who claimed he inherited a club with "no good culture" when he took over United last year, was at pains to stress that he was not focused on Sancho.

"It's in favour of the team. That is what my decision is based on," he said.

"That is not about me, and to be strict. No. This is in favour of the team. I don't think about that (Sancho's tweet) and I don't talk about that, because I have to win a game. It is all about that."

"The players who are there and available deserve me. I have to guide them, I have to prepare them, it is about that. I only focus on the players who are available."

Kane on target in 2-2 draw

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane said he "still had room to improve" after netting a fourth goal in four matches in his side's 2-2 home draw with Bayer Leverkusen on Friday.

Kane opened the scoring just seven minutes in. With a 2-1 lead, Bayern looked set for a fourth-straight victory before Argentina World Cup winner Exequiel Palacios scored an injury-time penalty to level the scores.

Despite scoring again, Kane revealed he was still adapting to his new side, having made the move from Tottenham in August.

"Of course I'm always happy to score, overall I'm still just getting to know the team, I think I can improve with my all-round



play. "That's going to come - it's just part and parcel of football."

"I feel with every training session and every game, I'm getting to know my teammates

more. As the season goes on, that'll become even stronger."

Despite saying "the draw was a fair result," Kane admitted "it always hurts when you con-

cede like this in the last minute with this type of decision".

Bayern captain Thomas Mueller and coach Thomas Tuchel complained about the late decision, both calling the penalty "soft".

Kane's fourth goal takes him one behind Stuttgart's Serhou Guirassy on the Bundesliga scoring charts.

The England captain will make his Champions League debut for Bayern against Manchester United on Wednesday.

"It's going to be a really good game, a tough game, obviously Manchester United are a big team and have some quality players, so we'll need to prepare well."

"Every game in the Champions League is tough so we'll expect nothing less on Wednesday."

Krejciikova vs Kenin in San Diego Open final

AP ■ SAN DIEGO

Fourth-seeded Barbora Krejciikova of the Czech Republic beat unseeded American Danielle Collins 3-6, 7-5, 6-2 to reach the finals of the WTA Cymbiotika San Diego Open.

Krejciikova will face wild-card entrant Sofia Kenin, who beat qualifier Emma Navarro, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 in the second semifinal.

"The match was very difficult, but I never give up," said Krejciikova, also a wild-card entrant who is ranked No. 13 in the world. "Danielle played really well in the first set, but after that, I was improving with every single point, so I went for it."

After Collins controlled the first set, Krejciikova, 27, turned things around to knot the second set at five games apiece. Keeping her composure, Krejciikova then broke Collins' serve and held her own to tie the match.

Taking advantage of Collins' sudden struggle of unforced errors, Krejciikova, the 2021 French Open winner, then eased to the win over the



inconsistent Collins, who reached the finals of the 2022 Australian Open before losing to Ashleigh Barty.

The Cymbiotika San Diego Open is a WTA 500 event with a total purse of \$780,637, including \$120,150 and 500 points in the WTA ranking for the singles champion.

Vallecano beat Alaves 2-0

AP ■ MADRID

Rayo Vallecano recovered from back-to-back losses in the Spanish league to beat Alaves 2-0 at home. Isi Palazon converted a penalty two minutes before halftime, and summer signing Jorge de Frutos sealed the win with a goal off a counterattack in the 82nd.

Alvaro Garcia played a key role in both goals. The winger was fouled in the area to set up Isi's spot kick, and he provided the assist for De Frutos in the second goal. Rayo is coached by Francisco Rodriguez after Andoni Iraola left to take over Bournemouth in the off-season. Rayo started the season with two wins before it was routed 7-0 at home by Atletico Madrid and then lost 1-0 at Real Betis before Friday's victory.

Lyles aims to end 2023 on high

AP ■ EUGENE

Noah Lyles and Armand Duplantis are among the world champions aiming to end 2023 on a high note as the World Athletics Diamond League concludes in Eugene, Oregon, this weekend. Lyles, who won 100m, 200m and 4x100m gold at the World Championships in Budapest last month, admitted he thought he had nothing left in the tank after he won the 200m in Zurich two weeks ago.

He was considering opting out of the season finale but said Friday he decided "I think I've got one more in me."

Lyles will race the 100m for the first time since the World Championships. He'll have little margin for error in a field that includes world silver medalist

Djokovic powers Serbia into Davis Cup quarters

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic returned to the court just five days after his historic US Open title triumph to lead Serbia into the Davis Cup quarter-finals on Friday, while Andy Murray helped Britain edge past Switzerland.

World number one Djokovic eased to a 6-3, 6-4 success against Alejandro Davidovich Fokina to give his country an unassailable 2-0 lead in Valencia after Laslo Djere's earlier 6-4, 6-4 win over Albert Ramos-Vinolas.

It was Djokovic's first appearance in the team competition since Serbia's semi-final loss to Croatia in 2021. "I'm on cloud nine with everything that has happened recently on the tennis court," Djokovic said.

"Playing for Serbia, for my country, is something completely different."

"It's a huge responsibility and pressure, but it's also a privilege and an honour."

Serbia have now secured a spot in the knock-out phase which will be played in Malaga in November, after also seeing off South Korea 3-0 on Tuesday, while Spain are out of the competition.

Serbia wrapped up a 3-0 victory in the Group C tie as Nikola Cacic and Miomir Kecmanovic beat Davidovich Fokina and Marcel Granollers 6-4, 7-6 (15/13).

They will round off their group campaign against the Czech Republic on Saturday.

An emotional Murray won the opening rubber of Britain's victory over Switzerland before revealing he had missed his grandmother's funeral to play.

"Today is a tough day for me, it's my Gran's funeral today," Murray said after his epic 6-7 (7/9), 6-4, 6-4, win over Leandro Riedi at the Manchester Arena.

The Swiss levelled the tie as veteran Stan Wawrinka quietened the crowd with a 7-5, 6-4 win against Cameron Norrie.



But Dan Evans and Neal Skupski brushed aside Dominic Stricker and Wawrinka 6-3, 6-3 as Britain made it two wins from two in Group B after also beating Australia earlier in the week.

Britain can secure a last-eight berth if they beat France on Sunday, while even a loss could be enough depending on the result of Saturday's tie between Switzerland and Australia.

Italy bounced back from their surprise opening defeat by depleted reigning champions Canada in Group A, downing Chile 3-0. Youngster Matteo Arnaldi battled past Cristian Garin 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 before Lorenzo Sonego edged out Nicolas Jarry 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Sonego then teamed up with Lorenzo Musetti for a 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/2) doubles victory against Tomas Barrios Vera and Alejandro Tabilo.

Finland kept their hopes of progressing alive with a 2-1 win over Croatia in their Group D clash in Split.

India's golden generation of squash ready for 1 last dance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saurav Ghosal, Joshna Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal, synonymous with Indian squash over the past two decades, have unfinished business going into what could be their last appearance at the Asian Games.

Ghosal and Joshna, who both turned 37 recently, will be featuring in their sixth Asian Games, a testament to their remarkable longevity in a physically demanding sport like squash.

A week away from celebrating her 32nd birthday, Dipika will be entering her fourth and in all probability last Asian Games. The mother of two, who doesn't play singles anymore, will be eyeing a mixed doubles gold alongside Harinder Pal Sandhu in Hangzhou.

Ghosal and Joshna too are in the twilight of their careers and Hangzhou could be their one final chance to add a singles gold to the rich medal count at the continental event, having won seven and four medals respectively since their maiden outing in 2002.

Though the level at Asian Games is not as high as the Commonwealth Games, the job for Ghosal and Joshna will be far from easy.

The psychological wounds of a heartbreaking loss in the men's singles final at the 2014 Incheon edition remain fresh in Ghosal's mind as the veteran athlete goes into the Games once again as the favourite for the gold medal.

The Indian is seeded second in the singles behind Malaysia's Eain Yow Ng, an opponent 12 years younger to

him. Ghosal, who is currently the highest-ranked player in Asia at 17, will also need to be wary of his rivals from Pakistan, Kuwait and Hong Kong. Abdullah, the 2014 gold medalist, is also part of the draw.

Ghosal is drawn to meet world number 19 Yow in the final and if that does happen, he will go into the contest high on confidence having beaten the much younger Malaysian in five games in Paris last month.

While Ghosal has had a steady run ahead of the Games, Joshna goes into the competition following an injury-marred year that saw the former world number 10 drop to as low as 71 in the PSA rankings. In fact, Tanvi Khanna is now the highest ranked Indian woman at 70.

Having regained full fitness ahead of the mega event, Joshna will have a point to prove and change the colour of the singles medal she secured in Jakarta five years ago. The bronze in the 2018 edition was her first in three events, following her three medals in team events.

Her main rivals in the competition include top seed Satomi Watanabe of Japan and Ho Tze Lok of Hong Kong.

Joshna may not have had the best of year leading up to the Games but trust her to bring her A game to the fore, like she had done in the 2018 edition when she stunned eight-time world champion Nicol David in the team events to script a silver for India.

Dipika and her mixed doubles partner Sandhu had the opportunity to take part in the Asian Games test event in Hangzhou three months ago and they made the most of it by winning the gold.

Women's tennis returns to China after Shuai boycott

AP ■ GUANGZHOU

Professional women's tennis tournaments return to China on Monday, less than two years after the WTA vowed to boycott the country out of concern for player Peng Shuai and risks to its players and staff.

The WTA tournament opening Monday in the southern metropolis of Guangzhou will be the first in mainland China since 2019 — and while no top-20 stars are expected to attend, it is set to attract plenty of attention.

The WTA suspended activities in China in December 2021, saying she had been "forced" into sex during a years-long, on-and-off relationship with Zhang Gaoqi, a married ex-vice

and then withdrawing — accusations of sexual assault against a senior Chinese leader.

Saying the issue was "bigger than business", the tennis body insisted it would not hold events in China until Beijing guaranteed the safety of Peng.

"Given the current state of affairs, I am also greatly concerned about the risks that all of our players and staff could face if we were to hold events in China," WTA chief Steve Simon said at the time.

Peng published a long social media post in November 2021 saying she had been "forced" into sex during a years-long, on-and-off relationship with Zhang Gaoqi, a married ex-vice



premier of China 39 years her senior. She has since denied she accused anyone of sexual assault and described the situation as a "huge misunderstanding".

Peng has not been seen outside China since the allegations were made. In April this year though, the WTA announced the resumption of tournaments, admitting its "principled stand... a powerful message to the world" had not been able "to bring about change".

China is a crucial market for the WTA, given the quality of local infrastructure and investment as well as TV rights and sponsorship deals with mainland partners.

FINAL SHOWDOWN

India look to snap five-year trophy-less streak against Sri Lanka in Asia Cup final today

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Rohit Sharma's Indian team will be firm favourites to end its five-year trophy drought in multi-nation events, when it squares off against a depleted Sri Lanka in the final of the Asia Cup here on Sunday despite a few niggling questions still remaining unanswered.

While Axar Patel is an important component in the Indian set-up and his multiple injuries remains a concern, Sri Lanka will in fact miss their premier spinner Maheesh Theekshana way more due to his right hamstring injury.

A glance at India's trophy cabinet will reveal the uncomfortable truth of them not winning any titles in the last five years, and Sunday will be a good opportunity for them to snap that unhappy streak.

Not to forget a win before getting into the World Cup mode will be the ideal boost for a side which hasn't yet fully ticked all boxes but is showing more solidity than one would have thought a few months back.

India's last title, across the three formats, came in 2018 when the Rohit's side beat Bangladesh in the Asia Cup by three wickets in Dubai.

Since that victory, India's inability to master crunch matches and occasions has been startling.

India reached semifinals of the 50-over World Cup in 2019 and the T20 World Cup in 2022, besides losing against New Zealand and Australia in the WTC finals in 2019 and 2023 respectively.

The Men in Blue also failed to make their presence felt in last year's Asia Cup, which was won



by Sri Lanka. That event was played in T20 format. Any whichever one looks at it, this is a seriously underwhelming record for a team that prides in its cricketing tradition and wants to set some new trends under head coach Rahul Dravid and skipper Rohit. However, India will believe that they have a brilliant chance to add a trophy to their glittering collection come Sunday. India are certain to recall the

five players who were rested for the Super Four match against Bangladesh on Friday, which they eventually lost by six runs. The return of Virat Kohli and Hardik Pandya for the summit clash will certainly add meat to their batting unit, which struggled against the array of Bangladesh spinners. Opener Shubman Gill made a top class hundred, but the rest of the batsmen could not rotate strike effectively in the middle

overs, leaving the late order with a tall task. The match also revealed another area India needed to address - the lack of consistency in bundling out a side after making early inroads. India had reduced Bangladesh to 59 for 4, but the bowlers gave away too many runs in the death overs, allowing their neighbours to post a healthy 265. But India will hope that the issue will be solved once pacers

Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav make their comeback for tomorrow's game. India will keep a watch on Axar's right hand which received multiple beatings in the match against Bangladesh, suffering niggles on his little finger and forearm along with hamstring injury. Even though the team management informed that they are still monitoring the progress of

the left-arm spinner, they have roped in off-spinner Washington Sundar as cover for him for the final.

Washington was training in Bengaluru with India's Asian Games-bound squad, and is expected to link with the team in Colombo by this evening.

But these are India's immediate concerns pertaining to the Asia Cup final. But they cannot be unmindful of the larger picture as well. Apart from the practice games, India have four more ODIs - Asia Cup final and three matches against Australia - prior to the World Cup to tick the desired boxes.

A victory here in the Asia Cup will boost their confidence ahead of the quadrennial big bash next month, as they also seek to end a 10-year-long ICC trophy drought.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka will feel quietly confident of their chances against India, as the home side is also on a 15-match winning streak in ODIs. **Teams (India):** Rohit Sharma (captain), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Prasidh Krishna, Washington Sundar (cover for injured Axar Patel).

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (captain), Pathum Nissanaka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Kusal Janith Perera, Kusal Mendis (vc), Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Maheesh Theekshana, Dumith Wellalage, Matheesha Pathirana, Kasun Rajitha, Dushan Hemantha, Binura Fernando, Pramod Madushan.



Washington called up as cover for injured Axar

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Washington Sundar has been called up as a cover for the injured Axar Patel for the Asia Cup final against Sri Lanka on Sunday. Axar sustained several injuries during India's six-run loss to Bangladesh in their last Super Four match on Friday. The extent of Axar's injuries is currently unknown and hence bowling all-rounder Washington, who was part of India's Asian Games squad, has been called up as a precautionary measure. "Axar is currently suffering

from multiple injuries. He has hurt his little finger, got hit on forearm by a throw from deep and most importantly has developed a hamstring niggle. So Washington has been called," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. More than the swelling on his forearm, it is Axar's hamstring issue which will keep the Indian team management worried with just three weeks to go for the World Cup. Washington, who bowls off-spin, last played an ODI at home against New Zealand in January this year.



Malan leads Eng to ODI series win

AP ■ LONDON

England's Dawid Malan said he was delighted to silence his critics after blasting a match-winning century in his side's 100-run win against New Zealand on Friday. Jos Buttler's team scored 311-9 from their 50 overs before dismissing the Black Caps for 211 at Lord's to win the four-match series 3-1.

Malan was last month named in England's provisional World Cup squad for the tournament that starts in India next month.

But some pundits argued his place in the world champions' squad was under threat, with young gun Harry Brook pushing for selection. Malan, named player-of-the-series after scores of 54, 96 and 127 in his three innings, said it was nice to prove himself.

"I got the call I was going to the World Cup and then obviously there was a little bit of noise leading up to it. But that's part and parcel of World Cups, and part and parcel of being a professional cricketer," he said. "Until you're on the plane you never really know if you're on it or not.

"It's satisfying from my point of view to be able to silence some people who always have some negative things to say but my job is to score runs.

"As long as I can keep doing that hopefully I can keep the support from the changing room because I always felt that from the guys that matter inside there." Malan averages an impressive 61 in 21 ODIs, but said it was hard to win a place in a side packed with white-ball batting stars such as Joe Root, Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler.

"It's incredibly tough and you have to score runs. I guess whenever there is a spot under scrutiny there are always going to be guys pushing for those spots. That's just the territory because those guys have been so good for so many years," he said.

We're trying to improve our batting on slow pitches: Shubman



PTI ■ COLOMBO

Indian batters, barring centurion Shubman Gill, struggled against Bangladesh spinners on a pitch that offered turn and grip during their six-run defeat in the Asia Cup Super Four match, and the opener said they are working on their skills to master such tracks. Gill said it was important to give attention to the area in view of the approaching World Cup, and the Asia Cup final on Sunday against Sri Lanka.

"It is definitely an area that we are trying to improve on. We had camp in Bangalore before coming here, and we were practicing on similar wickets," said Gill during the post-match press conference after India failed to chase down 265. "World Cup is such a long tournament as we go deeper into the tournament, the wicket tends to get slower." Gill said the Indian batting unit is trying to minimise the dot balls by increasing the strike rotation.

"It is not easy for batsmen who are coming in to rotate the strike and minimise those dot balls. As a batting unit, we are looking to work on it," he said. On their approach against Bangladesh spinners at Premadasa stadium, Gill said the batters were trying to play late.

"Taking singles was not easy on this wicket. So, we were trying to let the ball

come to the bat because we get more runs square of the wicket on slow wickets. So, we were trying to play the ball late," he added.

Gill said he should have stayed back and carried India past the finishing line against Bangladesh, but termed the chase as a good learning experience.

"Sometimes, there is so much adrenaline when you are batting, you miscalculate. It was a miscalculation on my part. But when I got out and there was a lot of time left, and if I would have batted not that aggressive then we should have gotten over the line. But these are learnings, and fortunately this game wasn't the final."

Axar Patel had coped a bit of beating on his right hand during the match against Bangladesh but Gill allayed any concerns.

"I don't think there is anything wrong with Axar. I think that was temporary and nothing to worry about," he said. Gill also defended India's decision to rest five frontline players in Virat Kohli, Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammed Siraj for the Bangladesh match.

"The reason why we gave rest to all the bowlers is because they played continuously for three days against Pakistan and then Sri Lanka. The bowlers needed a bit of rest, so that they can come back fresh for the final," he said.

Klaasen's 83-ball 174 propels SA to 164-run win

AP ■ CENTURIAN

Heinrich Klaasen smashed an outrageous 83-ball 174 to propel South Africa to a 164-run win over Australia in the fourth ODI, leaving the series tied at 2-2 heading into the finale. The Proteas posted a huge 416-5 on Friday mainly thanks to Klaasen, who came in at No. 5 and hit 13 fours and 13 sixes in the fourth-highest ODI innings by a South African batter.

He was caught on the boundary rope off the final ball of the innings, by which time he'd guided the South Africans to their third-highest ODI total.

Australia was bowled out for 252 in 34.5 overs and has seen its 2-0 lead wiped out in the five-match series ahead of the Cricket World Cup in India next month.

Klaasen shared a 222-run stand for the fifth wicket with David Miller



(82 not out in 45 balls). Rassie van der Dussen hit 62 in 65.

Josh Hazlewood took 2-79. Leg spinner Adam Zampa was the most expensive with his 10 overs returning 0-113. That included nine of South Africa's overall 20 sixes.

Wicketkeeper Alex Carey was the standout batter for Australia, hitting 99 in 77, and Tim David scored 35. South Africa quicks Lungi Ngidi (4-51) and Kagiso Rabida (3-41) did most of the damage.

The right-handed Klaasen, a Pretoria local whose family was in attendance for his record-breaking innings, was lbw for a second-ball duck to Head in the third match of the series in Potchefstroom.

"I had a shocker of a day the other day in Potch so it's lucky to bounce back immediately and play an innings like that," Klaasen told the on-field broadcaster.

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"Females are the most beautiful, gorgeous creatures in the whole world. And I think that we are gorgeous no matter what size we are"
—Alicia Keys



VANISHING INNOCENCE

EPIDEMIC OF MISSING CHILDREN

In India, the crisis of missing children is dire. Between 2018 and mid-2023, a staggering 2,75,125 children disappeared, averaging six children per hour. Alarming, 62,237 were boys, and 2,12,825 were girls. Out of these, only 240,502 have been found, leaving 34,623 children still missing. Dr Sangeeta Sharma reveals that many are abducted for ransom or sold into exploitation. This crisis is part of a global child trafficking epidemic, valued at \$150 billion. Children are sold for adoption at prices ranging from \$20,000 to \$25,000, writes **Biswajeet Banerjee**



trend. It is a grave violation of their rights, and we need to take immediate action to prevent it," emphasises Sunitha Krishnan of Prajwala, an organisation dedicated to rescuing trafficked children.

Krishnan highlights a critical issue — the time-sensitive nature of recovering trafficked toddlers. "A quick police action is required to track the trafficking toddler, and this, unfortunately, is missing," she laments.

The Indian Government has taken several steps to address the issue of missing children, including implementing the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, which protects children from abuse and exploitation. Despite these efforts, the problem persists, leaving countless families in agony.

"We need a comprehensive strategy to tackle this issue. We need to strengthen law enforcement agencies, increase public awareness, and provide support to families of missing children," asserts Nandini Thakkar, an advocate for child rights and Head Legal of the Anti-trafficking Initiative of Vipra Foundation.

Dharmendra Yadav, a police officer who initiated Operation Muskan — a campaign to trace missing children — said rescuing kidnapped and trafficked children is a formidable task. It requires a team of dedicated officials armed with a strong database that includes pictures of the abducted children.

"Earlier, such kidnappings were an urban phenomenon, but now children are being stolen from villages. This is done to escape police scrutiny, and as villagers are poor, kidnappings do not attract as much attention," he explains.

Yadav highlights how these kidnapped children often become "fuel" for the begging industry. He recalls a harrowing incident where a girl from Ghaziabad, reported missing, was rescued in Diamond Harbour in Bengal. In that raid, 14 children who had been reported missing from Katihar in Bihar were also rescued.

"These children were deployed as beggars outside temples," Yadav said.

Tragically, there are syndicates in Bengal that deploy children as young as one as beggars. Police categorise these beggars as trafficked children, but Bablu Pal, a part of the begging syndicate, offers a different perspective.

"There are so many poor families in West Bengal's villages who have as many as six children. As they cannot feed these children, they send them to us," he explains. Pal claims that every dawn, parents bring their children to him, and he distributes them among the city beggars. The demand is highest for "helpless-looking" children, with babies being the most sought-after.

Pal, unapologetic about his role in this heart-wrenching trade, describes the process, "Every morning at 4 am, parents bring their children to city-based railway platforms at Sealdah, Garia, and Sonarpur Stations. Beggars crowd around these places and from here they are sent to different places. We are not bothered about police interference. A ₹100 or ₹500 note is enough to get rid of them. Besides, we are very careful."

The scale of child begging is staggering, with estimates ranging from 5 lakh to 15 lakh child beggars across the country. The Government census results from 2011 revealed that West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have the most beggars, with child begging being particularly prevalent in Uttar Pradesh, while West Bengal has a higher number of beggars with disabilities.

The fate of Sidhartha remains uncertain, but his parents are not giving up hope. They are determined to find their son and are appealing to everyone to help them in their search.

"We are hopeful that our son will be traced by the police. We appeal to all to help us find our son," Pramod said, his voice carrying their unwavering determination to see their family reunited once more.

The room is enveloped in darkness, with only the feeble glow of a dimly lit bulb piercing through. Within the modest abode of Kajal and Pramod, an air of profound despair hangs heavily. The calendar on the wall cruelly taunts them, marking the passage of time slipping through their grasp. It has been more than eight agonising months since their precious six-year-old son, Sidhartha, disappeared into the abyss of uncertainty. Each day weighs heavily on their hearts, as they cling to hope for a reunion that feels increasingly distant.

"On December 24, 2022, my six-year-old son, Sidhartha, expressed a desire to play a game on my mobile. Lacking sufficient balance, he ventured to a nearby shop to recharge it. He never returned. It has been over eight months since he vanished, and the police have been unable to trace him," Kajal confides, her voice quivering with a blend of anguish and frustration. Tears well up in her eyes as she recounts the final moment she laid eyes on her cherished son.

Kajal clings tightly to a poster of her missing son, Sidhartha, the same image she has plastered all over the historic district of Lucknow. She implores, "Please, help me find my son." Her hands are folded in silent supplication, and then she succumbs to the weight of her sorrow, her spirit crushed by the burden.

At the age of 23, Kajal, along with her husband Pramod, promptly reported the incident to the police. They initiated a frantic search for their beloved child. Their neighbourhood soon became adorned with posters featuring Sidhartha's innocent visage, and they knocked on every door, seeking assistance. The police, too, launched an extensive operation to locate the missing child, but as days turned into months, hope began to wane.

to find the child. Special teams have been assembled to delve into the case, and we are utilising every resource at our disposal to trace the kidnapers," affirmed Sanjiv Chaudhry, the dedicated investigating police officer, his resolve reflected in his gaze.

"The boy seems to have vanished into thin air... there is no trace. No one has caught sight of him," Chaudhry lamented, the palpable sense of helplessness evident both in his words and his countenance.

The heart-wrenching saga of Kajal and Pramod is, regrettably, not an isolated incident. Throughout India, innumerable parents grapple with the torment of their missing children, their lives forever haunted by the cruel hand of fate that tore their families asunder. In Ghaziabad, another couple, Aliya and Zeeshan, had eagerly looked forward to celebrating their son's first birthday. But their joy was short-lived when their 11-month-old son, Rehan, disappeared from their home on March 18, 2023.

Aliya's voice trembles with pain as she recounts that fateful morning, "On one morning I was standing with my son when two persons, on a two-wheeler, grabbed his hand and snatched him from my lap. We searched everywhere, but he was nowhere to be found." Her husband, Zeeshan, adds with a heavy heart, "We are devastated by the loss of our son. We don't know who took him or why. We just want our son back."

The crisis of missing children in India has reached alarming proportions, leaving a trail of broken families and shattered dreams. According to data provided by the Ministry of Women and Child Development during the Monsoon session of the Lok Sabha, an astounding 2,75,125 children went missing between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2023. This shocking statistic translates to an unimaginable six children disappearing every hour in India.

ALIYA'S VOICE TREMBLES WITH PAIN AS SHE RECOUNTS THAT FATEFUL MORNING, "ON ONE MORNING I WAS STANDING WITH MY SON WHEN TWO PERSONS, ON A TWO-WHEELER, GRABBED HIS HAND AND SNATCHED HIM FROM MY LAP. WE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE, BUT HE WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND." HER HUSBAND, ZEESHAN, ADDS WITH A HEAVY HEART, "WE ARE DEVASTATED BY THE LOSS OF OUR SON. WE DON'T KNOW WHO TOOK HIM OR WHY. WE JUST WANT OUR SON BACK"

TRACKING NUMBERS

According to data provided by the Minister of Women and Child Development, 2,75,125 children went missing from January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2023

States	No. of missing children	No. of missing girls
Madhya Pradesh	61,102	49,024
West Bengal	49,129	41,808
Karnataka	27,528	18,893
Gujarat	20,081	16,432
Delhi	22,964	15,363

Among the missing children, 62,237 were boys, while a staggering 2,12,825 were girls. The figures are nothing short of staggering, reflecting a crisis that continues to escalate.

What is even more distressing is that 240,502 children out of the 2,75,125 missing children have been found, leaving 34,623 children still untraceable — their whereabouts a chilling mystery.

Dr Sangeeta Sharma, a child rights activist and former member of the Child Welfare Committee, highlights the dark reality of these disappearances, stating, "Many of these children are abducted for ransom or sold into slavery or prostitution. Human trafficking has become a major issue, and children are particularly vulnerable to this heinous crime."

The plight of missing children in India is part of a broader, global crisis of child trafficking. Neil Giles, Director of Intelligence at Stop the Traffik, an organisation based in the UK, during a workshop organised by the Journalism Centre on Global Trafficking, said that human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry, with children being sold for adoption at prices ranging from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

In India, chilling instances of child

trafficking have come to light.

In Moradabad and Varanasi, the police uncovered a sinister child trafficking racket where infants just a few months old were being sold for amounts ranging from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh. These operations extended across state borders, with traffickers targeting vulnerable children from impoverished backgrounds.

Additional Commissioner of Police, Varanasi Santosh Singh said, "They targeted children from families of labourers sleeping on the roadside, slums, and impoverished areas, ensuring that the crimes remained under the radar. The value of the child was determined by their perceived attractiveness, and the traffickers often sold the children to hospitals and childless couples."

In Moradabad, the gang was operated by a woman from Mumbai who had employed four individuals - all nurses in hospitals. Their modus operandi was to steal infants immediately after birth, selling them to affluent, childless couples in Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

"Children are vulnerable to kidnapping and trafficking. We need to take immediate action to prevent this



PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

In several States across India, climate change induced erratic temperatures and change in rainfall pattern continue to exacerbate water and vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, chikungunya, cholera and typhoid. Most individuals experiencing these symptoms typically manifest indicators such as fever, weakness and body ache. As soon as you notice any of these symptoms, get yourself tested to prevent potential health complications, doctors prescribe THE HEALTH PIONEER

The doctors say that during the monsoon season, being vigilant about various fevers and their symptoms is crucial for timely diagnosis and effective treatment. If you experience persistent fever along with other associated symptoms, consult a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate management. These diseases disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including the elderly, poor, children, and marginalized communities, who may have limited access to healthcare and resources for prevention and control.

Below are the most common monsoon diseases that can wreak havoc on your health.

- Cholera
- Typhoid
- Viral Fever
- Diarrhoea
- Influenza
- Leptospirosis
- Stomach Infections
- Dengue
- Chikungunya
- Malaria

Six Types of Fever to Look Out For

Malaria Fever: Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease prevalent in many tropical regions. The female Anopheles mosquito transmits the parasite responsible for malaria. Symptoms usually include high fever, chills, headache, body aches, and fatigue. If you experience these symptoms, it is essential to seek medical attention promptly and get proper treatment. Otherwise, it may cause health complications like cerebral malaria, which leads to death among malaria patients, seizures, renal failure, jaundice and respiratory disorders may also occur.

Dengue Fever: Dengue fever, transmitted by mosquitoes (Aedes species), is a viral infection commonly seen during the monsoon season. Symptoms include high-grade fever, severe headache, joint and muscle pain, rash, and in severe cases, bleeding manifestations. Also, there may be less urination and breathlessness in the patients. There is a risk of a drop in platelet

count during dengue which can prove fatal if not addressed timely. Early diagnosis and adequate hydration are crucial in managing dengue fever.

Nipah Fever: Initial symptoms of Nipah virus are non-specific such as fever, headache, dizziness, myalgia, vomiting and loose stools. This may progress to brain involvement in the form of seizures and encephalitis. It has very high morbidity in the form of psychiatric and neurological complications (depression, personality changes, deficits in attention, verbal, and/or visual memory) after recovery.

Public health measures such as isolation, quarantine, and infection control practices are essential to prevent outbreaks of Nipah virus infection.

Leptospirosis Fever: Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection typically contracted through contact with contaminated water or soil, particularly during floods. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache, muscle pain, chills, nausea, and vomiting. The

Leptospira bacteria is found in animal urine, which contaminates water and soil during heavy rains. Early treatment with antibiotics is necessary to prevent complications.

Prevention and Protection: Avoid wading or swimming in floodwaters; Leptospira bacteria can enter your body through cuts or abrasions. Stay away from flooded areas or wear protective clothing, including rubber boots.

Maintain proper hygiene: Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after exposure to floodwaters or contaminated soil.

Chikungunya Fever: Chikungunya is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. Symptoms include sudden high fever, severe joint pain, muscle pain, headache, fatigue, and rash.

Proper rest, pain management, and maintaining hydration levels are essential in the management of chikungunya fever.

Prevention and Precautions: While it's impor-

tant to be aware of these fevers, taking preventive measures can significantly reduce the risk of contracting them. Leptospira bacteria can enter your body through cuts or abrasions.

Stay away from flooded areas or wear protective clothing, including rubber boots. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after exposure to floodwaters or contaminated soil.

Typhoid Fever: Typhoid fever is a bacterial infection caused by the Salmonella typhi bacterium. Contaminated food and water are common sources of transmission. Symptoms include prolonged fever, headache, abdominal pain, and weakness.

Prevention and Protection: Practice good hygiene: Wash hands thoroughly before eating or handling food, and ensure that food is properly cooked and stored. Boil water before drinking or use a water purifier to eliminate bacterial contamination. Consider getting vaccinated against typhoid fever, especially if you are

traveling to an endemic region.

Cholera Fever: Cholera is an acute diarrheal illness caused by the bacterium Vibrio cholerae. It spreads through the ingestion of contaminated food or water. Heavy rainfall and flooding can contaminate water sources, leading to the spread of cholera. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration.

Treatment and Prevention: There is a vaccine for cholera. Both the CDC and the World Health Organization have specific guidelines for who should be given this vaccine. You can protect yourself and your family by using only water that has been boiled, water that has been chemically disinfected, or bottled water.

Be sure to use bottled, boiled, or chemically disinfected water.

Hydration is the mainstay of treatment for cholera. Depending on how severe the diarrhea is, treatment will consist of oral or intravenous solutions to replace lost fluids.

Patients as Partners: Elevating Healthcare Safety

September 17 marks Patient Safety Day, a global event uniting the healthcare community. This year's theme, 'Engaging Patients for Patient Safety,' underscores the vital role patients play in ensuring safer and more collaborative healthcare experience for all, says DR SANGEETA SHARMA

In the world of healthcare, keeping patients safe is a top priority. Patient safety is all about keeping you safe when you receive medical care. It's something that doctors, nurses, and patients themselves are all very concerned about and involves taking steps to make sure you don't get hurt while getting treatment. They do this by using safe practices, good communication, and by making sure everything in the healthcare system works smoothly. To achieve this, healthcare providers employ safe procedures, effective communication, and ensure the seamless functioning of every aspect within the healthcare system. Of course, there are challenges along the way. Making sure that you have access to reliable health information and improving health literacy are ongoing efforts.

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare and the journey towards ensuring the highest standards of care has led to a significant paradigm shift - engaging patients as active participants in their own

healthcare. There has been a growing recognition that patients possess unique insights into their own health, experiences, and concerns. You're not just a passive recipient of care but a vital part of your own safety and well-being. Here's how it works:

Knowledge is Power: Empowering patients with knowledge is a cornerstone of this approach. Informed patients can make better health decisions, understand treatment options, and assess risks. Healthcare providers are ensuring patients have access to accurate and simple information through educational materials, clear explanations, and digital health data sharing.

Discuss Medications: If prescribed medications, ask about their purpose, dosage, potential side effects, and interactions with other drugs or supplements you're taking.

Prepare ahead of Time & be punctual: Write down your symptoms, concerns, and questions. Be specific about your symptoms, when they started, and any changes you've noticed. List all medications, supplements, and allergies you have. Bring any relevant medical records, test results, or a list of previous diagnoses and treatments. Have your insurance information and identification ready if necessary. Arrive on time for your appointment and discuss follow-up appointments, tests, or referrals to specialists as needed. Understand what symptoms or changes should prompt you to seek immediate medical attention.

Open Communication: Be open and honest with your healthcare provider. Provide all

relevant information. Share your concerns, lifestyle, and any recent life changes that may affect your health. If you don't understand something, ask questions for clarification.

Making Decisions Together: Instead of just being told what to do, you're encouraged to be a part of the decision-making process. You can ask questions, express your concerns, and work with your healthcare team to choose the best treatment for you. Discuss potential risks, benefits, and alternatives before a procedure or treatment and read informed consent form carefully and get clarifications, if required. Repeat back instructions or treatment plans to confirm your understanding. This teamwork not only makes you feel more satisfied with your care but also reduces the chances of mistakes.

Speaking Up: Your voice matters. You can ask about hand hygiene, double-check your medications, and don't hesitate to speak up if something doesn't seem right. Your active involvement helps create a safer healthcare environment.

Technology's Role: Technology is playing a big role in this change. Electronic

health records and patient portals allow you to access your medical information, track your health, and communicate securely with your healthcare team. Mobile health apps and wearable devices help you monitor your health, vital signs, track symptoms, in real-time. Using medication reminder apps or pill organizers help adhere to prescribed medication regimens.

Address Mental Health Issues, if any: If you have mental health concerns, don't hesitate to bring them up. Your emotional well-being is an important part of your overall health.

Ultimately, looking ahead, the future of patient safety depends on strengthening the partnership between healthcare providers and patients like you.

The writer is a Professor & Head, Neuropsychopharmacology, Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IHBAS) & President, Delhi Society for Promotion of Rational Use of Drugs (DSPRUD)



DR SANGEETA SHARMA



HEALTH BRIEFS

NPPA APPROVES RETAIL PRICE OF 51 NEW DRUGS

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has approved the retail price of 51 new drugs under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 with various combination drugs treating diabetes, blood pressure and others. In its meeting held last week, the NPPA deliberated on cases of retail price fixation of 52 new drugs and approved 51 of them, while deferring price fixation of paracetamol and dicyclomine hydrochloride tablets manufactured by Prosperity Drugs and marketed by Torrent Pharmaceuticals.

The formulations for which the prices were fixed include various combinations, strengths and drug delivery forms of anti-diabetes drugs linagliptin, teneligliptin, sitagliptin, and dapagliflozin for various manufacturers and marketing companies.

'NIGHT OWLS' RUN RISK OF DEVELOPING DIABETES

A research has found that night owls—persons who wakes up late and sleep late—has higher risk of developing diabetes compared to people who wake up early in the morning. This sleep pattern, known as a chronotype, can increase your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and unhealthy lifestyle habits, according to a recent study.

Night owls were also more likely to have poor dietary habits, lower physical activity, increased alcohol consumption, unhealthy Body Mass Index, and smoking habits, alongside their obvious irregular sleep patterns, said the study led by researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Even after accounting for lifestyle factors, there was still a 19 per cent increased risk of diabetes in night owls compared to early birds, suggesting a potential genetic predisposition.

It's important to note that previous studies have also linked late sleep patterns to unhealthy behaviours and increased risk of diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular problems.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help mitigate these risks, as both genetics and the environment play a role in determining one's chronotype, said the study.

FREE CANCER TREATMENT FOR UP GOVT STAFF

The government staff and their dependents can now avail free cancer treatment under Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Rajya Karmchari Cashless Chikitsa Yojana at Kalyan Singh Super Speciality Cancer Institute and Hospital (KSSSCIH).

'NASAL IMMUNOTHERAPY CAN SOON HELP TREAT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE'

Researchers have found preclinical evidence that nasal immunotherapy can help reduce inflammation and improve cognition in people with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a debilitating neurodegenerative and neuroinflammatory disease that is difficult to treat. Most existing therapies target the buildup of amyloid beta plaques in the brain, which requires early intervention and intravenous therapy. However in Alzheimer's mouse models, the new nasal immunotherapy - anti-CD3 - reduced inflammation and improved cognition independent of amyloid beta plaques. Incidentally, the therapy is being tested in multiple sclerosis (MS) patients which dampens immune cell inflammation in the brain.

YOGA AND MEDITATION CAN KEEP ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AT BAY: AIIMS STUDY

Doctors from the Delhi-based AIIMS say that studies by the institute show that yoga and meditation increase the neuroplasticity of the brain and help in treating the memory loss disease. S Dr Rima Dada and Dr Manjri Tripathi from the institute explained that yoga and meditation help in the secretion of helpful chemicals such as melatonin, which promotes good sleep. It also helps in reducing the biological age, stress and inflammation when paired with a good diet and healthy lifestyle. "Yoga and meditation include asana, pranayam and suryanamaskar. But there should be a separate routine for each patient and co-morbidity and needs of the patient must be kept in mind," said Dr Tripathi while stressing on the importance of early detection.

Any person above the age of forty-five should get themselves tested if they show mild symptoms to prevent permanent damage. Alzheimer's can be detected by gradual changes in behavior, personality and social cognition. Untreated depression can also lead to Dementia. While online therapy can help, patients should visit in person time to time for baseline tests such as blood tests, said the doctors.

RML HOSP TO START SPECIALITY OPD FOR TRANSGENDERS

On the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday on Sunday, Delhi-based Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital will inaugurate a speciality OPD for the transgenders. Besides, a blood donation camp will also be organised on that day. The hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr Ajay Shukla will inaugurate this special OPD and blood donation camp.

"The service will be available to transgenders every Friday from 2 pm to 4 pm and there will be a separate registration counter for the same. An endocrinology facility with hormone analysis and free hormonal treatment, a psychiatry facility with clinical-psychological assessment, and plastic surgery will also be available at the OPD."

Also, dermatology, urology and paediatrics services and all related blood investigations will be available he said. It will have gender-neutral/transgender washroom facilities. "Government hospitals need to be accessible for every section of society and this is the motivation behind opening a separate OPD to provide healthcare services for the transgenders," Dr Shukla added.

Global South shaping geopolitics & development

The Global South constitutes an integral component of the international system, emerging as a prominent meta-category in the analysis of contemporary global politics. This underscores the necessity for its active participation in the global arena. This engagement is of paramount importance to the world due to its rich natural resources, diverse cultures, and, most significantly, its vast manpower.

Recent global conferences, summits, and gatherings of world leaders have witnessed a notable surge in the presence and influence of the Global South. For instance, the BRICS Summit held in South Africa this August reaffirmed the pivotal role of this coalition. As the host nation and chair, South Africa articulated its mission as "advancing the agenda of the Global South".

Similarly, on the eve of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima this May, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida underscored the significance of the Global South in the evolving geopolitical landscape, emphasising that the invited guest countries rightfully represented this growing importance.

The current crisis between Russia and Ukraine that started in 2022 has suddenly brought the Global South into the international debates and discussions. Interestingly, many of the leading nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America clearly stated their unwillingness to go with the US-led NATO over the war in Ukraine. This has gained momentum in fighting one of the bloodiest wars in the European continent since the end of the Second World War and the formation of the United Nations Organisation on October 24, 1945.

The latest G20 Summit in Delhi has once again strongly echoed the voice of the Global South. With the inclusion of



the 55-member African Union (AU) to the G20 under India's presidency, the latter has established the predominance of the Global South in this inter-governmental forum.

Now the question is what is Global South? Why is the Global South important? Can India lead the group?

The words "Global South" refers to those nations that are coming under the category of developing, less developed and underdeveloped.

The majority of these countries fall in the Southern Hemisphere, coming from the continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but not all. The very words "Global South" has been first mentioned by a political activist named Carl Oglesby in the year 1969.

In fact, he led a movement called Student for Democratic

Society (SDS) that publicly opposed the Vietnam War. While writing in the global Catholic magazine called Commonweal, he strongly advocated that the war in Vietnam was the result of the history of the northern dominance of the Global South. But with the sudden breakdown of the former USSR and other Socialist Bloc, countries in Eastern Europe helped the term Global South gaining currency in scholarly writings, reports, debates and discussions all over the world.

Till then, the popular word that was coined and used for these nations was "Third World" by Alfred Sauvy in the year 1952 while drawing an analogy with the three historical estates of France—the nobility, the clergy and the bourgeoisie. They were referred to as

those nations which were yet to be industrialised in western sense of the term. However with the disintegration of the USSR under then President Mikhail Gorbachev, the so-called Second World had disappeared and hence the relevance of the Third World had slowly went into oblivion.

But then again the words like developed, developing, and underdeveloped also encountered tonnes of criticism and finally did not get the popularity in public usage. Therefore with the emergence of the words Global South sounded more neutral and gradually received well in public to refer to these nations.

Also these nations most commonly refer to the countries belonging to the Group of 77 at the UN. The irony is that it includes China about which

there is a raging debate and also some of the wealthiest nations of West Asia. Some international observers fret that China under an ambitious and aggressive leadership of Xi Jinping might use the grouping for its own ulterior motives. And it is already seen on many occasions. Thus its immediate neighbour and another global stalwart is directly countering the expansionist moves of China by partnering with the Quad Group and openly coming closer to the US in recent years. China is aware about it and quite often displays its anger and resentment over India by bringing border skirmishes with the latter.

The Global South matters because these nations directly contributed to half of the world's growth in our time. They all are home to more

than 80 per cent of the world's population and account for 60 per cent of the GDP of the world. Another significant fact is that the remittances coming from migrant workers to low- and middle-income nations reached \$466 billion last year. This is solely responsible for lifting many million families from poverty and hunger in these countries.

The outflow of the FDI from these nations is recorded in the third position in global flow of the FDIs. Further intra-trade among them is growing faster than ever before in recent years as it represents more than a quarter of the global trade.

The chaos leading to the underdevelopment of the Global South can be attributed to the colonisation of these nations in the past by the nations of the Global North.

Finally, the role and responsibilities shared by the children and youth today in arresting the climate menace is remarkable. They are altogether spreading and making people aware about their rich biodiversity and the ways and means to preserve the same in the near future. The entire Global South countries together are a rich mosaic of innovation, cultural diversity and creativity.

India's leadership at the recent G20 Summit has undoubtedly made the country the voice of the Global South. It can certainly lead the group but only with close coordination from the other big-league nations like Brazil, South Africa, etc.

The Global South largely demands a strong South-South Cooperation (SSC) on a larger scale. The UN Population Fund defines the SSC in its Policy and Procedure Manual as "a means of development by an exchange of knowledge, experience and information and capacity development between and among developing countries through governments, civil society organisations and academic institutions, national institutions and networks to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD agenda and the achievement of the MDGs in participating countries".

Today the UN cooperation with the SSC is instrumental in advancing the SDGs in developing countries.

Finally, the Global South forges ahead. It is a great challenge for the Global North as its dwindling influence is felt all over. Certainly, the time will come for the "Rise of the Rest" and the leaders of the global liberal order have to work in tandem with the rising and shining Global South.

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

The intricate tapestry of the Global South comes alive, revealing its pivotal role in today's global arena. From its rich natural resources to its diverse cultures, this dynamic region is shaping the course of international affairs. As tensions between Russia and Ukraine thrust the Global South into the spotlight, its nations boldly assert their independent stance. India, in particular, emerges as a beacon, leading the charge alongside allies like Brazil and South Africa



MAKHAN SALKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Yemen: A live hell for children

War disrupts education and health services, exacerbating malnutrition. Regional powers' involvement in Yemen war compounds the crisis. The international community's inaction prolongs the suffering, leaving Yemeni children voiceless and powerless

The protracted and devastating conflict in Yemen, which has been going on since 2014, has receded from the international media's attention, despite its profound toll on children, resulting in numerous lives lost and shattered.

Many children in Yemen are confronted with a bleak outlook for their future. What makes this situation especially heartbreaking is that a significant number of them were either born during the turmoil or have come of age amid a relentless backdrop of violence, marked by bloodshed and deep-seated animosity among their fellow countrymen.

According to a UNICEF report, Yemen's armed conflict and humanitarian crisis has a severe impact on children. The report says 13 million children in Yemen need humanitarian assistance, 2 million are internally displaced and more than 1,02,000 children have been killed or maimed.

The World Report 2023 released by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) says education and health services for children have been disrupted by damage to schools and hospitals caused by fighting.

With the war showing no signs of abating, their prospects for the future appear increasingly grim.

Before Covid-19 pandemic, the UN termed Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Then some 80 per cent of the population that is 24.1 million needed humanitarian assistance and half of them were about to starve. Today, some of the most alarming aspects in regard to children in Yemen are: Almost a fifth of children have lost their own homes; about 2 million children are out of formal schools; one in five schools can no more be used as there is raging



chaos; more than 12 million children demand immediate humanitarian assistance; 4,00,000 children are expected to suffer from severe malnutrition and could collapse without urgent treatment.

The current situation is complicated by acute shortage of food, essential commodities, lack of basic health care and sanitation cum water facilities, outbreak of contagious diseases and finally, deterioration of the economy.

Malnutrition is a silent killer in the country according to the UNICEF records. The World Food Programme report published in 2016 recorded

that even before the war started, Yemen had one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the Arabian Peninsula.

It comes as no shock that with the country ensnared in conflict, the issue of malnutrition has exacerbated, with children bearing the brunt of its impact. Aid agencies have struggled to sufficiently meet the dietary needs of these children since the onset of the war.

Another report of UNICEF highlights that ten out of 22 Governorates of Yemen are facing famine and every passing year it is expanding to other places.

Yemen stands out in north-

west Asia as the sole republic, while all its neighbouring nations are either monarchies or emirates. This desert nation has a rich history of cultural intersection, owing to its strategic location at the crossroads of civilisations, boasting an extensive coastline that has been connected with ancient cultures for millennia.

But as a modern state, it is relatively new which was created after the merger of the Communist South Yemen with North Yemen in 1990.

Who is responsible for this mess? Can there be an immediate solution to this man-made tragedy? Mainly, the

Houthi rebels who belong to the Shia sect of Islam are fighting against the internationally recognised Government of Yemen fully backed by a Saudi-led coalition. So today, both the Houthi fighters and the Saudi sponsored Government are equally responsible for the quagmire in Yemen.

The culpability should be assigned to all international organisations, including the UN, for their failure to compel the warring factions to bring an end to this tragic situation. A resolution is attainable if both the warring parties and their supporters genuinely desire to resolve this crisis.

Like the Yemeni children, many others in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and in Ukraine now are constantly undergoing the same torture.

Conversely, those of us who have never personally endured such traumatic experiences can ever understand the ordeals these children are enduring, unless we actively engage with international news or seek out information on their plight.

Growing up in comfort, enjoying fundamental rights, and yearning for the best things in life define the typical experiences of children during peacetime. However, the harsh realities of wartime plunge us into the opposite end of the spectrum, where the joys of life are denied. Unless childhood is nurtured in an environment of care, love, and peace, it becomes exceedingly challenging to lay the foundations for a brighter future in adulthood. Such children often grapple with emotional disturbances and may, at times, adopt delinquent behaviour patterns as they grow older.

The responsibility lies squarely with the adults engaged in the conflict, be they Houthi rebels or Yemeni Government soldiers. They appear to be neglecting the well-being of their own future generations. In essence, they are inadvertently waging a battle against their own offspring, indirectly causing harm to them. These self-proclaimed warriors are denying innocent children access to essential provisions such as food, shelter, and universally acknowledged basic rights. It is imperative that they all be held accountable under international law.

As we reflect upon Yemen, a nation graced with a strategic location bordered by the

Red Sea to the west and the Gulf of Aden to the south, featuring a picturesque capital city named Sanaa, it is disheartening to witness the extent of human barbarity that has enveloped this land. Yemen finds itself strategically positioned in West Asia, sharing its land borders with Saudi Arabia to the north and Oman to the northeast-two influential and oil-rich nations within the region.

Today, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), two big powers of West Asia, are fighting the Yemen war through their proxies. On the other hand, Iran, another giant of the region is directly helping the Houthi warriors to fight against the Government-backed army.

The regional superpowers are competing for their space in Yemen. This has a serious impact on the economy, polity, society and culture of the country. As a result, children are badly affected. They have been totally deprived of normal upbringing for the last nine years. Tragedy in Yemen continues.

The international community has regrettably turned into a passive bystander amid this turmoil. Each day witnesses the tragic loss of innocent children's lives, and the duration of this conflict remains uncertain. Especially for children like us living in Yemen, it is a harrowing ordeal. They possess the undeniable right to seek justice and equity, yet they find themselves utterly powerless. There exists no avenue for them to voice their protests and express their concerns, leaving them with no recourse but to bear their grievances in solitude.

(Both the writers are young activists. Views expressed here are personal)



CHITRANGADA



YASUDHARA

I AM CAREFUL WITH MY DIET, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I REGULARLY MEDITATE AND DO YOGA EARLY IN THE MORNING. THAT'S THE ONLY REASON FOR MY FITNESS
— JAGAPATHI BABU



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week, celestial energies suggest a focus on financial stability, well-being, and interpersonal connections. While monetary outflows and health challenges may seem overwhelming, your professional commitments, including pivotal meetings and projects, will demand attention. Navigating these challenges requires a balanced and strategic mindset. By midweek, the universe will bless you with unexpected resilience and determination. Thoughts of investing in real estate might resurface, but financial constraints could be a hurdle. However, the cosmic alignment encourages forward-thinking and harnessing inner inspiration to chart a clear path. The stars hint at opportunities abroad, further studies, or a significant shift in your career trajectory to amplify your capabilities. Embracing new horizons is essential during this phase.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

The stars bestow upon you a commanding presence, allowing you to steer situations with confidence this week. While emotions and passions run deep, they remain within your grasp. Engaging in creative endeavors, whipping up delightful dishes, and catering to family needs will occupy your time. Additionally, you'll indulge in some self-care and leisure activities. By midweek, a shift in your convictions and operational methods emerges. An epiphany about harnessing your talents might strike you. A journey beckons and unforeseen events might catch you off guard. However, with meticulous planning, you'll navigate these scenarios adeptly. A surge of optimism and trust in the cosmic order fills you. You'll perceive the guiding hand of destiny, and perhaps, witness serendipitous occurrences or a string of fortunate events.

Lucky number 29 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you tread challenging terrains. There's a presence attempting to overshadow your essence, impacting your self-assurance. The potential dissolution of a longstanding bond, an unexpected turn in a will, or the health concerns of someone close might unsettle you. As midweek approaches, journeys beckon. Your passionate and assertive spirit will guide you onto new paths. A surge of vitality will drive and inspire you to pursue your aspirations. Your adeptness in communication will shine, allowing you to craft compelling arguments and insights on contemporary matters. Engaging in discussions with peers who resonate with your thoughts will not only amplify your voice but also inspire others. As the week concludes, the universe promises a sense of equilibrium, presenting decisions that tilt in your favor.

Lucky number 26 | Lucky colour Amber
Lucky day Sunday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

There exists a guiding influence in your life, proving immensely advantageous as it steers you towards a novel path. Engaging in self-reflection unveils profound life insights. Midweek, you'll witness seamless fulfillment of domestic needs. Opportunities arise for acquiring a new home, or office, or celebrating achievements. The warmth of family support fosters inner tranquility. Accomplishments, wisdom, goal attainment, and truth-seeking enrich your persona. The week might feature a meaningful home ceremony. Financial gains uplift your motivation. However, the week's end might bring psychological apprehensions about the present and future. Mitigate these with meditation and yoga for mental stability. Embrace these challenges as stepping stones, allowing personal growth to blossom amidst uncertainties. Trust your resilience and ability to navigate the path ahead, emerging stronger and wiser as you journey through these fluctuations.

Lucky number 27 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Monday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

The stars indicate potential challenges and setbacks in your professional and daily endeavors. You might feel confined, yearning for liberation from the complexities surrounding you. Your responsibilities and decisions could come under scrutiny. A whirlwind of thoughts may cloud your judgment. It's wise to pause and reassess until you gain more clarity and confidence about your circumstances. Consider viewing the situation from a fresh perspective. Integrate both your logical and emotional insights to chart the best course ahead. The cosmic energies suggest a temporary halt on major decisions, including financial transactions, initiating new ventures, travel, and romantic pursuits, especially for the initial three days. Embrace transparency and authenticity with yourself and those around you to alleviate the weight of apprehension.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Fuchsia
Lucky day Tuesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

The boundless energy you're known for may wane this week. In the initial days, you might grapple with a sense of emotional detachment and struggle to truly feel. A health concern or mishap within the family might push you out of your usual comfort. Pride and a misplaced sense of superiority could lead to internal turmoil during this period. If overwhelmed with tasks, delegating responsibilities can be beneficial, ensuring tasks are completed efficiently. As the week concludes, you may find yourself swept up in a whirlwind of desires and daydreams. While it's tempting to get lost in lofty aspirations and heightened expectations, the stars advise you to remain grounded and pragmatic.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Wednesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, the universe showers you with abundant success and joy, making you feel truly fortunate. The week commences with a boost in your financial standing, enhancing both your savings and overall satisfaction. Significant profits are on the horizon. Your focus will shift towards planning for your children's future, considering their education and career paths. You'll also be drawn to advanced studies and spiritual pursuits, engaging in meaningful rituals. Increased expenditures and rising family expectations could lead to feelings of despondency. As the week concludes, you might grapple with a sense of inertia and melancholy. Yet, remember, perception shapes reality; whether you view challenges as setbacks or opportunities is up to you. To maintain equilibrium, indulge in refreshing beverages and enjoy the soothing properties of curd.

Lucky number 23 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Saturday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

The week commences on a positive note. There's a promising chance of job offers or a boost in your earnings. Entrepreneurs will find this week particularly reassuring; timely transactions, steady profits, and seamless operations will bring them comfort. A work-related journey might be on the horizon. As you approach midweek, it's essential to adopt a balanced stance in all endeavors. Overextending can lead to setbacks. It's crucial to assess the current scenario and implement necessary positive adjustments. Your well-being will also come into focus. Overexertion and juggling too many tasks can impact both your demeanor and health. Prioritize adequate rest, a nutritious diet, a consistent fitness routine, and mindfulness practices. These will not only rejuvenate you but also invigorate your spirit, propelling you forward with renewed vigor.

Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Thursday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Your dedication and pragmatic approach are evident in your endeavors. Yet, you're caught in a tug-of-war between ambition and allure, leading to a phase of conflicting emotions. Such a state might compel you to make challenging choices, potentially spiraling into chaos and unfavorable outcomes. Deep introspection and a thorough assessment of your situation are essential. It's vital to prioritize self-care and find moments of rest. Around midweek, it becomes necessary to seek medical advice. Engaging in healing practices and keeping your goals in sight will serve you well during this period. The current cosmic energies advise against major financial decisions; if they're unavoidable, consulting a professional is recommended. On a brighter note, a steady financial inflow promises comfort.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, the universe emphasizes honing your cognitive abilities. Your eloquence and charismatic traits make you persuasive in conversations. However, be wary of getting entangled in fruitless debates. It's essential to distance yourself from negative influences and avoid succumbing to desires or temptations. Those interacting with the public should exercise caution. As the week concludes, celestial energies will shift in your favor, allowing you to truly relish moments of joy. Stress and concerns will melt away, making room for the rewards of your dedication. Consider indulging in self-care activities, perhaps a visit to the spa, a refreshing hairstyle change, or a workout session. The stars hint at a period of renewal and healing for you.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Your unwavering determination and effort face testing times. Adversaries are lurking, eager to see you falter. In the week's initial days, a vigilant approach and keen observation are essential to navigate potential pitfalls. You might encounter deceit and baseless disputes in your professional sphere. As the week progresses, an enticing opportunity will present itself. To seize it, refining your abilities and maintaining mental acuity will be crucial. Sometimes, it may seem like you're walking a fine line. However, with your sharp insight and wisdom, you can turn obstacles into opportunities. As the week concludes, the cosmic energies align in your favor, rewarding your perseverance. A sense of gratitude and tranquility will envelop you, acknowledging the fruits of your labor.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Plum
Lucky day Monday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

The cosmos showers you with abundant choices, each as alluring as the next, leading to potential indecision. A grounded perspective and balance are essential to make the right decisions. There's a risk of overlooking golden opportunities due to a fleeting mindset or a casual demeanor. This might stem from a reluctance to trust your intuition or a denial of the evident path forward. A new, uncharted adventure beckons, offering liberation from anxieties and uncertainties. Fueled by an adventurous spirit and a hunger for new achievements, you're drawn away from the mundane and towards more profound, spiritual aspirations. The celestial energies suggest a willingness to prioritize meaningful experiences over materialistic pursuits. A transformative spiritual exploration awaits you.

Lucky number 28 | Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Tuesday

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Yogasana and Pranayama preparatory to Dhyana

We now move to Yoga-Asana, the third step of Patanjali's eight-fold Yoga sutra. It is designed to acquire physical fitness and agility of body. It not only facilitates acquiring a posture suited to effortlessly follow the process for a continued stretch of time. Also, the mind and fundamental element of consciousness will play out better, as the gross body platform serves as their vehicle of operation. No wonder, the gross body is said to be the temple of God. For, the divine force - fundamental element of consciousness - dwelling within keeps us alive, which when withdrawn, the gross body becomes dysfunctional and then disintegrates.

Yoga-asana is a set of physical exercises set in tune with the breathing cycle. Pursuing the process, through regulated body movements and increased supply of oxygen, the joints become supple, muscles become soft, and so bodily agility

gets toned up. The process, however, needs to be pursued under the care of a trained expert. Keeping one's health vulnerabilities in mind, only he would know what exercises will prove beneficial. Unguided, it may prove counterproductive.

Next in line comes Pranayama. The purpose is to ensure correct breathing as that is key to healthy living as well as longevity. For, inbreath does not simply bring in fresh oxygen supply. At subtle level it carries life forces (Prana as termed in Indian context). So long as we are breathing, we are in receipt of life forces that keep us alive, which when stops, the gross body becomes a dead matter. Also, life forces animate all our dynamic functionalities. The way respiratory system works, defines the quality of our physical and mental health, and therefore, needs to be in shape.

Pursuing Pranayama, it becomes pos-



sible to slow down the breathing cycle, which, in turn, retards the ageing process. For, the run of vital organs correspondingly reduces, as they are tuned to the breath cycle. This way the running time of the vital organs comes down, and thereby their servicing abilities increase in terms of time frame. The beauty of the process is that it helps augment oxygena-

tion of the brain, which vitalises its dynamism further.

It will be interesting to note here that a tortoise is believed to breathe 3 to 4 times a minute and survives up to 300 years. An elephant supposedly breathes 10 to 12 times a minute, and lives for around 100 years. But a dog which keeps breathing briskly has a life of around 12 years only. So, as we slow down our breathing cycle, our aging process gets retarded. Evidently then, lifespan would expand.

Breathing cycle relates to our state of mind as well. A human being ordinarily breathes 18 counts per minute. But when in an agitated state, the breath count goes up to somewhere between 30 to 36. So, by reducing our breath count, we could keep in check mental agitation also.

Pranayam, though not difficult, but it is again a delicate process. Therefore, it needs to be pursued

under guidance of a trained expert. Purposely therefore, the process as such is not being discussed. But in a passing reference, it needs to be mentioned here that the process involves holding the breath for a while (Kumbhaka as termed in Indian terminology) in between every inhalation and exhalation. One is supposed to dwell on space in between the two, as this is at rest. Not simply that, one's attention is straightaway on the element of consciousness available there. So, dwelling on this space, even for a small stretch of time though, but it virtually puts us in a state of dhyana. As one graduates in the process, one has direct realisation of the life forces driving us. In this sense, pranayama can be said to be the beginning of dhyana process. The above two processes do also help ensure body-mind coordination. For, the body, mind, and nerves

get duly toned up, vital to proper functioning of our internal communication mechanism. The ground is now laid down for pursuing the dhyana process proper.

The four steps of the Dhyana process to follow, need to be seen as progressively succeeding stages of a singular process. For, the first step Pratyahara, implies distancing from the outer world and turn the mind inwards. It is in this very mode that the whole process is carried on. Dharana, dhyana, and samadhi are again progressively growing three successive stages of the process. There is no exclusive process dedicated to either of them. One progressively and spontaneously keeps graduating from one stage to the other.

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