

OPINION 6
‘SACRED GROVES’ ARE VANISHING FAST

WORLD 8
PROBE FINDS IMRAN KHAN INVOLVED
IN ORCHESTRATING MAY 9 VIOLENCE

MONEY 10
ONLINE SELLERS SEE 15 PER
CENT RISE IN FESTIVE SALES

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 2023; PAGES 12 13



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NIKHAT BAGS
OLYMPIC QUOTA
AND MEDAL
11 SPORT

MEDALS GALORE, AND COUNTING

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The young Indian shooting brigade sizzled at the Asian Games, steam-rolling the rivals to win two gold and three silver on Friday and record their best-ever medal haul in the continental showpiece.

The grand success of the shooters over the last six days has seen them amass 18 medals so far, including six gold and seven silver, surpassing the 14 they had won during the 2006 Doha Asian Games in an era dominated by the likes of the legendary Jaspal Rana.

Meanwhile, Kiran Baliyan became the first Indian woman to win an Asian Games medal in shot put event in 72 years as she picked up a bronze on the opening day of competitions here on Friday. In men's squash, the Indian team humbled defending champions Malaysia 2-0 to reach the final of the men's squash event after the seasoned Saurav Ghosal and Abhay Singh registered identical wins at the Asian Games here on Friday. India thus set up a marquee gold medal clash with Pakistan, against whom they lost in the pool stage and will seek revenge heading into the final.

Also while Nikhat Zareen (50 kg) has assured India of medal at Asian Games boxing events and secured Paris Olympics quota, Indian men assured of medal the sporting event.

Palak Gulia and Esha Singh made it a one-two in individ-

ual 10m air pistol, while the trio of Esha, Palak and Divya won the country a team silver in the event, before the triumvirate of Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar, Swapnil Kusale and Akhil Sheoran added another team gold in 50m rifle 3 positions.

The baby-faced 22-year-old Aishwary added another individual silver in rifle 3 positions, fighting an early elimination before finishing second best to a Chinese marksman, who set an Asian Games record.

Two teenage dreamy-eyed shooters, Palak Gulia and Esha Singh, set ablaze the shooting range by powering to a gold-silver finish in 10m air pistol event.

In one of the most trail-blazing efforts seen by the Indians, the young duo challenged each other for the top podium finish until 17-year-old Palak clinched the gold medal and Esha the silver.

“There’s no rivalry with anybody. My biggest competitor has always been me. I’m always fighting with myself,” Palak said later.

Palak had a score of 9.1 in her first shot in the finals but recovered remarkably well.

“My first shot was 9.1, a totally outer shot. I was a bit nervous after that, thinking obviously like what I hit. But I then said it’s not over, it’s the first shot, you have 23 more shots to go.

“So, it’s not over until you win. It’s all right, it’s just one shot and because of this you



Indian shooters Swapnil Suresh Kusale, Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar and Akhil Sheoran pose with their gold medal during the presentation ceremony of men's 50m rifle 3 positions team event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou on Friday. PTI

cannot let you impact the rest of the shots,” said the 17-year-old from Jhajjar district in Haryana.

“For an athlete, your quality is how you come back from your bad shots or how well you you can come back. So I was only focusing on the process, like no

matter what happened, I still had so much to do.”

Esha said she would give her performance nine out of 10 points. “It was good, the initial start was very nice. I was able to maintain my focus for as long as possible. There were certain times where it was not

working out, but I’m glad that at the end, it did.

“I had a bit of nerves, and I couldn’t trigger well. I instantly realised, and I’m grateful that I did. So then I paid more attention towards my triggering. Technically, I have noted down a few things for my next

competition to improve.”

Palak, who took up shooting in a school in Gurgaon, said she was not satisfied with her qualification score.

“I had a 577, which was enough to qualify but it wasn’t up to the mark. I’m always looking at a 580-plus. That’s

what I want to achieve in the coming events.”

Pakistan’s Talat Kishmala settled for a bronze after giving a tough fight to Esha.

This is the first major senior individual medal for Palak in an international competition after she gave notice of her precocious talent just last year. She shot 242.1 in the finals for a Games record.

Esha, who had won the individual silver in 25m pistol on Wednesday and was part of the trio that won the 10m air pistol team silver along with Palak and Divya TS earlier on Friday, settled for silver, scoring 239.7. It marked the first time that two Indian shooters have finished one-two on the podium at the Asian Games.

The unprecedented success of Indian marksmen continued in the 50m rifle arena as well with the men’s 3-positions team, comprising the young trio of Aishwary (591), Swapnil (591) and Sheoran (587), overcoming the Chinese challenge with a world record score of 1769 to grab the top podium finish.

Hosts China were a clear six points adrift with 1763 points, while South Korea were a distant third with 1748 points.

The men’s trio smashed the world record by a whopping eight points.

Aishwary and Swapnil shot superbly to make the individual finals as well. They were placed first and second after the qualification round, something never seen before in a sport

dominated by the Chinese at the Asian level.

The third Indian in the competition, Akhil, despite finishing fifth with 587 in qualification, missed out on the eight-team finals as only two shooters per country are allowed in the individual medal round.

Swapnil, a strong medal prospect at next year’s Paris Olympic Games, was firing on all cylinders, shooting down the qualification Asian and Asian Games record on way to a superb 591.

Not to be left behind, Aishwary too shot an identical score to be tied with Swapnil but entered the finals, and was placed second because of fewer shots closer to the bulls eye (inner 10s). Swapnil had 33 inner 10s, while Aishwary had 27.

The two Chinese who made it to the finals — Du Linshu and Tian Jiaming — were placed third and fourth respectively behind the two young Indians.

Both Swapnil and Aishwary shot an average of 9.850 out of a maximum score of 10 on each of the shots in the qualification round in all three positions — kneeling, prone and standing, an incredible achievement, considering the pressure from the relentless Chinese.

In fact, Swapnil had a 199/200 in prone, while Aishwary had an identical score in kneeling position.

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One Nation, One Election in works on war footing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It has come to light that the Centre is keen on implementing the concept of “One Nation, One Election,” which means that Lok Sabha polls, State Assembly polls, and the third-tier polls, known as local body polls, can be conducted simultaneously.

While the Ram Nath Kovind Committee is working on this, the Law Commission is devising a formula to synchronise all Assembly and third-tier polls by either extending or reducing their tenure. This would allow all State elections to be held concurrently with the Lok Sabha polls starting from 2029 onwards.

Sources have indicated that the law panel is formulating a mechanism to establish a unified electoral roll for Lok Sabha, Assemblies, and local bodies. This is aimed at reducing costs and minimising the use of manpower, as the same process

is currently carried out separately by the Election Commission and various State election commissions.

A mechanism is being developed to ensure that once Lok Sabha and Assembly polls are synchronised, voters will only need to go to the polling booth once to cast their ballot for both elections.

They mentioned that since Assembly and parliamentary polls are conducted in phases, the Commission is working out the details to ensure that voters do not need to visit polling stations more than once to cast their ballot for both polls.

The Commission, they added, believes that Assembly and Lok Sabha polls can be held concurrently, and they are now focusing on the logistical details to facilitate this extensive democratic exercise.

The high-level committee has been entrusted with the task of recommending how Lok Sabha, Assembly, and local body polls (panchayat, municipalities, zila parishad) can be

held simultaneously.

Considering the Kovind panel’s terms of reference, it is also possible that the Law Commission’s scope could be expanded to include the simultaneous conduct of local body polls alongside national and state polls, according to the sources.

One suggestion that the law panel may propose is to conduct the three-tier polls in two phases within one year. In the first phase, Lok Sabha and Assembly polls could be held, followed by local body polls in the second phase. Sources view this as a practical approach, taking into account the diverse climatic conditions in the country.

In August 2018, the previous Law Commission had endorsed the Modi Government’s proposal to hold simultaneous polls for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. They argued that this would prevent the country from being in a constant state of election mode.

Eid Milad blasts kill 58 in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI/PESHAWAR

A powerful suicide blast in Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province on Friday, killing at least 54 people and injuring over 100 others who were preparing to celebrate Eid Milad-un-Nabi — Prophet Muhammad’s birthday — police said.

Hours later, another blast at a mosque in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Hangu city killed at least four people and injured 12 others.

At Mastung, the explosion occurred near Madina Mosque on Al Falah Road in the Mastung district when people had gathered in large numbers to mark Eid Miladun Nabi, City Station House Officer Mohammad Javed Lehri said.

“The explosion was a ‘suicide blast’. The bomber exploded himself next to the Deputy Superintendent of Police’s (DSP) car,” Lehri said.

Later, a hand grenade was also defused by the bomb



squad from near the blast site, he said.

Bordering Afghanistan and Iran, Balochistan is Pakistan’s largest province and has frequently been hit by terror groups including the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Islamic State group.

Mastung’s DSP Nawaz Gishkori, who was on duty for the rally, was found dead among others.

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Do not lower consent age: Law Commission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Law Commission has advised the Government not to tweak the existing age of consensual sex under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and suggested introducing guided judicial discretion in the matter of sentencing in cases involving tacit approval of children in the 16-18 age bracket. The current age of consent in India is 18 years.

The Law Commission has submitted its report on the age of consent under the POCSO Act to the Law Ministry in which it has suggested that amendments are needed in the legislation to remedy the situation in cases involving tacit approval, though not consent in law, on the part of children aged between 16 and 18.

The panel, headed by former Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, said it had

considered all the views and suggestions given in connection with cases involving those between the age of 16 and 18.

The panel said reducing the age of consent will have direct and negative bearing on the fight against child marriage and child trafficking and also advised courts to tread with caution even in cases where it is observed that adolescent love cannot be controlled and criminal intention may be missing.

The law panel report said after a careful review of existing child protection laws, various judgments and considering the maladies of child abuse, child trafficking, and child prostitution that plague our society, the commission is of the measured view that “it is not advisable to tinker with the existing age of consent under the POCSO Act”.

“However, having cautiously considered all the views and suggestions furnished in this regard, the commission said it

considers it necessary that certain amendments need to be brought in the POCSO Act to remedy the situation in cases wherein there is tacit approval in fact though not consent in law on part of the child aged between 16 to 18 years,” according to the report.

Noting that such cases do not merit to be dealt with the same severity as the cases that were ideally imagined to fall under the POCSO Act, the commission deems fit to introduce guided judicial discretion in the matter of sentencing in such cases.

“This will ensure that the law is balanced, thus safeguarding the best interests of the child,” it said.

The law panel said comments were also sought from the Ministry of Women and Child Development on the matter.

“However, despite reminders, no response was received,” it said.

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Birthplace of Indian cricket board sealed

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The curtain has fallen on the iconic Roshanara Club building in Shakti Nagar — the birthplace of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) — one of the wealthiest sporting organisations in the world. Roshanara Club was sealed at 5 am on Friday as Delhi Development Authority (DDA) did not renew its lease.

The club, founded on August 15, 1922, marked its centenary last year. Initially, the club obtained a 90-year lease, which expired in 2018. However, the club received a temporary extension lasting six months to one year. Six months ago, it received a notice from the DDA to vacate the premises.

This is the ground where the first unofficial test match and the first unofficial Ranji Trophy match were played. Legendary figures of the game such as Jack Hobbs, CK Nayudu, Mushtaq Ali, Amar

Singh, Herbert Sutcliffe, Iftikhar Ali Khan Pataudi, and Frank Worrell were among the early luminaries who graced the hallowed grounds of Roshanara Club.

During the pre-independence era, the club hosted esteemed guests, including Viceroy and Governor-Generals like Richard Attenborough and the Mountbattens. Eminent dignitaries such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Zakir Hussain, VV Giri, and Dr Rajendra Prasad frequented the club.

Since then, this ground has been graced by world-class players. Icons like Kapil Dev, Surinder Amarnath, Hari Gidwani, Surinder Khanna, Madan Lal, Bishan Singh Bedi, Rahul Dravid, Harbhajan Singh, Yuvraj Singh, Virat Kohli, Gautam Gambhir, and Ishant Sharma represent only a fraction of the star-studded constellation of cricketers who have played on the revered ground.



During the period when the IPL was played within a bio-secure bubble due to Covid, even premier IPL teams such as the Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals, and Chennai Super Kings opted to conduct their practice sessions on the Roshanara Club premises.

The club officials alleged that the sealing was done despite a stay from the High Court till October 6. On the other hand, DDA officials said

sealing has been made in accordance with the law. “There is no illegality in it and the matter is in the cognisance of the court,” they said. Early on Friday, there was unusual activity around Roshanara road as all roads leading to the club were barricaded.

From 5 am, the police, in multiple buses, secured the area and didn’t allow any entry into the club’s premises. Hundreds of clueless members waited at the main gate

around 6 am but weren’t allowed to enter. Only office bearers of the club were permitted but even their stay was short. The police personnel stationed outside didn’t reveal much but said, “It’s locked, lease has expired.”

“We have received information from the Deputy Commissioner of Police office that they have been asked by the DDA for a police force to seal the club,” said a senior member of the club to *The*

Pioneer.

“The authority has not renewed the lease. The matter had been in court since the expiry of the lease. The High Court had this year asked the DDA to not take any coercive measure and stayed the order. We approached the lower court as per the High Court’s suggestion. But the lower court dismissed our application on September 27,” said another senior member.

“We had two leases, one from 1922 and another from 1928, in every 30 years they used to get renewed. Our first lease came to an end in 2012, after which we had proper communication with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in which we requested the Ministry to extend its time duration. Accordingly, we got an extension for six months.”

“Another lease ended in 2018, after which the MoHUA sent us a letter mentioning that the Government will make a

policy so we will be treated accordingly. We approached the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi but he couldn’t help us immediately,” said Rajan Manchanda, general secretary of the Roshanara club.

According to Amit Kumar, chairman of Roshanara Cricket Club, legends like Virat Kohli, Virender Sehwag, Ishant Sharma, Kapil Dev are also honorary members of the club.

For years, it served as the preferred venue for the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) to host off-season and selection camps as well.

The club, named after the daughter of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, is considered one of the oldest clubs in the country. Rai Bahadur Amba Prasad, Sardar Saheb Sobha Singh (father of noted writer Khuswant Singh), Rai Bahadur Sultan Singh (whose residence at Kashmere Gate known as Sultan Singh Building was the venue of Congress Working

Committee meetings), Raymond Grant Govan, owner of then Delhi Flour Mills, Lala Ram Kishore were among the founding members of the club.

There was a period in Delhi cricket where the association hosted their must-win fixtures of Ranji Trophy at the club because of its lively surface and even the best in the business have struggled here.

Encompassing 22 acres, Roshanara stands as a symbol of the club’s endeavour to preserve its illustrious historical heritage while simultaneously adapting to the demands of the contemporary era, exceeding the expectations of its present-day members.

Also, the newly installed floodlights at the cricket ground are a sign of progress and change. The facility continued to retain the old-world charm for years and also had infrastructure for various other sports like tennis, squash, table tennis and swimming.

Discussed Canada with Blinken: Jaishankar

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said that the Canadian allegations with regard to the death of a Khalistani separatist was discussed during his meeting with the Secretary of State Tony Blinken a day earlier and noted that the two delegations came out "better informed" after the meeting.



"Yes, I did," Jaishankar said in response to a question during his appearance at the prestigious Hudson Institute think-tank when asked if the issue of Canadian allegations came up during his meeting with Blinken at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department.

The US side shared its assessments on this whole situation and he explained to the Americans a summary of India's concerns. "I think hopefully we both came out better informed," Jaishankar said.

response to him both in private and public was that his allegation was not consistent with our policy. And if he had, his government had anything relevant specifics, we would look into," he said.

"We were open to looking at it now. That's where that conversation is at this point of time," Jaishankar said.

He said that for India, Canada has become a country where organised crime from India mixed with trafficking in people, mixed with secessionism and violence which is a very toxic combination of issues that people who have found operating space.

He acknowledged that there has been a lot between India and Canada on this issue preceding the remarks of the Canadian prime minister.

In the last few years, the issue of Khalistan has come back very much into play, because of what "we consider to be a very permissive Canadian attitude towards terrorists, extremists, people who openly advocate violence and they have been given operating space in Canada because of the compulsions of Canadian politics."

"I don't think most Americans, perhaps Canada,

AAP committed to INDIA bloc, assures Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday assured the AAP is committed to the opposition INDIA alliance and will not break away from it amid a fresh row between his party and the Congress in Punjab following Sukhpal Singh Khaira's arrest in an old drugs case. "The AAP will not separate ways from the INDIA alliance," he said at a press conference.

AAP convener's statement came a day after Punjab Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira was arrested in connection with the 2015 drug trafficking case. The arrest sparked speculations that the

matter could further strain ties between the Congress and the AAP. The AAP is currently rules in Punjab and is part of the opposition India Alliance.

At a press conference here on Friday, Kejriwal, who is the national convener of the AAP, was asked about the future of the INDIA alliance following the arrest of the Congress legislator in Punjab.

"The AAP is committed towards the INDIA alliance. We will not break away from the alliance. We are committed to fulfilling the dharma of the alliance," he said. The AAP has, however, rejected the allegation saying the action against the Bholath MLA was taken according to the law.

J&K BJP facing open rebellion within its ranks



MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir Unit of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) is apparently facing an open rebellion from within its ranks in the Kashmir valley.

A day after the festival of Eid Milad-un-Nabi was celebrated in the valley, the disciplinary committee headed by Sunil Sethi along with Aseem Gupta and Rekha Mahajan as the members of the committee slapped notices on eight more party rebels in Kashmir citing charges of 'indiscipline'.

Indian Army-USI jointly conclude discussion under 'Project Udbhav'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army in collaboration with the United Service Institution of India (USI), concluded a hybrid-panel discussion here on Friday under 'Project Udbhav' on the topic "Evolution of Indian Military Systems, Warfighting and Strategic Thought- Current Research in the Field and Way Forward".

Project Udbhav is an initiative set in motion by the Indian Army to rediscover the profound Indic heritage of

statecraft and strategic thoughts derived from ancient Indian texts of statecraft, warcraft, diplomacy and grand strategy, army officials said here.

The project endeavours to explore India's rich historical narratives in the realms of statecraft and strategic thoughts. It focuses on a broad spectrum including Indigenous Military Systems, Historical Texts, Regional Texts and Kingdoms, Thematic Studies, and intricate Kautilya Studies.

This pioneering initiative

stands testimony to the Indian Army's recognition of India's age-old wisdom in statecraft, strategy, diplomacy, and warfare.

At its core, Project Udbhav seeks to bridge the historical and the contemporary.

The goal is to understand the profound depths of indigenous military systems, their evolution, strategies that have been passed down through the ages, and the strategic thought processes that have governed the land for millennia, they said.

Eid Milad blasts kill 58...

From Page 1

Lehri said the wounded were shifted to a medical facility even as an emergency has been imposed in the hospitals.

District Health Officer Rashid Muhammad Saeed said the situation at the hospitals

across the town was chaotic as relatives and friends of those killed and injured were making it difficult for the doctors and nurses to perform their duties.

"Around 20 of the patients who were in critical condition have been moved to Quetta for treatment," he said.

Balochistan Inspector

apparently spotted the suicide bomber and tried to stop him. "Three other police officers were also injured in the blast," he said.

The IG said he was not aware of the exact number of people injured but they were in dozens.

The TTP has denied involvement in Friday's blast, saying in a statement that such an attack was against its policies. The group also condemned the attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that "mosques, schools, and public gatherings are not part of our targets."

Sheikh said the suspicion is centred around the Daesh

(also known as ISIS) terror outfit.

"It is still too early to say who is behind this attack but in the past Daesh militants have been active in Mastung district," he said.

Sheikh said Daesh had previously claimed responsibility for such attacks in the past.

Mastung District Headquarters Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Nisar Ahmed said 18 bodies were brought to his hospital, while the remaining were moved to the Naqab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital in Mastung and Civil Hospital in Quetta.

Stillbirth or miscarriage risk doubles in event of job loss, says study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new study suggests there may be a link between job loss and miscarriage or still-birth.

The risk of miscarriage or stillbirth doubled after a pregnant woman or her partner lost a job, a team of European

researchers has found. The study underscores the need for mental health support during pregnancy through the public health system is important regardless of women's and their partner's job status.

The study was published in the journal Human Reproduction.

SHGs exempted from quality control order for medical textiles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In keeping with the Government's vision of "Go vocal for local", the Union Textile Ministry said on Friday that it has exempted Small Help Groups (SHGs) from the mandatory Meditech Quality Control Order (QCOs) ambit, for the essential products such as sanitary napkins, baby diapers, and reusable sanitary pad/sanitary napkin/period panties

General (IG) Abdul Khaliq Sheikh said the suicide bomber blew himself up close to groups of people who were gathering near the mosque to take out the Rabul Awwal procession to celebrate the Prophet's birthday. "Until now we have 54 confirmed casualties," he said, adding that the injured have been sent to hospitals in Mastung and Quetta.

Sheikh said DSP Ghashhori was killed after he

Public Notice: This is to inform General Public Notice that Sh. Archil Bansal acquired Built up property bearing No. 106-A, area measuring 100 Sq Yds, Kharsa no 394, situated in Vill Ghronoda, Pratap Gang, Gali no 10, Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110091 vide Relinquishment Deed dated 13.10.2021 registered as doc. No. 8429 executed by Smt. Kusum Bansal, 2 Me. Disha Bansal and 3. Smt. Aika Bansal. Now Sh. Archil Bansal intends to sell the Built-up property bearing no 106-A, area measuring 100 Sq Yds, Kharsa no 394, situated in Vill Ghronoda, Pratap Gang, Gali no 10, Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110091 to Mr. Deepak Soni and further Mr. Deepak Soni has agreed to create a mortgage in respect of the said floors in favour of our client DFC FIRST Bank Limited. Further, if any person, body, individual, institution having any claim, title, interest and/or objection in respect of or against or relating to or touching upon said property or part of the property, by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title documents pertaining to the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at below mentioned address within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Public Notice: Notice is hereby given to our client Mr. Arvind Kishore Kumar Jindal S/O Mr. Jayanti Prasad is in process to purchase the Residential House No. 72, area measuring 200 sq. yd, situated at Gandhi Nagar residential colony, Tehsil & Distt. Ghazabad UP. (availing loan from RBL Bank Ltd.) from Rama Agarwal who inherited the same after the death of her husband Mr. Shivam Sundar, whereas he acquired the same by virtue of Gift Deed dated 25.07.2007 (Doc. No. 4678) read with mutation letter GPA Gift Deed dated 25.07.2007 in the name of Rama Agarwal. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

MEDALS GALORE...

From Page 1

The finals though was a bit of an anti-climax, with both Swapnil and Aishwary missing the gold medal.

Aishwary signed off with a silver after China's Du Linshu created an Asian Games record score of 460.6 to deny the 22-year-old Indian the top podium spot.

Aishwary had a final score of 459.7, while home team marksman Tain Jiaming took the third place behind the Indian

with a score of 448.3.

The biggest setback, though, was for marksman Swapnil, who was gunning for a sure-shot gold after leading for a major part of the finals, but a rank poor shot of 7.6 saw the 28-year-old take a mighty tumble from No.1 position to fifth in the standing position.

That virtually eliminated him from medal contention.

Though he shot 10.5 and 10.1 in his last two shots, Swapnil could only manage a fourth-place fin-

ish.

Aishwary will return to India as the most successful shooter having won the 10m air rifle and 50m rifle 3 positions team gold medals, besides individual bronze in 10m air rifle and a silver in 50m rifle on Friday.

Teenager Esha led from the front as she guided the Indian women's 10m air pistol team to a silver medal.

The trio of 18-year-old Esha (579), Palak (577) and Divya TS (575) aggregated 1731 points for their silver medal, while China took the gold with a total of

1736, which is an Asian Games record.

Chinese Taipei finished with a bronze, totalling 1723.

The scores in the qualification round decide the team medallists, while eight top-scoring shooters move into the finals to win individual glory.

Esha had also claimed a silver medal in the women's individual 25m pistol event on Wednesday, while the trio of Manu Bhaker, Esha and Rhythm Sangwan had fired in tandem to shoot the gold medal in the women's 25m pistol team event on the same day.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor, Property Address of Secured Asset, Date of Notice Sent, NPA Date. It lists multiple defaulted borrowers and their respective details.

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days as requested to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002.

कार्यालय नगर परिषद राऊ जिला इंदौर

E-Mail- cmorau@mpurban.gov.in

क्रमांक/3170-लो.नि./न.प./23-24 राऊ दिनांक 28.09.2023

--:0:-- निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना --:0:--

एतद् द्वारा समस्त सक्षम श्रेणी पंजीकृत टेक्नो/फर्म को सूचित किया जाता कि ऑनलाइन टेन्डर ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट सिस्टम पोर्टल (http://www.mptenders.gov.in) के माध्यम से आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। निविदाओं का सक्षम विवरण निम्नानुसार है।

Table with 7 columns: Sr. No., निविदा क्र. सूचना क्रमांक, कार्य का विवरण, लागत राशि, अमानत राशि, निविदा का मूल्य, कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि. It details the tender information for road works.

समय सारणी - निविदा प्रपत्र ऑनलाइन क्रय कर जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 30.10.2023 सार्थ 17:30 बजे तक निश्चित है।

नोट :- 1. निविदाकार को संभालनालय नगरीय प्रशासन एवं विकास म.प्र. भोपाल के पत्र क्रमांक/वाप्र/7/2022/15213 भोपाल दिनांक 15.12.2023 में दी गई शर्तें तथा कायकल्प अभियान अंतर्गत सड़कों की मरम्मत/सुध्वीकरण हेतु शासन द्वारा समय समय पर जारी दिशा निर्देश का पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा। 2. टेक्नोकार को प्रत्येक कार्य के प्रारंभ करने के पूर्व एवं कार्य की समाप्ति उपरत पर्याप्त जियो टैग फोटो का संशोधा कर संबंधित यूटी को उपलब्ध कराया जावेगा। 3. निकाय क्षेत्र के आसपास उपलब्ध शासकीय लोब अथवा संभागीय स्तर से स्थापित की जाने वाली Mobile Testing Lab के माध्यम से Testing इत्यादि का कार्य निष्पादित किया जावेगा। 4. डामरीकृत सड़कों के नवीनीकरण कार्य में यदि केवल Wearing Course (मोटाई 30 एमएम या कम) का कार्य किया जाना है तो Defect Liability period 03 वर्ष रहेगी तथा जिन सड़कों के लिये Base course एवं Wearing course दोनों का कार्य शामिल किया जावेगा, उके निर्माण के स्थिति Defect Liability period 05 वर्ष रहेगी। 5. काईट शापिल का रीसा, रोकने लिए एक स्थित डिफेंसिबिलिटी period 05 वर्ष रहेगी। 6. गुणवत्ता के उन्नयन एवं सुनिश्चित के लिए टेंडरिंग हेतु निर्धारित Frequency से टेंडरिंग का कार्य कराया जावेगा, जिस पर होने वाली राशि का वहन भी टेक्नोकार को किया जाना होगा।

(श्रीमती पद्मी विजय पाटीदार) अध्यक्ष, नगर परिषद, राऊ (इंदौर) (सी. एस. निगम) मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी नगर परिषद, राऊ (इंदौर)

Do not lower consent age: Law...

From Page 1

During the consultations, the panel said, while there was a wide divergence of opinion on how to resolve the issue at hand, there was unanimity of thought when it came to the aspect of the POCSO Act working against the very children it ought to protect.

"The blanket criminalisation of sexual activity amongst and with a child, though intended to safeguard children, is leading to incarceration of young boys and girls who engage in such activities as a consequence of sexual curiosity and need for exploration that may to some extent be normative for an adolescent," the report said.

There is a social cost associated with the present situation, including the negative impact upon the health, both physical and mental, of the children as well as a burden upon the investigating agencies and courts which takes away focus from the cases that are genuine and require immediate consideration, the report said.

The mental trauma and harassment faced by children who, on account of engaging in such a consensual act,

come to fall within the ambit of the POCSO Act is certainly an issue of concern, the law panel pointed out.

In the deliberations, the commission said, three possible solutions came up -- blanket reduction of the age of consent to 16 years as was the situation prior to the enactment of the POCSO Act, introducing a limited exception in case of consensual sexual act involving a child above the age of 16 years, and introducing judicial discretion in sentencing in cases of consensual romantic relationship between adolescents or with an adolescent between the age of 16 to 18 years.

"With respect to the first proposed solution, while giving a blanket exemption to consensual sexual acts by persons above 16 years may seem like a panacea for the situation we are faced with, however, the same will lead to many unintended consequences of much severe nature," it said.

Reducing the age of consent will have a direct and negative bearing on the fight against child marriage and child trafficking, the battles

against which have been hard-fought and are still ongoing, it said. With respect to the second proposed solution, carving out a limited exception for sexual relations with a child above 16 years is equally concerning and prone to misuse, the panel said.

"The consent of a child is no consent and reading the same would be deeply problematic. All children deserve the protection of the special law enacted for this very purpose and diluting the age of consent will deprive a significant portion of the child population, especially young girls aged 16 to 18 years, of the protection and expose them to unchecked exploitation," it said.

The panel report said increasing incidents of grooming and cyber-crimes such as sextortion are classic examples of how children in this vulnerable age group can be trapped and exploited.

The panel said the third solution of introducing judicial discretion in sentencing seems to strike a delicate balance to address the issue at hand and at the same time protect children from sexual exploitation.

ICONIC ROSHANARA CLUB'S 100 YEARS JOURNEY ENDS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) sealed and officially took possession of the iconic Roshanara club building in Shakti Nagar, north Delhi in the national capital.

The DDA said that action for eviction and taking over possession of the premises of Roshanara Club Ltd. was carried out on Friday at sunrise (around 6:00 am) with the assistance of police and independent official witness by the Estate Officer along with other employees of DDA and possession of the premises has been taken over.

The Delhi Development Authority today evicted and took possession of the premises

of Roshanara Club Ltd, the leases for which had expired 11 years back in 2012 and 6 years back in 2017. This action was taken under provisions of section 5 (2) of the The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971," the DDA said in a statement.

"During the eviction proceedings, it was found that apart from illegally occupying land worth thousands of crores for years together, the management of the club had allowed about 3.5 acres of precious land, out of 23.29 acres land leased to the Club, to be encroached. The cost of the encroached land itself works out to more than ₹180 crore as per the prevalent circle rate.

The Management of the Club had also unauthorisedly

let out land to nurseries and illegal hutments. Furthermore, Roshanara Club Ltd. has been in unauthorised occupation of the land for years together after expiry of the lease, for which it is to pay damages," it said.

The DDA said it was found that the historic and iconic Club, land for which was leased for public purposes, and which holds the distinction of serving as the cradle of Indian Cricket, had off late become the private property of certain individuals.

"The Club building and the premise were in a state of total disrepair due to lack of maintenance and upkeep and the land allowed to be encroached by the Management was housing jhuggis," it said.

In its order, the DDA said,



"Whereas the Deputy Director (OSB), DDA vide his letter dated January 19 this year forwarded to the Estate Officer the matter for initiation of eviction proceedings against Roshanara Club Ltd. under the PP Act, 1971 from its leased premises measuring 51062 Sq yard and 61688 Sq yard — total 112750 Sq yard that was allotted on annual rent basis for 30 years (extendable by 30+ 30 years, up to 90 years) to Roshanara Club Limited after expiry of the leases in August 2012 and December respectively; and whereas the Estate Officer,

after hearing the representations of both parties, in exercise of powers conferred upon him under section 5[1] of the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 passed an order dated April 12 this year against Roshanara Club Ltd through its Secretary and all the concerned persons who may be in unauthorised occupation of the said public premises or any part thereof to vacate the said public premises within 15 days from the date of issue of the order."

The annual lease rent of the first lease was ₹100. For the second lease the annual lease rent was ₹3,200 for the last period of 30 years. Upon expiry of the final term of the lease, Roshanara Club Ltd., through

its representatives, submitted representations for extension of these two leases but their request for extension was rejected.

The Roshanara Club Ltd. then challenged the eviction order dated 12.04.2023 before the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Tis Hazari Court.

The Principal District & Sessions Judge after hearing the case of both the parties pronounced its judgment dismissing the appeal of Roshanara Club Ltd. and upholding the eviction order dated 12.04.2023 passed by the Estate Officer/Central Zone.

The authority said in due compliance of the statutory provisions under PPE Act,

1971, an opportunity has been afforded, by way of written communication sent by e-mail, to the club authorities to remove the perishable items on 29.09.2023 between 12:30 pm and 3:30 pm, to which they are yet to respond.

It said that the orders of Judge were conveyed by DDA to Estate Officer, Central Zone through a letter dated September 27; and whereas the Estate Officer in his order dated April 12 against Roshanara Club Ltd through its secretary and all the concerned persons who may be in unauthorised occupancy of the said public premises or any part thereof ordered to vacate the said public premises within 15 days from the date of issue of the order," it said.

Winter Action Plan to curb pollution unveiled

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping with the practice over the past many years, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday unveiled the 'Winter Action Plan' from October to December with a strong emphasis on addressing dust pollution, vehicular emissions and the open burning of garbage to tackle air pollution.

Addressing a Press conference, Kejriwal said the Delhi Government has identified 13 hotspots namely Anand Vihar, Mundka, Wazirpur, Jahangirpuri, R K Puram, Rohini, Punjabi Bagh, Okhla, Bawana, Vivek Vihar, Narela, Ashok Vihar and Dwarka for control of pollution from hotspots.

Further, the Chief Minister said to prevent stubble burning, bio-decomposers will be applied in the fields in Delhi. Citing data from last year, the Chief Minister said that there has been a 30 per cent reduction in stubble burning in areas around Delhi.

Taking a dig at the Kejriwal government's winter action plan, the Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva termed it a "copy-paste" job while the Leader of Opposition In Delhi



Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bihuri called it an eye wash, nothing else. Almost two months from now, the national capital of the country is likely to be engulfed in thick smog, as the trend has shown over the past few years with the onset of winter months and post Diwali celebrations.

The winter action plan primarily focuses on preventing crop residue burning, dust pollution, vehicular and industrial emissions, open burning of garbage, regulating firecrackers, tree planting, ensuring effective implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), managing e-waste and fostering collaboration with neighbour-

ing states, Kejriwal said. Thirteen teams have been formed to implement these action plans at the identified air pollution hotspots.

"To combat crop residue burning, the Delhi government successfully implemented a free bio-decomposer technique in the past three years, which has yielded positive results. Last year, we treated 4,400 acres of farmland with the bio-decomposer method. This year, we will use it on 5,000 acres of both Basmati and non-Basmati rice fields, all free of cost," Kejriwal said.

The chief minister also announced an anti-dust campaign from October 9. It

includes measures such as the installation of dust control equipment at all sites exceeding 500 square metres, with real-time monitoring available through a web portal.

Kejriwal shared that 591 teams have been set up to ensure strict compliance with dust control norms, with 530 water sprinklers and 258 mobile anti-smog guns deployed to combat dust pollution.

To tackle vehicular pollution, 385 teams have been formed to check Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates and enforce the ban on 10-year-old diesel and 15-year-old petrol vehicles. The city government has identified 90 congested roads where teams will be deployed to manage traffic and inform commuters of alternative routes.

The government will also deploy 611 teams to prevent the open burning of waste. An additional 66 teams will ensure that industrial units do not use unauthorised or non-compliant fuels.

Starting from October 3, a "Green War Room" will be operational 24x7 to monitor environmental indicators. A nine-member expert team has

been assigned to analyse reports and plan future actions based on the gathered data.

This year, Delhi has set a target to plant 52 lakh trees and plants under the tree planting campaign. In the first phase, about 75 per cent, or 39.48 lakh trees and plants, have already been planted. The second phase of will commence on October 15. Additionally, the New Delhi Municipal Council aims to plant 50 lakh trees, he added.

The Chief Minister announced that e-waste generated in Delhi will be collected and processed in 20 identified zones. After proper disposal, all electronic waste in Delhi will be scientifically processed. The Delhi Government will also organise a "Run Against Pollution" to raise environmental awareness among the people and campaigns to check vehicular pollution and the burning of firecrackers.

The BJP, however, blasted the Kejriwal government over the action plan, calling it a "copy-paste" job. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, said, "Arvind Kejriwal's winter action plan is just a show. Kejriwal did not do anything about pollution control.

Diesel generators allowed for emergency services

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As a one-time exception, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has now permitted DG Sets for all capacity ranges, to be run only for emergency services in the National Capital Region NCR, even under periods of restrictions under the GRAP only up to December 31.

DG sets deployed for emergency services are also required to install / adopt appropriate means for emission control in the intervening period and with effect from January 1, 2024, the Government said in a release.

Such DG sets shall be permitted to operate in the NCR, strictly subject to adherence to the stipulated schedule / measures for emission control.

The Commission, from time to time, observed and has sensitised all stakeholders that amongst other contributors, large-scale use of diesel generating sets is a major contributing factor for deterioration of air quality in the region.



To this end, the Commission, since February, 2022 and from time to time, thereafter, has issued Directions, Orders and Advisories for control of emissions from such DG sets and their regulated operations.

The decision comes as a relief for sectors dependent on uninterrupted power supply as it extends the deadline previously set for a complete ban on diesel generator sets.

The nine categories benefiting from this temporary reprieve include commercial and residential complexes employing

elevators, escalators and travellers as well as medical facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes using critical medical equipment. Railway services and stations, along with metro services, airports and interstate bus terminals, have also been granted the exemption.

Sewage treatment plants, water pumping stations, projects of national significance concerning national security, and services related to telecommunications, information technology and data management can also operate diesel generator sets during this period.



₹20 crore gold heist: Chhattisgarh Police arrests 2

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Police has arrested two people in connection with a ₹20-crore burglary from a jewellery store in New Delhi earlier this week and recovered around 18.5 kg of gold and diamond ornaments from them.

A joint team of officials from the anti-crime and cyber unit and the Civil Line police station in Bilaspur district carried out the operation while probing a series of thefts in Bilaspur city, Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh said.

Those arrested have been identified as Lokesh Srivas, who is allegedly involved in seven thefts in Bilaspur, and Shiva Chandravanshi, he said. Acting on a tip-off about Srivas being present in Kawardha town of Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district, the team conducted a raid there on Wednesday and arrested Chandravanshi along with ornaments worth ₹23 lakh, he said. By that time, Srivas had managed to escape, the SP said.

The team then tracked down Srivas to a house under the Smritinagar police station jurisdiction in Durg district and recovered 18.5 kg of gold and diamond jewellery and ₹12.5 lakh in cash from him,

Singh said.

Investigation revealed that the jewellery was stolen from a store in New Delhi, he said, adding a team of the Delhi police has also arrived in Chhattisgarh and further investigation into the matter is underway. Multiple teams were formed to work out the case and to effect the recovery. Hundreds of CCTV cameras were examined which revealed that one suspect carrying a backpack was found entering the adjoining building on Sunday night, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast Delhi) Rajesh Deo said.

During investigation, on the basis of inputs received from Chhattisgarh Police on Thursday, Srivas was identified as the prime suspect in the case. The photograph of the accused was collected which was matched with the suspect who was seen entering the adjoining building on Sunday and exiting on Monday evening, the DCP said.

As Srivas is a resident of Kabir Dham, Chhattisgarh, efforts were made to identify his mode of transport. Based on the technical surveillance, it was revealed that the accused had booked a bus from Delhi to Sagar. The bus left ISBT, Kashmir Gate at 9 pm on Monday, he said.

DDA, NDMC to undertake cleanliness drives

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for "one hour of shramdaan for swachhata," on October one, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) will undertake cleanliness drives all over the city.

Under the Swachhata Hi Sewa Pakhwada, NDMC will organize 356 events on October one for one hour with the involvement of 32 Schools, 65 Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), 41 Market Traders' Associations (MTAs), 03 Herit-

age Places, 06 Religious Places, 16 Vegetables and Fruits Markets/Hotels/Clubs, 103 Parks, 20 Slums, 65 NGOs and other stakeholders.

The NDMC appealed to citizens and visitors of its area to donate one hour for cleanliness and participate in the mass movement on October 1st at 10 am.

To facilitate the successful execution of these events, NDMC have designated nine higher level officers of HoD level as Nodal Officers to conduct various events during 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' Pakhwada in liaison with RWAs, MTAs,



Sanitation, Horticulture and Civil Engineering Departments of NDMC.

The main Swachhata Event will be organized in all Colony Parks / Gardens and Markets in

NDMC area. The Nodal Officers directed to inspect and engage with RWAs, MTAs, Slums, Commercial areas and citizens of the local area, Sanitation, Horticulture and

Civil Engineering Departments for the "Clean Your Park/Garden & Markets" activities during the Pakhwada.

All Nodal Officers for Swachhata Pakhwada were also directed to submit a report at the end of the events on plastic waste collected, Constructions and demolition waste collected, green waste collected, square meter or area of park cleaned, numbers of citizens participated in the cleaning of the park and other activities in NDMC area.

'Swachhata Hi Sewa' fortnight is being organised between September 15 and

October two and Swachh Bharat Diwas to be celebrated on October two. The theme of Swachhata Hi Sewa for 2023 is "Garage Free India" with focus on visible cleanliness.

The DDA will conduct a massive cleanliness drive at various locations of Delhi on October 1 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. with general public and RWAs as a tribute to Father of the Nation.

In the areas under its jurisdiction, DDA regularly conducts cleanliness drives as it is essential for physical and mental well being of the residents of Delhi.

Vigilance seeks tour details of Kejriwal's Private Secretary



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of misusing the office by securing pay and perks beyond the limits, the Directorate of Vigilance has sought details from the General Administrative Department (GAD) regarding tour details of Bibhav Kumar, Private Secretary to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the last five years. The vigilance department has also sought details relating to the amenities and facilities availed by Kumar during travels.

In a note, Special Secretary (Vigilance) YVVJ Rajasekhar said many officers of Delhi government have complained that Kumar has been indulged in passing instructions at the behest of the chief minister.

"He is indulging in passing instructions allegedly on the behest of Chief Minister. He is also insisting that the officer should disclose all the infor-

mation to him in the first instance before meetings. It was alleged that he is issuing instructions to various officers without any written directions. It is also alleged that Kumar, is directly instructing the engineers of Public Works Department and very often directly supervising their work and influencing and pressuring the engineers/officers," reads the note.

The note further stated that it is also alleged that he is misusing the office by securing pay and perks beyond the limits prescribed by law and it is also alleged that he was staying in extremely costly and extravagant luxury suits while on tour.

"In this context, General Administration Department, Delhi government may kindly provide the tour details undertaken by Kumar in the last five years along with the permissible TA/ DA and so the actual benefits taken by him with or

without any legal sanction. Beside this, GAD may also kindly provide the details relating to the amenities/ facilities availed by him beyond his eligibility and entitlements with or without permission of the Competent Authority," Rajasekhar said in the note.

The note further pointed out that action taken report pertaining to allotment of quarter to Kumar is still pending with the Public Works Department.

It has earlier directed the PWD to stick to house allotment rules and allot only the mandated category of quarters i.e., Type IV to Kumar after cancelling the Type VI bungalow currently allocated to him "illegally". The department observed that a Type VI bungalow has been allotted to Kumar illegally in violation of Delhi Allotment of Government Residences (General Housing Pool) Rules against Type IV accommodation for which he is eligible.

The Vigilance Department in a note had stated that it is established that the PWD has to follow the extant rules and in this case the allotment rules stipulates that Kumar is eligible only for Type-IV accommodation since it is out of turn. Whereas, Kumar contrary to the extant rules occupying a Type-VI accommodation (bungalow) which was allotted from the Pool of Delhi Jal Board.



20 AAP leaders join Congress

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 20 AAP leaders and office-bearers from Northeast Delhi joined the Congress on Friday, with more expected to follow suit in the coming days. More than 20 people, including former Delhi Congress secretaries Kuldeep Bhati and Yogendra Bhati and block ex-president Mahendra Kumar, joined the party from the AAP, the Delhi Congress said in a statement.

Arvinder Singh Lovely, the Congress' Delhi unit chief, had earlier exhorted leaders and workers who left the party to return to its fold. Speaking about the returning functionaries, a senior Congress leader said more are expected to join in the coming days.

Asked if the move will affect the equation of the opposition INDIA bloc, the senior leader told PTI that the

Congress will carry out work to strengthen itself in the national capital. "The decision on the alliance will be taken by the party's high command and we will be abide by it.

As a political party, we are supposed to take measures to strengthen and revamp ourselves and we will continue to do that," the senior party member said.

Lovely alleged that both the BJP and the AAP have "halted the development work" in the national capital.

"Due to the fight between the BJP and the AAP, many major development projects have been put on the backburner. The BJP's agenda is to create hatred and animosity in society," he said.

"The AAP, on the other hand, is running away from its own responsibility by blaming the BJP for halting all development works," Lovely alleged.

Doctor honoured for passion for disability justice



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While medicine may be his first love, and vocation, the passion of this city doctor extends to disability and for his unwavering commitment.

Dr Satendra Singh has been recognised with a national award. Dr Singh is a professor of Physiology at Delhi's prestigious University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital. Dr Singh received the NCPEDP-Mphasis Universal Design Awards 2023 from Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities ((DEPwD) on Thursday.

Dr Singh, who contracted polymyelitis very early in life, embodies this spirit of dedication and advocacy, particularly in the realm of disability justice, and for his relentless efforts and unwavering commitment, he has been honored with the prestigious NCPEDP - Mphasis Javed Abidi Public Policy Award 2023 this year.

Modi to lay foundation of Telangana projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Assembly elections to five States barely couple of months away, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Telangana on Sunday where he will lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the nation multiple developmental projects worth more than Rs 13,500 crore and thereafter expected to visit the other poll-bound States Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh in the same week.

Modi will reach Mahabubnagar district, where he will dedicate to the nation and lay the foundation stone of multiple developmental projects worth more than Rs 13,500 crore, in important sectors such as road, rail, petroleum and natural gas and higher education.



road projects that are part of Nagpur-Vijayawada Economic Corridor, including the 108 km long four-lane access controlled greenfield highway from Warangal to Khammam section of NH-163G and 90 km long four lane access controlled greenfield highway from Khammam to Vijayawada section of NH-163G.

During the programme, the prime minister will also flag off a train service through video conferencing, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

These road projects will be developed at a total cost of about Rs 6,400 crore, the statement said.

In a step that will provide impetus to the prime minister's vision of development of modern road infrastructure across the country, foundation stone and dedication to nation of multiple road projects will be done during the programme, it said.

The projects will reduce travel distance between Warangal and Khammam by about 14 km; and between Khammam and Vijayawada by about 27 km, it said.

Prime Minister Modi will also dedicate to nation a road project -- four laning of 59 km long Suryapet to Khammam section of NH-365BB.

Built at a cost of about Rs. 2,460 crore, the project is a part of Hyderabad - Visakhapatnam Corridor and is developed under Bharatmala Pariyojana. It will also provide better connectivity to Khammam district and coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh, the statement said.

Prime Minister is also expected to visit Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh on October 2, Chhattisgarh on October 3 and on October 5 to Rajasthan again.

Elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram are likely to be held by November, this year. A team of Election commission is currently visiting Rajasthan to oversee the poll preparations there.

Women's quota Bill receives Murmu's assent

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the women's reservation bill which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State assemblies. According to a law ministry notification issued on Friday, the President gave her assent on Thursday. Now, it will be officially known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act.



According to its provision, "It shall come into force on such date as the central government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint."

During a special session of Parliament earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had described the law as "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam". The Constitution amendment bill was passed by the Lok Sabha with near unanimity and the Rajya Sabha with unanimity.

The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period. While there is quota within quota for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women, the opposition had demanded that the benefit be extended to Other Backward Classes.

There have been several efforts to pass the bill in Parliament since 1996. The last such attempt was made in 2010, when the Rajya Sabha had passed a bill for women's reservation, but the same could not be passed in the Lok Sabha. Data shows that women MPs account for nearly 15 per cent of the Lok Sabha strength while their representation is below 10 per cent in many state assemblies.

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BSF recovers drone with heroin bottle in Amritsar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Friday said it recovered a drone along with one bottle attached (filled with suspected heroin), from the paddy fields in the area falling near Rajatal village in Amritsar district of Punjab.



The recovered drone is a Quadrocopter (Model - DJI Mavic 3 Classic, made in China) and the gross weight of the recovered heroin is 0.545 Kg.

On Friday, during afternoon hours, on specific input of BSF, search operation was carried out by the BSF and Punjab Police, near the border fence near Rajatal in Amritsar, the BSF said in a statement.

on the basis of revelations by the apprehended, two packets of narcotics, suspected to be heroin (gross weight 700 gms, were recovered from the farming fields of Daoko.

On Tuesday, the BSF along with the Punjab police apprehended a drug smuggler and recovered narcotics.

The BSF foiled two attempts of smugglers to smuggle narcotics via drone. Drones from across the border have acquired a menacing proportion for gunrunning and smuggling of drugs along the bordering States.

On September 26, the BSF noticed the intrusion of a suspected drone near Daoko village in Amritsar in the afternoon.

The Centre is scouting for anti-drone technologies to counter the drone menace and secure its frontiers along Pakistan.

Further, at about 3.45 PM,

Besides Punjab, drone sightings have been reported from Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan.

ED attaches assets worth ₹2.84 crore in scholarship scam



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has provisionally attached properties worth Rs 2.84 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 'Post matric Scholarship Scam'.

The properties were attached by the Lucknow Zonal Office. The attached assets include seven plots worth Rs 76,83,000 in the name of Syed Ishaq Hussain Jafri, one flat worth Rs 52,00,000 in the name of his wife Rachna Jafri, two plots worth Rs 76,55,000 in name of Praveen Singh Chauhan and one plot worth Rs 24,00,000 in the name of his wife Hema Singh, one plot worth Rs 35,50,000 in the name of Ram and Shyam Educational Society purchased by Ravi Prakash Gupta and balance Rs 19,69,000 in the bank account of Vikram Nag.

The ED initiated investigation in this case on receipt of intelligence and subsequent registration of FIR dated March 30 by Uttar Pradesh Police (Hazratganj police station) on the basis of information shared by ED.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanhalli Hosur Main Road Bangalore- 560068

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	C Balaji/ C Jyothi/ No.20 4th Cross LIC Colony Bangalore- 560022/ LBBNG00005595205	(As Described In The Loan Document/ Property Document Covering All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Site No.6 (Old No. 21) Bearing BBMP Katha Pld No.2-72-6, Situated At 17th Cross Road, Ward No.2, Jalahalli Muthyalanagar, Bengaluru, Now Within Limits of Bbmp, Measuring East To West 30 Feet and North To South 40 Feet Totally Measuring 1200 Square Feet Together With Building Consisting of Ground, First And Second Floor Total Built Up Area Approximately 1650 Square Feet, And Bounded On: North: Road; and South: Private Property Old (Site No.34), New No 16 East: Private Property Old (Site No.22); New No 05 West: Private Property Old (Site No.20); New No 07	31/08/2023 Rs. 85,03,005.00/-	10/06/2023

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

Date : September 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regd. Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vadodra 390007
Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra- Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai 400051

Branch Office: ICICI BANK LTD. SCO 143 A, 2nd & 3rd Floor, City Emporium Industrial Area Phase 1, Chandigarh (UT), 160002

A notice is hereby given that the following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non Performing Assets (NPA). The notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses as provided to the bank by them, that in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	LUPNP0004265339/ Ankur/ Merox 10 It Solutions Pvt Ltd/ B-601, Sector-62/ It Park Noida-1 Up/ Noida- 201301	HEXA/ XTA/ HEXA/ UP14DD8826	02-Aug-2023 Rs. 10,95,372/-	11-Jul-2022
2.	LAYGR00044109411/ Dhanraj Dagar/ 173 Ram Nagar Colony/ Jaroda Jagadhri Yamunanagar/ Delhi/ Delhi- 135001	SCORPIO/ S11/ SCORPIO/ HR02AV1268	09-Aug-2023 Rs. 9,97,194/-	30-Jun-2023
3.	LASNPO004603442/ Greenbook Verve Private Limited/ Mohit/ Ground Floor Kh No 75/2 Kapashera/ New Delhi/ South/ Delhi-110037	NEXON EV/ XZ PLUS/ NEXON EV/ DL8GD3514	09-Aug-2023 Rs. 13,87,292/-	08-Jun-2023
4.	LVR0H00040773861/ Shree Shyam Handloom Industry/ Mohit/ Near Happy Model School Shop No. 1/ House No. 1352/3 Gall No. 06/ Rajeev Nagar/ Gurgaon- 122001	10.59/ 10.59/ 10.59/ HR63D1322	03-Jul-2023 Rs. 5,99,149/-	13-Sep-2022
5.	LATHR00038227157/ Sooraj J/ KARUMATHIL HOUSE KARIKKAD VIA/ KUNNAMKULAM PORKULAM AKKIKAVU/ DELHI/ DELHI_ 680519	SANTRO/ SPORTZ/ SANTRO/ KL48M6750	05-Sep-2023 Rs. 2,43,741/-	13-Feb-2023

The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (where ever applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of issuance of notice U/s. 13 (2), failing which further steps will be taken after expiry of 60 days from the date of issuance of notice U/s. 13 (2) as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : September 30, 2023
Place : Delhi NCR
Sd/- Authorised Officer
For ICICI Bank Ltd.,

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700020 CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Mukut Ray Choudhury/ Sobha Ray Choudhury/ Roopak Roy Choudhury/ Indrani Bhattacharjee/ Sc 3 Unit 3 Khavela Nagar Bhubaneswar Khurda Orissa Bhubaneswar- 751001/ LBBBS00003869761/ LBBBS0000424646/ LBBBS0000386977	Plot No.3 (Soc) Kharvelanagar, Unit III, Revenue Plot No.116, Khata No.367, Mouza Kharvela Nagar-1, P.S. New Capital, Bhubaneswar, Orissa (admeasuring an Area of 2700 Sq.ft. and 0.060 Dec.	August 03, 2023 Rs. 2,37,29, 078/-	03/06/2023
2.	Rajmani Kumar/ Sabnam Kumar/ O Radhe Shyam Prasad Kisan Colony Phase 2 Near Beur Akhara Anishabad Patna Bihar Patna- 800002/ LBPTN00005314853/ LBPTN00005314851	Khasra Survey Plot No.59 (Part), Thana Code 113, Thana No.33, Touzi No.5070, Khata No.72, Patna Municipal Corporation, Ward No.7, Mouza Beur, Mausam Mohalla, Kisan Colony, Thana Pulwari Shariff, Sub-registry Pulwari Shariff, Sadar Registry Office and District Patna, Bihar (admeasuring an Area of 1772 Sq. Ft. or 4.0679522 Decimal.	August 29, 2023/ Rs. 2,22,08, 271/-	12/06/2023

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

Date : September 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Danish urges PM to condemn Bidhuri's behaviour

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a row over BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's derogatory remarks in the Lok Sabha against him, BSP MP Danish Ali on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make a public statement condemning Bidhuri's behaviour and ensure "suitable punishment" to the south Delhi MP.

Noting that the Modi was not present in the House, Ali claimed that Bidhuri used "inappropriate language" when referring to the Prime Minister during his address. Ali said he believes that as the Leader of the House in Lok Sabha, it is the PM's responsibility to ensure free speech and wellbeing of all Members of Parliament, irrespective of political affiliations.

"I raised an objection to the use of such language in relation to the Prime Minister, even if it was in a quotation. It is evident from the House proceedings that none of the members from the ruling party objected to my stance against the use of unparliamentary language directed at you," Ali said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred the complaints lodged by several MPs on the issue involving BJP member Bidhuri's use of objectionable words against BSP's Ali to the Privileges Committee.

In a letter to the prime minister, Ali also demanded that he be provided enhanced security in view of an "escalation of threats" against him. The recent incident during the special session of Parliament was not just an attack on him as an individual but an attack on the "very essence of democracy", Ali said.

Expressing grave concern as a Member of Parliament over



the "recent shameful events" that occurred on the floor of the House, the BSP leader called on the prime minister, as the Leader of the House, to take note of the incident.

"As you must be aware, the situation has significantly worsened since September 21, 2023, and it has cast a shadow over the parliamentary decorum and democratic functioning of our esteemed House of which I am privileged to be a member," Ali said in his letter

which he released to the media. "In your capacity as the Leader of the House and the Prime Minister of our great nation, I trust that you would find it deeply concerning that MP Ramesh Bidhuri resorted to using unparliamentary and abusive language," Ali said.

"However, when I rose and pointed out to Bidhuri's use of unparliamentary language towards you, he got rattled and reacted strongly, possibly realising his mistake. He began making highly offensive attacks against me on the floor of the House to divert the attention of the House," the BSP MP said.

Ali then pointed out some of the objectionable and derogatory words Bidhuri had used against him, saying that the BJP MP displayed a complete disregard for the high decorum of the House and claimed that he verbally

threatened him. Ali said that members like BJP MP Nishikant Dubey have even gone as far as to disseminate "absolute falsehoods" against him by asserting that he made certain remarks which provoked Bidhuri when it is clear that those remarks were made by the BJP lawmaker himself during his address.

Bidhuri's remarks targeting Ali during a discussion on the success of the Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission last Thursday sparked a furore, with opposition leaders calling for stringent action against the BJP MP.

Opposition parties have rallied around Ali and targeted the BJP on its MP's remarks. Several members of the Congress, TMC and NCP among others have written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking the strictest action against Bidhuri.

No glorification of toppers among guidelines to curb suicides in Kota

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

With suicide cases of competitive exams aspirants remains unabated in the coaching hub Kota in Rajasthan, the State government has finally woken up to the cause and issued guidelines to contain the worrisome issue. The Rajasthan Government Guidelines for Coaching Institutes notes no glorification of toppers, results of routine tests to be kept confidential, no segregation of students in special batches based on their ranks and a policy for easy exit and refund within 120 days are among the recommendations.



District collectors have been asked to sensitise all stakeholders in their respective areas and ensure that the guidelines are followed. This year has seen the highest number of student suicides -- 26 so far -- with two ending their lives within a gap of a few hours on August 27 and the latest was on Thursday.

According to official figures, 26 students have committed suicide in Kota this year, the highest ever for the country's coaching hub. Last year, the figure was 15.

There is a set of other recommendations for institutes to ease mental pressure on the students such as facial recognition to prevent faking attendance, mandatory weekly holidays, not holding exams on the day after a holiday and a code of conduct for faculty and hostels.

"Coaching institutes should not encourage students below Class 9 to take admission. They should give admission after screening tests and counselling to assess their interest. If any registered student below Class 9 wants to leave, the institute should provide them a full refund in 120 days," the guidelines state.

The nine-page guidelines have been issued days after the state government set up a 15-member committee headed by Education Secretary Bhawani Singh Detha to examine the issue after record student suicides were reported

dedicated portal, to be developed soon by the state government. The guidelines have a provision for "easy exit and refund policy" within 120 days if students and parents feel any inconvenience and uneasiness.

It also directs the institutes to decide the batches alphabetically instead of the students' ranks and not to shuffle and segregate them in the middle of the course based on performances in the weekly assessments.

Flyer suffers burns after crew member spills coffee on her

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A passenger onboard an Air India flight from the national capital to San Francisco earlier this month suffered burns after a cabin crew member accidentally spilled coffee on her, and the airline has apologised for the incident.

The passenger took to social media to narrate her experience, saying "Air India delivered distressing experience that took a harrowing turn when flight attendant spilled hot water on my leg".

"I was travelling from New Delhi to SFO on Flight AI 173 with my 4-yr-old son and 83-yr-old mother-in-law. The flight lasted approximately 16 hrs, and it was nothing short of a nightmare," the passenger said in a long thread posted on social media platform X on September 27.



The passenger claimed that she was in excruciating pain and that screamed and cried for help, and that after some time, a physician on the plane offered assistance.

The physician diagnosed the "injury as a second-degree burn and attempted to provide care. However the flight lacked essential medical supplies, and the treatment was far from ideal I endured severe pain for nearly two hours in flight with no pain medication or proper first aid kit available," the passenger said in the thread.

"We sincerely regret the unfortunate incident that occurred on our flight AI 173 operating Delhi-San Francisco on 20 September 2023. One of our cabin crew members accidentally spilled coffee on a guest during service," an Air India spokesperson said in a statement on Friday.

While the passenger has claimed that the crew spilled hot water, the airline said coffee was spilled. The airline said the crew immediately administered first aid to the guest and paged for a doctor on board, who attended to the affected guest.

"We have expressed our sincere apologies to the guest, whom our teams have been in touch with to offer all further assistance, including medical care. We have taken serious note of the incident, and will ensure to retrain the crew member on our standard procedures to avoid such an incident in the future," the spokesperson said.

According to the passenger, upon landing, the paramedic team evacuated her from the plane, and that the crew did not attend to the family members, leaving them alone and unaware of what was happening.

Ramlila of Ramnagar begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Thousands of people watched attractive tableaux of Ksheer Sagar in a historic pond near old Durga Mandir on Thursday night. The internationally famous Ramlila of Ramnagar, a trans-Ganga area, began with the birth of 'Demon King' Ravana at Lanka on the occasion of Anant Chaturdarshi as per Hindu calendar (September 28). The Ramlila will end on Sharad Purnima with Rajyabhishek of Lord Rama (October 28). The present 'Kashi Naresh' Kunwar Anant Narayan Singh and the royal family members were present as per tradition. His father late Dr Prabhunagar Singh, a popular figure among the local masses and the former Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) till his death, always maintained the tradition by taking part in various local festivals, including Ramnagar Ramlila, Bharat Milap of Nati Imlai, Nag Nathaiya of Tulsi Ghat and others.

Ramnagar Ramlila drew global attention since UNESCO proclaimed the tradition of this Ramlila 'a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity' in 2005. Later, the Central government and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) produced a two-hour documentary entitled 'Ramlila'. Ramnagar Ramlila is still organised under the patronage of the royal family of the Banaras Estate, though funded by the state government since the abolition of Princely Estates. The unique feature of



The Ksheer Sagar tableaux near Durga Mandir pond in Ramnagar on the first day of Ramlila in Varanasi on Thursday night.

This Ramlila is the use of petromaxes for lighting at the stage instead of electric lighting and artists are selected on the basis of their loud voices as they do not use mikes. There are separate venues some of them are 1-2 kilometres away from each other for different shows. They are Janakpur, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Panchvati and Lanka apart from some smaller venues of some Rishis like Valmiki, Bharadwaj and others. This 31-day long Ramlila is known for its sets, dialogues, visual spectacle and permanent as well as temporary structures. Its uniqueness is the active participation of local people as when the marriage procession of Lord Rama is taken out, the audiences themselves become the 'baratis' and during the time of Ramas 'vanvas' (exile), the scene generally turns gloomy there.

There are many beliefs about the starting of this famous Ramlila in the first half of 19th century. According to one belief, it is said that once when Maharaja Udit Narain was seeing the Ramlila at Assi, the place where Goswami Tulsidas had penned 'Ramcharitmanas', he was very sad as his son and prince Ishwari Narain Singh, who had credit to take the Ramlila to new heights, was very sick. During the show an artist playing the role of Lord Rama gave a bead from his necklace to the Maharaja asking him to put it around the neck of his ailing son. The Maharaja did it and surprisingly his son showed improvement in his health. Later, the royal family itself started Ramlila in Ramnagar. According to another version, once Maharaja Udit Narain could not reach the

nearby village of Chota Mirzapur where two brothers, Bhonu and Bithal Sahu, had organised the Ramlila, on time. When he reached there the programme of Dhanushyagya had concluded. The incident frustrated the Maharaja and after returning from there he narrated the same to his queen. Later on the advice of the Maharani, the Maharaja started organising the same in Ramnagar.

There is one more belief that when Maharaja was going on a pilgrimage to Jagdish Dham, he stayed at Kharagpur. During his stay he had a dream that instead of visiting the 'dhams' he should start Ramlila himself. As Maharaja Udit Narain ruled the estate up to 1835, it is said that the Ramnagar Ramlila was probably started in the beginning years of 19th century.

Health dept intensifies drive to prevent spread of dengue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Health department has intensified its drive to prevent the spread of dengue in urban and rural areas of the district. Besides, people are also being made aware by telling them the methods of prevention. In this sequence, a health camp was organised by the Health department at Sahitya Naka, Gola Ghat in Ramnagar area on Thursday. About 117 people were given counselling in the camp out of which 77 people were tested for dengue (NS-1) and malaria in which no one was found positive. During this period, preventive measures and awareness work were carried out along with distribution of medicines as per requirement.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that the Health department has also made concrete arrangements to prevent the spread of dengue. "It is important for the public to take special precautions to avoid serious diseases and communicable diseases like dengue and malaria. For this, cleaning, anti-larva spraying and fogging work are being done in the city and rural areas," he said, advising the people that in case of cold, cough, fever, vomiting etc, they should get tested at government hospitals or health centres and take medicine only on doctor's advice. He said that all facilities are available at government health centres.



A doctor checking patients at Ramnagar in Varanasi on Thursday.

He also appealed to the people to cooperate in preventing the spread of this disease by not allowing water to accumulate in any street or locality. Be sure to take care of cleanliness of all water sources every Sunday.

Dr SS Kanojia, Nodal Officer and ACMO of Communicable Disease Control, said dengue mosquitoes breed with the monsoon. People are constantly being made aware to prevent the spread of dengue. Its symptoms

are high fever, headache and joint pain for the first three to four hours. Redness of eyes and fever lasts for two to four days and then gradually the temperature becomes normal. Along with fever, there is a lack of blood in the body. Body temperature increases and blood pressure also becomes much lower than normal," he said, advising the people that if anyone's body is affected due to any of these symptoms, then they should immediately go to a government health centre or

hospital and get tested and treated. Dr Kanojia said that so far this year 139 confirmed dengue (ELISA) patients have been identified in the district. Out of these 125 patients have recovered. The remaining are on treatment. No one is in serious condition. On the occasion, Dr CS Singh, Filaria Unit In-charge Dr Amit Kumar Singh, Filaria inspector Ajay Kumar Shukla, Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal, Sanjay Kumar Singh and domestic breeding checkers (DBC)s were present.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

PS to PM visits Banaras Locomotive Works, inspects workshop areas

Principal Secretary (PS) to the Prime Minister Dr PK Mishra visited Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Friday and inspected its workshop areas. In view of the stay of Dr Mishra at BLW Officers' Guest House, the General Manager (GM) of BLW Basudev Panda paid a courtesy visit there to meet the PS to the PM. On the occasion Joint Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, Deepak Agrawal, Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma and District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam were also present. The principal secretary visited various shops of BLW like Loco Frame Shop,



PS to PM Dr RK Mishra visiting BLW workshop in Varanasi on Friday.

Harness Shop, Loco Assembly Shop, Loco Test Shop and observed the works related to locomotive production. Besides, he also inspected the loco driver cab. During the stay of Dr Mishra, the GM gave detailed information about loco production apart from BLW's activities, manufacturing facilities, ongoing projects as well as production process and technical subjects. Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) SK Srivastava, Principal Chief

Material Manager (PCMM) Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Ranvijay, Chief Engineer (CE) VK Shukla, Senior Deputy General Manager (Sr DGM) Vijay, Chief Mechanical Engineer (SE) Neeraj Jain, Chief Electrical Engineer (Loco) Arun Kumar Sharma, Chief Design Engineer (Electrical Loco) PP Raju, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar along with other officers and employees were also present.

'Clean Competition Day' observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the directions of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of North Eastern Railway (Varanasi Division) Vineet Kumar Srivastava and Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar, 'Clean Competition Day' was observed here on Friday under the ongoing 'Cleanliness Fortnight' being run from September 16 to October 2. During this period, a campaign was launched to keep the station premises, trains, tracks, railway offices and colonies clean and a thorough inspection was conducted under the supervision of officers nominated by the DRM. Under the 'Clean Competition', an effort was made to create a sense of healthy competition for cleanliness. Appreciation letters were given to those units which were found clean regularly throughout the year. To stimulate the spirit of healthy com-



Children taking part in 'Clean Competition' at DRM Office in Varanasi on Friday.

petition, essay competitions on the topics of 'Cleanliness Fortnight', 'Save Water and Save Life' etc were organised at DRM office in Varanasi and other major offices, units and clubs of the Varanasi division of NER. A street play on cleanliness was also staged at Varanasi City station. Earlier, 'Clean Toilets and Environment Day' was observed under the ongoing 'Cleanliness Fortnight'. During the day the officers nominated by the DRM inspected the cleanliness of public toilets located in the station premises of Prayagraj Rambhag, Banaras, Varanasi City, Ghaziipur City, Ballia, Azamgarh, Belthara Road, Siwan, Chhapra, Bhatni and Salempur stations of Varanasi division (NER).

Awareness programme on World Heart Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

An awareness programme was organised by the Central Hospital in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) in association with the Popular College of Nursing and Paramedical Institute and Indira Nursing College on the occasion of World Heart Day here on Friday. The programme was inaugurated by lighting the lamp. A prayer was sung by the trainees of two nursing colleges. While inaugurating the programme, Dr Devesh Kumar, Principal Chief Medical Officer of BLW, said that a large number of people lose their lives due to heart attacks all over the world, and in India people below 30 years of age are also becoming its victims now. He said that it has become very important for everyone to be aware of their hearts. According to him, this year's theme of World Heart Day is 'Use Heart, Know Heart'. He appealed to all to adopt a healthy lifestyle to avoid seri-



World Heart Day being observed at BLW's Central Hospital in Varanasi on Friday.

ous heart diseases and suggested all to keep the heart healthy, control blood pressure, keep getting regular checkups done and consult a doctor as necessary. "Eat a balanced nutritious diet and do adequate physical exercise and do not let one's body become fatty, avoid smoking, get enough sleep and take the right treatment at the right time," he advised. While addressing the programme, Anand Kumar, Assistant Professor of Popular Nursing College, also spoke on the occasion. The college students

also made people aware about keeping a healthy heart by presenting a drama on exercise and proper lifestyle, and CPR. They also motivated the participants by practical demonstration. Dr SK Sharma, Geeta Kumari Choudhary, Anjana Todd, Sumit Kumar, Durgesh Nandan Srivastava, Sanjay Kumar, Kamla Srinivasan, Chandrakala Rao, Sita Singh, Usha Jaisal, Usha Devi, Ahilya Singh, Aarti and other paramedical staff of the hospital were present in the programme.

Rajbhasha: BLW GM honours employees, officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The prize distribution and closing ceremony of Rajbhasha Pakhwara (Fortnight) was held at Technical Training Centre (TTC) auditorium in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Friday under the aegis of Rajbhasha department. Speaking as the chief guest, the General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda said just as BLW is making records for its products, in the same way it is also moving on the path of continuous progress in the direction of use and dissemination of the Rajbhasha (official language).



He congratulated BLW on recently receiving the Railway Minister's Rajbhasha Shield. He also said that the city of Varanasi has been the centre of Hindi as many litterateurs gained fame at the national and international level through their works and breathed new life into the free-

dom movement. "Therefore, our responsibility becomes even greater to ensure 100 per cent use of the Rajbhasha in our day-to-day work," he said. Chief Rajbhasha Officer and Chief Mechanical Engineer (Service) Neeraj Jain gave detailed information about various pro-

grammes organised during the fortnight. A solo play 'Sant Kabir' was presented by Dr Ashta Bhujia Mishra, a retired employee of BLW and an expert in the drama genre. Thereafter, the GM honoured the employees and officers who did excellent work in the field of Rajbhasha by rewarding them. Principal Chief Materials Manager Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Prabir Kumar Saha, Principal CPO Ranvijay, Senior Deputy General Manager Vijay along with the heads of other departments were also present. The vote of thanks was given by Senior Rajbhasha Officer Dr

Sanjay Kumar Singh while the programme was conducted by senior translator Amlesh Srivastava. Earlier, under the auspices of Rajbhasha department of BLW, the quarterly meeting of BLW Rajbhasha Implementation Committee was held under the chairmanship of the GM Basudev Panda. Chairing it the GM said that Hindi is the language of the people and appealed to the officers to discharge their administrative works in Hindi. "The dreams of freedom fighters will be fulfilled by discharging the official works in Hindi so that the benefits of the development can also reach the common man," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Yadvinder Singh Dhull/ Bobin Dhull A/c No LBHS00001724766 H.No.1045 Sector-13 Hissar	House No.196 Block D, Omicron 1A, Greater Noida, Noida- 201301	22/08/2023 Rs. 11,62,836.52/-	09/07/2023

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

Date : September 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700020
CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

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.	Rupesh Kumar Singh/ Sudha Singh/ Qtr No. 67/F MB Road Sector 04 Rushap Vihar Saket Delhi Delhi- 110017/ LBMTI0005378477	Mouza- Dumri Tola Rudalpakadi, Khata No.- 66, Kharsa No. 824, Touzi No. 428, Thana No. 13, Thana Pipra Kothi, Anchal- Chakiya, Sub-Registry Chakiya, District- East Champaran, Bihar (Admeasuring an area of 1 Katha I.E. 5 ¾ Decimal/ Date of Symbolic 25.09.2023	April 21, 2023 Rs. 20,64,718/-	Delhi/ Bihar

The above-mentioned borrower/s/ guarantor/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 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/ NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Shubir Walter Abraham/ Shumir Oliver Abraham/ Edna Abraham/ LBDEL00005394144/ LBDEL00005394146	DDA Flat No. 1136, 3rd Floor, Pocket 1, Sector D, Category-C, Sfs- Cat-II, Sector D Along With Scooter Garage, Vasant Kunj New Delhi Delhi- 110070/ September 26, 2023	May 18, 2023 Rs. 1,41,18,636/-	Delhi & NCR

The above-mentioned borrower/s/ guarantor/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 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Neeraj Gupta, Malini Gupta, 812, G-3, Hig Flat, Shubham Apartment, Shalimar Garden Ex-1, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad 201005 A/c- LBDEL00001483876	Flat No 812/G-3, HIG, Ground Floor, Shubham Apartment-IV, Situated at Plot No. 812, Shalimar Garden Ex-1, Village Pasosna, Pargana Loni Uttar Pradesh Ghaziabad 201010	27/07/2023/ Rs. 8,28,878.38/-	08/11/2007
2.	Rajesh Chaudhary, Purnima Verma, AI Malona Textile LLC, Post Box No 31681, Sharjah, AI Nadha, 27401 A/c- LBDEL00001656738	Flat No. 4402, DDA Duplex, Ground and First Floor, Block B-5/6, Category- III, Vasant Kunj, Delhi- 110070	07/09/2023/ Rs. 5,93,29,397/-	08/11/2008

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

Date : September 30, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
Secured Creditor



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Simmering

Unrest spreads in Manipur after tragic killing of two students and AFSPA extension

Manipur, normally hailed domestically and globally for its scenery and vibrant culture, is again in the throes of turmoil following the tragic killing of two Meitei students. The murders, which occurred amid already ongoing widespread protests, have ignited anger and calls for justice among the local population. The bodies of Phijam Hemjit (20) and Hijam Linthoingambi (17) were discovered only recently since they went missing on July 6, 2023. Allegedly killed by Kuki militants, their photographs circulated widely on the internet: one showing their lifeless bodies and another showing them in a fearful state alongside two armed men. In response, thousands of students in Imphal took to the streets on September 26. The disappearance and murder of Hemjit and Linthoingambi had occurred during a period marked by ethnic violence in the State. A significant development in the wake of the violence was the extension of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

(AFSPA) for another six months in Manipur, though it is important to note that this extension excluded 19 police stations in the Imphal Valley and an area bordering Assam. The AFSPA extension has historically been a contentious issue in Manipur. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured of swift action against the students' murderers and nab the culprits at the earliest. In a significant development, a team from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), led by the agency's Special Director Ajay Bhatnagar, was dispatched to Imphal to investigate the alleged kidnapping and killing of the two students. This move came after the Manipur government handed over



the case to the CBI, hoping for a thorough and impartial investigation. The State Government has suspended the internet services in the state and the school and colleges have been shut.

Political reactions have been varied. Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge has asked the Prime Minister to sack Chief Minister N Biren Singh, terming him "incompetent". Indeed, the CM has miserably failed to douse the fire engulfing his State for five months now. It is now a national issue and a human crisis that must be resolved at the earliest. Many precious lives have been lost and still no tangible solution has been found either by the Government or Manipur's warring tribals. The State is in such a mess that it is casting doubts on the nation's ability to deal with tragic incidents laced with rights abuse. The world media has been rather critical of the Indian Government in how it dealt with the situation. It remains to be seen how people will react to AFSPA extension to deal with the situation. The tragic loss of two young lives should serve as a reminder of the urgent need for a peaceful and just resolution to the issues facing Manipur. The State's people and the Government should deal with the situation without any prejudice or electoral collateral.

PICTALK



Hindu devotees perform 'Tarpan' ritual for their ancestors on first day of 'Pitra Paksh', in Bhopal

'Sacred Groves' are vanishing fast

'Sacred groves' are fast disappearing in the country due to the erosion of traditional belief system which helped conserve them



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Vayalar Ramavarma, a leading poet had penned down some of the eternal romantic and revolutionary poems. 'Puzhakkal', 'Malakal', 'Poovanangal', 'Bhumikku Kittiya Sthreedhanangal' (English for Rivers, Mountains, Gardens, are the dowries bestowed on Mother Earth) was a song he authored for the 1969 blockbuster film 'Nadi' based on a story set on the banks of Periyar, Kerala's longest river. Vayalar wrote these lyrics much before the environmentalists and ecologists hogged the limelight.

Almost six decades later, what we see is the inhabitants of planet Earth, especially those in Bharath, squandering the entire dowry received by Mother Earth. India, which had nearly 40 per cent forest cover way back in the 1950s has destructed forever the evergreen forests, especially the Rain Forests in the country under the pretext of development. The sad truth is that there is neither forest nor development. Politicians plant hundreds of thousands of saplings on the birth anniversary of their leaders. But once the TV cameras and news photographers leave the spot, the saplings end up in dustbins! There is no system in place to take care of the saplings. If the number of saplings planted by the AIADMK cadres in Tamil Nadu on the occasion of party supremo Jayalalitha's birth anniversaries is any indication, the entire State would have become an eternal forest by this time.

The forest wealth of India is giving way to development under the pretext of infrastructure development, urbanisation, industrialisation and commercialisation. A group of parliament members from Kerala are agitating for a railway line to Sabarimala, the holy shrine atop the verdant Western Ghats which is open only during the festival season from November to January. The proposed rail track is all set to destroy hectares of forest which is known as sacred groves. B V Kumar, the former chief of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, popularly addressed as the country's super sleuth, who has undertaken a trip to the Western Ghats by foot, found to



his horror that high-quality cannabis is being cultivated atop the Anamalai Hills and it is to facilitate the transport of the "stuff" to Kochi and other places that the railway track is being demanded.

In addition to the destruction of forests, the plunderers and looters are out to destroy the sacred groves (mini forests) maintained and looked after by the local communities across the country. Sacred Groves are an important heritage of the country and can be seen from Surat to Silchar and Kashmir to Kanyakumari. These mini forests have an area of two to 25 hectares and are the repositories of the natural biodiversity of the region. These forests boast of rare medical plants, shrubs and trees in addition to other flora and fauna. Some of the groves are on the periphery of towns and cities. The local inhabitants literally adore and worshipped these groves and had declared them as no-go areas. Children were told stories linking these mini forests.

But an in-depth study by the Chennai-based CPR Environmental Education Centre, headed by Dr Nanditha Krishna has found that the sacred groves are being destroyed at an alarming rate by our own brethren.

The groves are a tribute to the local deities or tree spirits and the local population has installed clay statues of the Gods whom they worship as their saviours.

"The degree of sanctity accorded to the sacred groves varies from one area to another. In some forests, even the dry foliage and fallen fruits are not touched. People believe that any kind of disturbance will offend the local deity, causing diseases, natural calamities or failure of crops. For example, the Garo and the Khasi tribes of north-eastern India prohibit any human interference in the sacred groves. In other places, dead-wood or dried leaves may be picked up, but the live tree or its branches are never cut. For example, the Gonds of central India prohibit the cutting of a tree but allow fallen parts to be used," writes Dr. Naditha Krishna in her research paper. Dr Krishna, the great-granddaughter of C P Ramaswamy Iyer, lives in her ancestral home named "The Grove".

The groves are often associated with ponds, streams or springs, which support the water requirements of the local people. The vegetative cover helps in the recharging aquifers. The vegetation cover of the sacred groves improves

the soil stability of the area and prevents soil erosion. Although there has been no comprehensive study of sacred groves in the entire country, experts estimate the total number of sacred groves in India could be in the range of 100,000 - 150,000.

The threats to the groves vary from one region to the other and even from one forest to the other. However, the common threats identified are the disappearance of the traditional belief systems, which were fundamental to the concept of sacred forests. These systems and their rituals are now considered mere superstition. Encroachment has led to the shrinkage of some of the largest forests in the country. Many forests are suffering due to 'Sanskritisation' or the transformation of the primitive forms of nature worship into formal temple worship. Invasion by exotic weeds such as Eupatorium odoratum, Lantana camara and Prosopis juliflora is a serious threat to some groves. One need not sacrifice the scientific temper and secularist credentials to protect these groves. But consider them as armed guards of nature to save the land.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)



THE FOREST WEALTH OF INDIA IS GIVING WAY TO DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PRETEXT OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, URBANISATION, INDUSTRIALISATION AND COMMERCIALISATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEPLORABLE ACTS OF LYNCHING

Sir — This concerns the news report, "Divyang tied to pole, beaten to death on suspicion of theft" (September 28, 2023). Hate speeches incite mobs to seek easy prey, with the most vulnerable victims being daily wage earners and especially abled individuals. Tragically, Mohammad Isaar, the mentally ill son of a fruit vendor, suffered a gruesome fate when he was tied to an electric pole and beaten to death in the national capital, accused of stealing prasad. In February, Mohammad Faiyaz, another person with mental health issues, fell victim to a mob in Bihar's Samastipur.

The hate speech delivered in Parliament, given the location, is the proverbial icing on the cake of toxic rhetoric. Yet, it's just a small part of a much larger issue. According to Hindutva Watch's half-yearly report, the first half of 2023 witnessed 255 documented incidents of hate speech gatherings targeting Muslims. We must prevent Manipur's tragedy from engulfing all of India. Swift action is imperative against those who propagate hate speeches.

Sujit De | Kolkata

RESIGNATION CONTROVERSY

Sir — In a dramatic turn of events, well-known Manipuri actor Rajkumar Kaiku has resigned from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in protest of the handling of the four-month ethnic conflict in Manipur. His resignation came on the heels of the controversial extension of the Armed Forces Special Prevention Act (AFSPA) in Manipur. Kaiku's decision followed the tragic killing of two students, prompting him to send his resignation letter to the state leadership. Despite the BJP's attempts to retain him, Kaiku stood firm, blaming the state government for the ongoing turmoil in Manipur. Kaiku's departure marks a significant setback for the ruling party, reflecting the dire situation in the state.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Honouring India's shooting stars



Kudos to star performer Sift Kaur Samra, who secured a gold medal in the women's 50-meter rifle 3 positions event at the Asian Games. The men's 10m air pistol team's victory over the Chinese team marks a significant achievement, with Indian shooters amassing four gold, four silver, and five bronze medals. Their dynamic performance has inspired the youth, fostering a strong desire to bring honor to the nation

through sports. Both central and state governments are actively supporting these sports champions with financial rewards.

The shooters of India showcased exceptional skill and determination at the 2023 Asian Games, securing numerous remarkable achievements. India's shooting contingent delivered an outstanding performance, clinching a plethora of medals and establishing themselves as a dominant force in the sport. The shooters demonstrated remarkable precision and composure, securing gold, silver, and bronze medals across various events. Their achievements not only added to India's medal tally but also served as a source of inspiration for aspiring athletes across the nation. These remarkable feats reaffirm India's status as a powerhouse in the sport of shooting on the international stage and underscore the hard work and dedication of the athletes and their coaches.

PV Srinivas Sreelekh | Secunderabad

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

Sir — It is imperative to seek a political solution to the India-Canada confrontation that goes beyond the public's "assassination as a form of vengeance" mindset. Such acts not only fail to end terrorism or Khalistani sentiments but may inadvertently inspire them. While not all Sikhs support separatism, it is crucial to address and eradicate misguided Khalistani beliefs through education and information dissemination. The term "Sikh" itself signifies a "learner," and it is the duty of both the public and the Government of India to eradicate the Khalistani mindset by providing fair knowledge and valid points.

The Indo-Canada row has been a complex and sensitive issue, requiring careful diplomatic manoeuvring and cooperation from both nations. To foster resolution and maintain a harmonious relationship, it is imperative for both India and Canada to engage in dialogue, compromise, and seek common ground. First and foremost, diplomatic dialogue should take precedence. High-level talks between govern-

ment officials from both countries should be initiated to discuss the issues at hand. An open and respectful exchange of concerns and perspectives can pave the way for understanding and potential solutions.

Both nations should commit to finding mutually beneficial resolutions rather than escalating tensions. Human rights concerns must also be addressed constructively. Canada has expressed concerns about human rights issues in India, particularly in relation to the treatment of certain minority groups. India, in turn, has felt that Canada is interfering in its internal affairs. To resolve this aspect of the dispute, both countries can establish a platform for human rights discussions. Independent experts and international organizations could be invited to assess and monitor the situation, ensuring transparency and accountability on both sides.

Anmol Porwal | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Indo-France relations are on firm footing

New twists and turns mark the diplomatic ties between the two friendly nations but the relationship between India and France remain strong



POOJA KAPOOR

On September 9-10, 2023, India held the G20 Leaders' Summit at the recently opened Bharat Mandapam Convention Centre in Pagati Madan. India's accession of the G20 chair marks a crucial turning point in the country's development as a global leader. It excels in this role not only because of its pragmatic approach but also because of its philosophical outlook, which is reflected in the phrase "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam." The recent visit of French President Emmanuel Macron with Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit shows their diligent commitment to enhance defence cooperation. The India-France strategic partnership, fostered for more than two decades, exhibits its resilience through its close and friendly relations based on mutual trust, shared values, a commitment to international law and the UN Charter, a firm belief in multilateralism, and a shared desire for a stable multipolar world.



times by continuously showing that it is a staunch supplier and steady consort. Both nations have strived to deepen and expand their collaboration as the convolutions in the global geopolitical order have evolved over a period. One of the first nations with which India signed a civil nuclear agreement was France. It had provided the fuel for the Tarapur plant after the US stopped off supply in 1984. They inked a civil nuclear collaboration agreement in 2008, following the Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver, forming the basis for the construction of the French Extended Producer Responsibility reactors in India. Not only this but the Mirage also-2000 which has served as the primary multifunctional fighter and has proven itself time most conspicuously in the 1998 Kargil War has also been supplied

by France. Paris was also essential in preventing India from being too isolated in the non-proliferation system following the nuclear tests in 1998. France supports India's application for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council as well as its admission to the Nuclear Suppliers Group as a sign of growing collaboration. Recently, India had also agreed on the procurement of 26 Rafale M fighter jets and three Scorpene submarines.

MARITIME SYNERGY

Indian Ocean Region's stability and security are intimately concurrent with India's maritime safety. Concerning the Indian Ocean Region, India-France Maritime Security Cooperation has made great strides in recent years. India is a major force in the region with a 7500-kilometre-long coastline and a two-million-square-kilometre EEZ. Most of India's commerce is facilitated by the Indian Ocean region. France, on the other hand, belongs to the Indian Ocean Area because it has a sizable EEZ in addition to its ultramarine assets such as

the La Réunion Islands and Mayotte.

There are more than four thousand French military personnel deployed in the Indian Ocean, including Djibouti, Abu Dhabi, and other foreign territories. Both nations strive to guarantee peace and stability in the IOR because of their significant interests and have a history of successful cooperation and fruitful partnerships. In conclusion, the perception of shared characteristics and the potential for realising synergies and mutual benefits in particular domains serve as the foundation for French interest in India. The geopolitical similarities between France and India go beyond the surface. France has promoted inclusivity, cohesion, and unity in an international effort to address global concerns and create a more stable international order. It is grounded on both nations' fundamental belief in a multipolar world and the idea of strategic autonomy.

(The author has worked as assistant professor and writes on international relations; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

YOUR IMPERFECTIONS MAKE YOU UNIQUE...

All of us have an untapped potential, waiting to be unleashed



SAKSHI SETHI

Our mind is in an endless loop playing what we said and did over and over again. And if we find that one little mistake, then begins the torment of self-bashing. The individual wishes to have a time capsule to go back and make things right for themselves and others too as they fear what others will think about them and that they will be rejected and disliked in society. In other words, all of us seek to be socially perfect. Whereas in reality, odds are that no one even thought twice about goof-up but it's the anxious mind that won't let the individual see the truth. We all know that no one is perfect, but just knowing that, is not enough to make society let go of their desire to be perfect.

One must choose to let others see their real self rather than hiding behind a facade of perfection. "It's easier to be happy if we look beyond imperfections rather than seeking happiness by trying too hard to make everything perfect." Anonymous. A recent study by Harvard Business Review concluded that while perfectionism can improve performance, it can also result in elevated stress levels, depression and anxiety as perfectionists often catch their self-worth to their ability to perform perfectly. This is a sad and true reality.

Quietly often, individuals assume that perfection is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of goals. For ages, we all are loved only when we perform, achieve or do something that makes our clients, colleagues or even adults around us proud. And unfortunately, when something unacceptable or something not good enough is approved, we get punished, ignored or even criticized. Instead, it should be believed that goals are something that helps them move forward and not something that serves as a hindrance that keeps on reminding them what they lack. If love and affection depend on what we do and not who we are, we will of course end up being anxious and depressed in the long run. In today's fast-moving cruel society, it's really important to understand the flaws and imperfections that make an individual real.



Embracing imperfections is key to leading an authentic and fulfilling life. Each one of us probably has a personality trait or a physical feature that doesn't sit well with us. But, if one needs to be truly happy, one must strive for excellence and not perfection. In Japan, a centuries-old tradition – practising kintsugi (an art of mending broken ceramics with gold) as a metaphor for life. It teaches that broken places make an individual stronger and better than ever before. The main philosophy behind this art is not only to value imperfections but it's beauty too, and celebrate them equally.

By embracing the flaws and imperfections, one can create stronger and more beautiful pieces of art. Remember, in every one of us lies an untapped potential, waiting to be unleashed. The journey to success begins with a simple yet powerful choice to believe in self and the abilities.

One must dare to dream big, set audacious goals and push themselves beyond their comfort zone. That's where the true potential shines the brightest. Everyone is capable of achieving greatness. It's only to maximise the potential and turn aspirations into reality. Embrace your imperfections, in them one can find their beauty, strength and uniqueness.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

The timeless charm of 'Chaturanga'



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Chess has been part of societies across the world. Its roots can be traced to ancient India, where it was known as 'Chaturanga', a game simulating battlefield



In the world of sports and intellect, Chess, or the 'Game of Kings' as it is known, holds a special place. From prodigies like 18-year-old R Praggnanandhaa, or 'Pragg', Magnus Carlsen and Bobby Fischer to grandmasters like Vishwanathan Anand, Garry Kasparov, Anatoly Karpov and others, the game has evolved in the past two decades.

Chess has a rich and storied history that spans centuries. One of the most captivating chapters in the tale of chess's evolution can be found in India. From its origins as a courtly pastime for Indian royalty to becoming a globally recognized sport, chess in India has a remarkable journey that showcases both cultural influence and individual excellence.

Imagine the ancient kings and generals strategizing their military moves on the chessboard, the precursor to battles fought on the battlefield. Known as "Chaturanga" in ancient India, chess brilliantly simulated the four divisions of the Indian military: infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots. These divisions corresponded to the modern chess pieces of pawn, knight, bishop, and rook. The game wasn't just a pastime, but a mirror reflecting the art of war and strategy.

Intriguingly, the game's influence extended beyond the battlefield. The Mahabharata, a cornerstone of Indian epic literature, featured a chess match between the Pandava prince Yudhishtira and the deity Shiva, who had assumed the guise of a Brahmin. This match conveyed vital moral lessons, underscoring the importance of strategy, foresight, and decision-making in the Indian cultural context.

From its origins in India, chess embarked on an epic journey along the



THE 21ST CENTURY HAS WITNESSED SEVERAL REMARKABLE ADVANCEMENTS IN THE WORLD OF CHESS, FURTHER PROPELLING THE GAME'S POPULARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

(The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti; views are personal)

Silk Road, a network of trade routes connecting the East and West. It arrived in Persia in the 6th century, where it underwent significant modifications and earned the name "Shatranj." The allure of chess continued to grow as it travelled through the Islamic world and eventually reached medieval Europe, enchanting minds and shaping strategic thinking.

The Mughal Empire, which ruled over India from the 16th to the 19th century, played a significant role in the evolution of chess. The Mughal rulers, particularly Akbar, fostered an environment of intellectual and cultural exchange, not just playing the game himself, but also organizing grand chess tournaments with players of various backgrounds.

Fast forward to the 19th century, when chess underwent a metamorphosis. Standardized rules and international competitions emerged, leading to the crowning of the Austrian-American Wilhelm Steinitz as the first official World Chess Champion in 1886. Steinitz's groundbreaking contributions, including insights into positional play and the endgame, revolutionized chess strategy and elevated the game to new heights.

Germany's Emanuel Lasker, Steinitz's successor, was a polymath who brought innovation and adaptability to the chessboard. His 17-year reign showcased his exceptional skill and comprehensive understanding of chess dynamics, securing his place as a true legend.

Wikipedia mentions that one of the most influential figures in the revival of chess in India (read Asia) was Mir Sultan Khan (later settled in Pakistan from 1947 to 1966), a humble servant from British India who rose to become a formidable chess player. In an international chess career of less than five years (1929-33), he won the British Championship three times in four tries (1929, 1932, 1933), and had tournament and match results that placed him among the top ten players in the world.

The mid-20th century heralded a significant shift as the Soviet Union rose as a chess powerhouse and World Champions like Mikhail Botvinnik, Vasily Smyslov, and Tigran Petrosian emerged from the Soviet chess school, each contributing unique strategies and playing styles. However, it was the electrifying rivalry between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky during the 1972 World Chess Championship that captivated the world, with Fischer ultimately claiming victory and capturing the imaginations. The late 20th century brought the enigmatic Garry Kasparov into the limelight. Kasparov's tactical brilliance redefined chess strategy. His match against IBM's Deep Blue in 1997 etched his name in history, showcasing the intersection of human ingenuity and computational power.

Back home, it was Vishwanathan Anand, who went on to become India's first Grandmaster in 1988. Anand's incredible skill and strategic bril-

liance elevated him to the status of a chess legend. He would later become the World Chess Champion, a title he held from 2000 to 2002 and then from 2007 to 2013. Anand's successors, including P. Harikrishna, Vidit Gujrathi, and Koneru Humpy, have also made significant contributions to the world of chess.

The 21st century has witnessed chess's resurgence, thanks to technological innovations. Online platforms and apps have democratized the game, allowing players of all skill levels to engage, learn, and compete globally. Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning have transformed chess analysis and preparation, with engines like Stockfish, AlphaZero, and Leela Chess Zero providing unprecedented insights.

Beyond the game's intricacies, Indian cinema has shown the prowess of the game in various forms – style, strategy, crime and culture. For example, Satyajit Ray's "Shatranj Ki Khiladi" painted a vivid picture of the game's cultural significance. The film transported audiences to the era of nawabs and their obsession with the game, portraying chess as more than just a pastime.

Chess is a training ground for patience and perseverance. In a world consumed by the allure of mobile phones and digital screens, chess offers a refreshing and timeless escape – a game where history, culture, and innovation converge on a 64-square battlefield, making it timeless, vibrant and engaging.

Alarming rise in unemployment rates in Asia and the Pacific

The rising unemployment across the world can have serious consequences on the world economy and security

As per the recent report of ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Asia and the Pacific, the unemployment rate of young people aged between 15 and 24 years in Asia and the Pacific is estimated to have reached 14.9 per cent in 2022, which is the same as the global average. While that rate represents a decrease from the rate of the previous year (15.5 per cent), it remains higher than the pre-pandemic benchmark of 13.3 per cent in 2019.

Beyond the regional aggregate, there are important divergences between sub-regions and countries in the evolution of unemployment rates and other labour market indicators. In both Southern and Eastern Asia, youth unemployment



SUNIL GOEL



DIMPLE KHOKHAR

(Goel is a columnist and Professor of DoHE, GoMP and Khokhar is a research scholar at RIMT university; views are personal)

rates in 2022 are projected to be higher than the pre-pandemic benchmark by less than 1 percentage point, whereas in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the corresponding rate is projected to be higher by 2 percentage points. In Sri Lanka, which is currently experiencing balance of payments and sovereign debt crises, youth unemployment in the second quarter of 2021 was at 30.0 per cent, whereas in Vietnam, which is benefiting from diversification strategies of global value chains as COVID-19 lockdowns in China persist, the corresponding rate for the same quarter was 5.5 per cent.

Young men in the region face substantially higher unemployment rates (16.0 per cent) than young women (12.7

per cent). However, when examining a more comprehensive measure of labour underutilization, that is, the combined rate of youth unemployment and potential labour force (termed the LU3 rate), the gap between men and women diminishes, pointing to young women having higher potential labour force rates than young men.

The proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) also jumped in the region as a result of the pandemic, rising by 1.5 percentage points to reach 24.8 per cent in 2020 – higher than the global average of 23.3 per cent. Whereas NEET rates are almost 2.5 times higher for young women than for young men, the pandemic served to increase the NEET

rate among men (by 2.1 percentage points) more than among young women (a rise of 0.7 percentage points), thereby decreasing the gender gap in the NEET rate. This development was driven by trends in South Asia, where the male NEET rate increased by 2.7 percentage points compared to 0.9 percentage points for young women.

Deteriorating economic conditions in the first half of 2022 are likely to further increase the NEET rate among young people in the region, with potential long-term scarring effects on employment trajectories and incomes of affected individuals. The gender gaps in NEET rates are closely related to those in the labour force participation rate (LFPR) and the employment-

to-population ratio (EPR). Young women in Asia and the Pacific experience much lower LFPRs and EPRs: the LFPR for women in the region in 2022 is projected to be 26.3 per cent, compared to 46.6 per cent for young men, while 23.0 per cent of young women in the region are projected to be in employment compared to 39.1 per cent of young men. Southern Asia, at 29.9 percentage points, has the highest LFPR gender gap in the region.

In Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022, the ILO used a macro-econometric model to quantify the economic and employment impacts of a number of policy measures for promoting inclusive and sustainable green, digital and care transitions. The macro-econometric modelling simu-

lating the employment impacts of a package of green policy measures aimed at improving energy efficiency in buildings and appliances, decarbonizing electrical power generation through a shift to renewable energy, and expanding electric vehicles usage and the associated infrastructure (termed the "green scenario") could, by 2030, create an additional net 8.4 million jobs worldwide for young people aged 15-29 years relative to a "business-as-usual scenario", with Asia and the Pacific accounting for 5.8 million (or 69.0 per cent) of those jobs. Policy measures aimed at providing universal (90 per cent) internet broadband coverage (termed the "digital scenario") in the region are projected to lead to a net increase of 2.1 million jobs for

young people by 2030 relative to the baseline, accounting for a third of the global total. This lower global share compared to the green scenario is a reflection of the relatively smaller internet coverage gap in the region. Policy measures directed at increasing investments in health and social care provision and in education coverage with a view to meeting the relevant targets of SDG 3 (on health) and SDG 4 (on education) are expected to create an additional net 8.5 million jobs for young people in the Asia and the Pacific region by 2030 compared to the business-as-usual scenario. This represents almost half of the global total, highlighting the increase in care services coverage needed in the region.

Probe finds Imran Khan involved in orchestrating May 9 violence

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and several top leaders of his party were directly involved in orchestrating the unprecedented anti-government violence on May 9, a joint investigation team has informed an anti-terrorism court here.

A Joint Investigation Team (JIT) was constituted to probe the violence in Punjab province following the arrest of Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party in connection with a corruption case on May 9.

The JIT headed by DIG Operations

Imran Kishwar on Thursday submitted chargesheets against PTI leaders and hundreds of workers before an anti-terrorism court, reported the Dawn newspaper on Friday. According to Lahore police, Khan, 70, and over 900 other party leaders and activists named in the May 9 cases have been "declared guilty of serious offences", the report said.

In the chargesheets filed before the court, the prosecution alleged that the violent protests led by the suspects on May 9 were part of a planned conspiracy against the state.

It said over "400 pieces of video evidence, including speeches of the PTI chairman, proved that the attacks on military installations and premises in cantonment

areas were pre-planned".

A large number of PTI activists had attacked military installations, police vehicles, and other public and private properties in Lahore, according to the cases registered with the police. The vandalism at the Lahore Corps Commander's House (Jinnah House), Askari Tower, and the Shadman police station were some of the major incidents during the violence. "We have declared them prime accused in 12 out of the total 14 cases registered under the anti-terrorism act and other charges at Lahore's various police stations... [and] challans have been submitted in the ATC," the Dawn newspaper quoted DIG Kishwar as saying.

He said the JIT obtained "sufficient evidence" against the nominated persons, including Imran Khan, former Punjab governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema, former provincial min-

isters Mian Mehmoodur Rashid, Dr Yasmin Rashid, and others.

The digital and photogrammetric evidence as well as voice messages of the suspects "confirmed the allegations" levelled against them in over a dozen cases lodged at different police stations in the provincial capital, the DIG said.

According to the JIT report, Khan along with the cooperation of central, provincial and local leaderships, constituted this plan to push Pakistan towards civil war and the public was incited through fake and self-created stories, reported The Express Tribune. Following the arrest of Imran Khan by paramilitary Rangers on May 9, unrest broke out in Pakistan that saw the torching and vandalising of dozens of military and state buildings, including the Army headquarters in Rawalpindi and the ISI building in Faisalabad.

Nawaz Sharif to address rally on his return to Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif would appear in a court a day after addressing a rally at the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore upon his return from self-imposed exile in London on October 21, according to a media report on Friday. Sharif, the 73-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, will kick off the election campaign of his party after a rally at the Minar-e-Pakistan.

"After appearing at the rally and announcing the final manifesto of the party, Nawaz Sharif will appear in court the next day," the Pakistan Observer said quoting PML-N's Punjab president Rana Sanaullah. The announcement (by Sanaullah) comes a day after Pakistan's anti-graft body said it is reopening at least four corruption cases against Nawaz Sharif coinciding with his scheduled return to the country next month.



the path laid out by Nawaz Sharif." In the light of a Supreme Court ruling which struck down amendments made to the accountability laws by the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, led by Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is reopening four pending probes against Nawaz.

The cases are related to illegal plots and land allotment, dubious transfer of shares of his sugar mills and Toshakhana (national treasury gifts). Two cases relate to misusing his authority for allotting plots and illegal construction of a road in 1986 and 1998 respectively. The third pertains to the transfer of shares in illegal manners vis-à-vis a sugar mill owned by him while the fourth is related to Toshakhana wherein he is accused of taking luxurious vehicles from the national treasury in violation of rules, officials privy to the cases had told PTI.

Russia to keep funding Af

Islamabad (AP): Moscow will keep helping Afghanistan on its own and through the UN food agency, Russian officials said Friday as they hosted Taliban representatives for talks on regional threats.

The talks in the Russian city of Kazan came as Moscow is trying to maintain its influence in Central Asia even as it wages war on Ukraine. The discussions focused on regional threats and creating inclusive government, Russian state news agency Tass reported.

President Vladimir Putin's special representative for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov attended the gathering and said Russia is inclined to keep helping Afghanistan independently and through the World Food Programme.

A letter from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was read at the talks, accusing Western countries of "complete failure" in Afghanistan, saying they should "bear the primary burden of rebuilding the country."

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in mid-August 2021 as US and NATO troops were in the final weeks of their pullout from the country after 20 years of war.

Following their takeover, the Taliban gradually imposed harsh edicts, as they did during their previous rule of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, based on their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia. They barred girls from school beyond the sixth grade and women from almost all jobs and public spaces. No country has formally recognised the Taliban as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan.

The United Nations says that recognition is "nearly impossible" while the severe Taliban restrictions on women and girls are in place.

Moscow has since 2017 hosted talks with the Taliban and other representatives from other Afghan factions, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the former Soviet nations in Central Asia.

'Pak seeks \$11 bn aid from China, Saudi Arabia'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan is seeking around USD 11 billion from China and Saudi Arabia as part of efforts to fill external and domestic resource gaps so that the IMF bailout programme remains on track to ensure economic stability until an elected government is formed in the country, according to a media report on Friday.

It comes amid the caretaker government's push for expanding the tax net effectively to retail, agricultural and real estate sectors while continuing a crackdown on illegal currency movements.

The Dawn newspaper reported that this information was part of a detailed policy statement issued by caretaker Finance Minister Shamsad Akhtar before the Senate Standing Committee

on Finance and Revenue, presided over by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla in Islamabad on Thursday.

She said the government was currently working on an economic revival plan that would be presented to the caretaker prime minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar soon and shared with the Senate Standing Committee on Finance.

She said the caretaker government had a limited scope to undertake deep-rooted structural reforms but promised to deliver on reforms that were part of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme to ensure the disbursement of a USD 700 million loan instalment.

Talks with the IMF would begin by the end of October on this.

The IMF reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan

on a nine-month Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) of about USD 3 billion in June.

The finance minister said it was the government's priority to deliver on the IMF programme to ensure economic stability and continuity.

On the external financing gap, Akhtar said the country's financing needs were still higher, but with the joint efforts of all stakeholders, the government would be able to secure disbursements from the project pipeline and also revive some policy-based financing from multilaterals.

External flows would improve with the USD 700 million flows from the IMF. For net bilateral financing of USD 11 billion, China and Saudi Arabia had been requested along with a request for a Saudi oil facility, she said.

She deplored that even the

"To meet the external financing requirements, we are working to secure concessional funding from multilaterals (the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank) of USD 6.3 billion," she said in her written statement, adding that the IMF had already approved USD 3 billion and bilateral assistance of around USD 10 billion was also expected.

At the same time, Akhtar warned that a "key risk to external stability comes from the rise in international commodity prices," as Brent crude oil prices jumped to USD 95 per barrel in September, an increase of 27 per cent from USD 74 per barrel in June.

The public debt rose sharply over the last two years, mainly because of devaluations and interest rate hikes.

She deplored that even the

debt relief from G20 countries for the poor nations had also been consumed without ensuring high-return investments, the paper said.

She said the authorities were also working on amending laws to bring retail, agriculture and real estate into an effective tax net because no government could ever control twin deficits without doing this.

Akhtar said the caretaker government was seeking support from courts to get the pending cases resolved to generate an additional Rs 3 trillion.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) recently announced it would hold the election in the last week of January after finalising the setting up of electoral districts in light of the data of the census, which was held earlier this year.

'Probe into killing of Nijjar ongoing'

Washington (PTI): The killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar remains an "active and ongoing investigation," the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has said. Nijjar, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), was killed in Surrey, British Columbia on June 18. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020.

The killing of Nijjar, 45, is being investigated by the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) of RCMP. "We are aware of reports being made regarding the homicide of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. As this remains an active and ongoing investigation, I'm unable to comment on specific evidence collected by IHIT," IHIT spokesperson Sergeant Timothy Pierotti told PTI on Thursday. Meanwhile, the Guru

Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in Surrey, British Columbia where Nijjar was killed has launched an investigation into how The Washington Post newspaper was able to view security camera footage of the June killing.

"We've been told by the temple that the video is not for the media, the public because it's an ongoing investigation. That video won't be released to anyone. It's an ongoing investigation," Gurkeerat Singh, a spokesman for the gurdwara, told Canada's national news agency The Canadian Press.

Singh, however, said he has seen the video multiple times. "It wasn't something done randomly. These people are watching the movement of Hardeep Singh for a while and they know the direction he goes and how he exits the gurdwara," he said.

Bus overturns in England, killing two

London (AP): A bus carrying dozens of schoolchildren overturned on a highway near the English city of Liverpool on Friday, killing the driver and a 14-year-old girl, police said. The bus was transporting students from Calday Grange Grammar School and West Kirby Grammar School on the Wirral Peninsula, across the River Mersey from Liverpool.

Traffic on the M53 highway was blocked as police and other emergency services responded to the incident, which was reported shortly after 8 am. Two other occupants of the bus were taken to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool with serious injuries, while a number of other patients were taken to surrounding hospitals for treatment to minor injuries, North West Ambulance Service said.

Spain's Socialist leader gets a shot at becoming PM despite his defeat

AP ■ MADRID

Spain's acting centre-left Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez lost July's national election but now has a shot at returning to power after the leader of the country's conservatives failed for a second time Friday to get parliament's support for a new government.

In a vote in the Congress of Deputies in Madrid, the Spanish parliament's lower chamber, Popular Party leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo collected 172 lawmakers' votes in his favor to 177 against him, with one vote declared null and void.

That was roughly the same tally that he received two days earlier, in the first round of voting, and the defeat exhausted his chances of taking power, bar an exceptional turn of events. The Popular Party holds 137 seats in the Congress of Deputies, the most of any party,



up of 350 legislators from 11 parties, making the path to power difficult for any one of them and requiring them to strike deals with rivals.

If no government is in place by November 27, another national election will be held on January 14.

Friday's vote opened a door for Socialist leader Sánchez, whose Socialists placed second in the election, to possibly return to power if he can persuade smaller parties to back him.

Sánchez, 51, has been Spain's prime minister for the past five years and is the country's acting leader until a new government is formed.

His outgoing government has delivered bold policies in such areas as women's rights and climate change.

He called July's snap election after his party had a poor showing in local and regional elections

following the election.

But even with backing from the far-right Vox party's 33 lawmakers and two from small conservative rivals, it was not enough for Feijóo to win a simple parliament majority.

The outcome extended the political limbo of the European Union's fourth-largest economy. The July election produced a splintered parliament made

Biden offers warnings about Trump

AP ■ TEMPE (US)

President Joe Biden issued one of his most dire warnings yet that Donald Trump and his allies are a menace to American democracy, declaring Thursday that the former president is more interested in personal power than upholding the nation's core values and suggesting even mainstream Republicans are complicit.

"The silence is deafening," he said. During a speech in Arizona celebrating a library to be built honoring his friend and fierce Trump critic, the late Republican Sen. John McCain, Biden repeated one of his key campaign themes, branding the "Make America Great Again" movement as an existential threat to the nation's political system.

He's reviving that idea ahead of next year's presidential race after it buoyed Democrats during last fall's midterm election, laying out the threat in especially stark terms: "There's something dan-



gerous happening in America right now." "We should all remember, democracies don't have to die at the end of a rifle," Biden said. "They can die when people are silent, when they fail to stand up or condemn threats to democracy, when people are willing to give away that which is most precious to them because they feel frustrated, disillusioned, tired, alienated."

The 2024 election is still more than a year away, yet Biden's focus reflects Trump's status as the undisputed frontrunner for his party's nomination despite facing four indict-

ments, two of them related to his attempts to overturn Biden's 2020 victory.

The president's speech was his fourth in a series of addresses on what he sees as threats to democracy, a topic that is a touchstone for him as he tries to remain in office in the face of low approval ratings and widespread concern from voters about his age, 80.

Biden is trying to shift the political narrative to a line of attack he used frequently ahead of last year's midterms, when Democrats gained a Senate seat and only narrowly lost the

House to the GOP.

That could be especially tricky given that Biden is facing mounting pressure on Capitol Hill, where House Republicans are holding the first hearing in their impeachment inquiry and where the prospect of a government shutdown is looming — with Trump actively egging one on. On the first anniversary of Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of Trump supporters staged an insurrection, Biden visited the Capitol and accused Trump of continuing to hold a "dagger" at democracy's throat. Biden closed out the summer that year in the shadow of Philadelphia's Independence Hall, decrying Trumpism as a menace to democratic institutions. And in November, as voters were casting midterm ballots, Biden again sounded a clarion call to protect democratic institutions.

Advisers see Biden's continued focus on democracy as both good policy and good politics.

Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein dies at age 90

AP ■ WASHINGTON

US Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, a centrist Democrat who was elected to the Senate in 1992 in the "Year of the Woman" and broke gender barriers throughout her long career in local and national politics, has died. She was 90. Three people familiar with the situation confirmed her death to The Associated Press on Friday. Feinstein, the oldest sitting US senator, was a passionate advocate for liberal priorities important to her state — including environmental protection, reproductive rights and gun control — but was also known as a pragmatic lawmaker who reached out to Republicans and sought middle ground.

She was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1969 and became its first female president in 1978, the same year Mayor George Moscone was gunned down



alongside Supervisor Harvey Milk at City Hall by Dan White, a disgruntled former supervisor. Feinstein found Milk's body.

After Moscone's death, Feinstein became San Francisco's first female mayor.

In the Senate, she was one of California's first two female senators, the first woman to head the Senate Intelligence Committee and the first woman to serve as the Judiciary committee's top Democrat. Although Feinstein was not always embraced by the femi-

nist movement, her experiences colored her outlook through her five decades in politics.

"I recognise that women have had to fight for everything they have gotten, every right," she told The Associated Press in 2005, as the Judiciary Committee prepared to hold hearings on President George W. Bush's nomination of John Roberts to replace Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court. "So I must tell you, I try to look out for women's rights. I also try to solve problems as I perceive them, with legislation, and reaching out where I can, and working across the aisle," she said. Her tendency for bipartisanship helped her notch legislative wins throughout her career.

It also proved to be a liability in her later years in Congress, as her state became more liberal and as the Senate and the electorate became increasingly polarized.

New Spanish law strengthens animal rights

Madrid (AP): A new animal welfare law that took effect Friday in Spain outlaws the use of animals for recreational activities that cause them pain and suffering but allows bullfights and hunting with dogs.

Spain's first specific animal rights legislation is intended to crack down on abuses. The law particularly targets the mistreatment of domestic animals, introducing fines of up to 200,000 euros (\$212,000).

It bans the buying of pets in stores or online, but gives stores a grace period to find homes for their animals. In the future, it only will be legal to purchase pets from registered breeders. The new rules allow pets into most establishments, including restaurants and bars.

The law bans the use of wild animals at circuses and gives owners six months to comply. It allows zoos to keep using the marine mammals in their dolphin shows until the animals die.



People watch the preview of the new digital exhibition "Destination Cosmos" at the former gas plant Phoenix in Dortmund, Germany, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023. The multimedia presentation of Phoenix des Lumières art center shows the history of man's desire to explore space from the earliest stargazers to the International Space Station and the exploration of Mars. AP/PTI

Hawaii authorities search for man with handgun

Honolulu (US): Hawaii authorities were looking for a man who fled with a handgun after getting into a scuffle while trying to talk to soldiers at an Army base, officials said. No shots were fired but the Army treated it as an "active shooter situation" and two military bases on Oahu went into lockdown for several hours, said Michael Donnelly, a spokesperson for US Army Garrison Hawaii.

The Army issued a shelter-in-place order for Schofield Barracks, which was later lifted. The Army was working with the Honolulu Police Department to find the suspect, who was still at large, Donnelly said.

The Army said the man was 5 feet, 10 inches (177 centimeters) tall, wearing an aloha shirt and jeans and had a mohawk-type haircut.

The man was last seen near the Schofield commissary on a bike. AP

Troshev asked to take charge of 'volunteer units' in Ukraine

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered one of the top commanders of the Wagner military contractor to take charge of "volunteer units" fighting in Ukraine, signalling the Kremlin's effort to keep using the mercenaries after the death of their chief, Yevgeny Prigozhin.



The June 23-24 rebellion aimed to oust the Russian Defense Ministry's leadership that Prigozhin blamed for mishandling the war in Ukraine and trying to place Wagner under its control. His mercenaries took over Russia's southern military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don and then rolled toward Moscow before abruptly halting the mutiny.

In remarks released by the Kremlin on Friday, Putin told Andrei Troshev that his task is to "deal with forming volunteer units that could perform various combat tasks, primarily in the zone of the special military operation" — a term the Kremlin uses for its war in Ukraine.

Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov was also present at the meeting late Thursday, a sign that Wagner mercenaries will likely serve under the Defense Ministry's command.

Speaking in a conference call with reporters on Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Troshev now works for the Defense Ministry and referred questions about Wagner's possible return to the military.

Wagner fighters have had no significant role on the battlefield since they withdrew after capturing the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in the war's longest and bloodiest battle.

The meeting appeared to reflect the Kremlin's plan to redeploy some Wagner mercenaries to the front line in Ukraine following their brief mutiny in June and Prigozhin's suspicious death in a plane crash August 23.

The private army that once counted tens of thousands of troops is a precious asset the Kremlin wants to exploit.

Putin denounced them as "traitors," but the Kremlin quickly negotiated a deal ending the uprising in exchange for amnesty from prosecution. The mercenaries were offered a choice to retire from the service, move to Belarus or sign new contracts with the Defense Ministry.

Putin said in July that five days after the mutiny he had a meeting with 35 Wagner commanders, including Prigozhin, and suggested they keep serving under Troshev, who goes by the call sign "Gray Hair," but Prigozhin refused the offer then. Troshev, a retired military officer who has played a leading role in Wagner since its creation in 2014 and faced European Union sanctions over his role in Syria as the group's executive director.

Wagner mercenaries have played a key role in Moscow's war in Ukraine, spearheading the capture of Bakhmut in May after months of fierce fighting. Kyiv's troops are now seeking to reclaim it as part of their summer counteroffensive that has slowly recaptured some of its lands but now faces the prospect of wet and cold weather that could further delay progress.

South Sudan's leader discusses closer ties in energy, trade with Putin

AP ■ JUBA

Visiting South Sudan President Salva Kiir agreed in a meeting with Russia's president to expand their relationship in energy, trade and other areas, notably oil.

Kiir and President Vladimir Putin met in Moscow on Thursday and also discussed political and security matters in South Sudan, which is preparing for its first presidential election in December 2024. The country won independence from Sudan in 2011, and Kiir has led the country since then.

According to a video of the leaders' public statements posted online by the Kremlin, Putin said the development of oil refineries in South Sudan with the participation of Russian companies would strengthen ties. "This is only the beginning. We have many good opportunities in a variety of fields, including energy," Putin said. Currently, Russia's Saffat Group is working on an oil refinery in South Sudan's Unity state.

Russia's invitation to Kiir to visit came as global powers reach out to African nations for support regarding Russia's

invasion of Ukraine.

South Sudan is under pressure from the United States and other allies to more quickly implement a peace deal signed in 2018 to end a five-year civil war and prepare for the election.

For its part, South Sudan wants arms embargos removed. Russia, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, could help. Kiir said "the world dictates that no one can survive or succeed alone," and told Putin that the young country needs "strong friends and you are one of them."

Putin and Kiir also discussed peace and security in Africa and international affairs. The conflict in neighboring Sudan has sent thousands of people into South Sudan, whose humanitarian and other resources were already badly strained. This is the second time the South Sudanese president has visited Russia. Kiir attended the first Russia-Africa summit in 2019. Putin said Russia would assist South Sudan in handling its domestic political situation and ensuring security. "We will do our ultimate to support you in this domain," Putin said.

Concerned with the oil deal with Russia, a delegation from Islamabad is set to fly to Moscow on October 10 with the pact also on its agenda, the report said.

During recent talks with the Russian side, Pakistan had demanded higher discounts, but the former was not ready to give more than USD 8 per barrel. Now, the Pakistani side has chalked out a new formula that Russia should export crude oil at USD 60 per barrel price cap.

Pakistan seeks discounts in oil imports from Russia: Report

Islamabad (PTI): Cash-strapped Pakistan is seeking discounts in oil imports from Russia and has urged Moscow to strike a long-term oil deal while remaining within the price cap at USD 60 per barrel, a media report said on Friday.

Pakistan, which is currently grappling with high external debt and a weak local currency, is hoping that snapping crude at discounted rates from Russia will stabilise oil prices in the country, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

"Pakistan wanted Russia to set a benchmark of USD 60 dollars per barrel 'free on board' (FOB) — the actual price charged at the port — to import crude oil on a long-term basis. This means that Russia will also be bearing the freight cost for oil to be exported to Pakistan," the report said. In June this year, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that the first shipment of discounted Russian crude oil had arrived in the port city of Karachi, a development that brought relief to the people hit by skyrocketing inflation.

Russia had shipped one cargo with 100,000 metric tonnes of crude oil that arrived in Pakistan in one month. The freight cost for that oil was also paid by Russia. That ship was on a trial basis and the Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) processed that crude oil that was cheaper by USD 7 per barrel.

Concerned with the oil deal with Russia, a delegation from Islamabad is set to fly to Moscow on October 10 with the pact also on its agenda, the report said.

During recent talks with the Russian side, Pakistan had demanded higher discounts, but the former was not ready to give more than USD 8 per barrel. Now, the Pakistani side has chalked out a new formula that Russia should export crude oil at USD 60 per barrel price cap.

The US has already indicated that it would allow Pakistan to import crude oil from Russia but with a cap that was announced by G7 countries, the report said.

The EU, G7 countries and Australia had announced a price cap at USD 60 a barrel on Russian oil last December.

The US and its allied countries felt that Russia was pumping its oil revenue into the war against Ukraine.

However, they had announced a cap for Russian oil so that its supply to the world would not be disrupted.

Marcos says Philippines not looking for trouble but will defend waters

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippine president said on Friday that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard dismantled a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spoken publicly against China's installation of the 300-metre (980-foot) -long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

"We're not looking for trouble, but what we'll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years," Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province. The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the US military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact.

The prospect of more American forces in local military camps in the northern

Philippines across from Taiwan and southern China alarmed and infuriated Beijing.

After the Philippine coast guard dismantled the rope and net barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal, Filipino fishing boats entered the shallow lagoon and caught about 164 tons of fish in one day, Marcos said. "That's what our fishermen lose, so there should not be a barrier there, and it's clear the area is within the Philippines," he said.

"Our fishermen have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years so I can't understand why that has changed. A Philippine surveillance aircraft deployed Thursday spotted two Chinese coast guard vessels closely guarding the shoal's entrance, making it still difficult for Filipino fishermen to gain entry into the fishing lagoon, Philippine coast guard spokesman Commodore Jay Triarla said during a news conference Friday.

Amid China's effort to play down the Philippine coast guard's disabling of the barrier, Triarla showed journalists one of two metal anchors he said Filipino coast guard personnel removed recently from Scarborough's entrance to knock the barrier down.

Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a news briefing in Beijing on Wednesday that the shoal "is China's inherent territory."

"What the Philippines (has) done is nothing but a farce that entertains itself. China will continue to safeguard the territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests of Huangyan Island," he said, using the Chinese name for Scarborough.

Although Marcos has tried to nurture normal ties with China, the long-simmering territorial disputes have put the Asian neighbours on a potential collision course, with the Philippine leader vowing his country would not yield even "an inch" of territory in the strategic waterway.

Marcos's more confrontational stance contrasts with that of his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia while often criticising US and Western security policies.

Under Marcos, who took office last year, the Philippines has intensified its efforts to fight China's increasingly aggressive actions in one of the world's most hotly contested waters. The Philippine coast guard often invites journalists to join its patrols in an effort to expose what it calls Chinese bullying in the busy waterway.

Over 70% of Nagorno-Karabakh population has fled

Yerevan (AP): More than 70 per cent of Nagorno-Karabakh's original population has fled to Armenia, authorities said, as the region's separatist government said it would dissolve itself, and the unrecognised republic inside Azerbaijan would cease to exist by year's end after a three-decade bid for independence.

Armenian officials said that 84,770 people had left Nagorno-Karabakh by Friday morning, continuing a mass exodus from the region of ethnic Armenians that began Sunday. The region's population was around 120,000 before the exodus began.

The moves came after Azerbaijan carried out a lightning offensive last week to reclaim full control over the breakaway region and demanded that Armenian troops in Nagorno-Karabakh disarm and the separatist government disband. A decree signed by the region's separatist president, Samvel Shakhramanyan, cited a September 20 agreement to end the fighting under which

Azerbaijan will allow the "free, voluntary and unhindered movement" of Nagorno-Karabakh's residents to Armenia. Some people lined up for days to get out of Nagorno-Karabakh as the only road to Armenia quickly filled up with vehicles, creating a major traffic jam on the winding mountain road.

Armenian Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan said that some people, including the elderly, had died while on the road to Armenia, because they

were "exhausted due to malnutrition, left without even taking medicine with them, and were on the road for more than 40 hours." Some of those who fled the regional capital, Stepanakert, said they had no hope for the future. "I left Stepanakert having a slight hope that maybe something will change and I will come back soon, and these hopes are ruined after reading about the dissolution of our government," 21-year-old student Ani Abagyan told The Associated Press.

their summer counteroffensive that has slowly recaptured some of its lands but now faces the prospect of wet and cold weather that could further delay progress.

US quietly acknowledges Iran satellite reached orbit

AP ■ DUBAI

The United States has quietly acknowledged that Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard successfully put an imaging satellite into orbit this week in a launch that resembled others previously criticised by Washington as helping Tehran's ballistic missile program. The US military has not responded to repeated requests for comment from The Associated Press since Iran announced the launch of the Noor-3 satellite on Wednesday, the latest successful launch by the Revolutionary Guard after Iran's civilian space program faced a series of failed launches in recent years.

Early on Friday, however, data published by the website space-track.org listed a launch Wednesday by Iran that put the Noor-3 satellite into orbit.

Information for the website is supplied by the 18th Space Defense Squadron of the US Space Force, the newest arm of the American military. It put the satellite at over 450 kilometres (280 miles) above the Earth's surface, which corresponds to Iranian state media reports regarding the launch. It also identified the rocket carrying the satellite as a Qased, a three-stage rocket fueled by both liquid and solid fuels first launched by the Guard in 2020 when it unveiled its up-to-then-secret space program. "Noor" means "light" in Farsi, while "Qased" means "messenger."

Authorities released a video of a rocket taking off from a mobile launcher without saying where it occurred.

Details in the video earlier analysed by the AP corresponded with a Guard base near Shahrud, about 330 kilometres (205 miles) northeast of the cap-



ital, Tehran. The base is in Semnan province, which hosts the Imam Khomeini Spaceport from which Iran's civilian space program operates. The website space-track.org also listed the missile as having been launched from the Guard base at Shahrud. Speaking on Thursday night to Iranian state television, Guard space commander Gen. Ali Jafarabadi described the Noor-3 satellite as having "image accuracy that is two and a half times that of the Noor-2 satellite."

Noor-2, launched in March 2022, remains in orbit. Noor-1, launched in 2020, fell back to Earth last year. Jafarabadi said Noor-3 has thrusters for the first time that allow it to maneuver in orbit. He also offered a wider description of Iran's hopes for its satellite program, including potentially controlling drones.

That could raise further concerns for the West and Ukraine, which Russia has bombarded with Iranian-made bomb-carrying drones for over a year. "If you look at the recent wars in the world, you will see that success on the battlefield is very dependent on the use of satellite technologies," Jafarabadi said.

"Now the armed forces in all the progressive countries

are trying to make all their equipment remote control, it means that to make it steerable, when a vessel or any other equipment takes a long distance from us, it is no longer possible to see and guide it, except through satellite."

The image-taking capabilities of the Noor-3 remain unclear. International sanctions on Iran have locked it out of accessing commercially available imagery, forcing it to develop its own homegrown satellites. The head of the US Space Command dismissed the Noor-1 as a "tumbling webcam in space" that would not provide vital intelligence.

Other video released by Iranian state TV showed the Guard using a Dutch-Italian IVECO truck to pull the mobile launcher used in the launch. The truck manufacturer did not respond to a request for comment. The United States says Iran's satellite launches defy a UN Security Council resolution and has called on Tehran to undertake no activity involving ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

UN sanctions related to Iran's ballistic missile program are due to expire October 18.

The US intelligence community's 2023 worldwide threat assessment says the development of satellite launch vehicles "shortens the timeline" for Iran to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile because it uses similar technology. "Iran's continued advancement of its ballistic missile capabilities poses a serious threat to regional and international security and remains a significant nonproliferation concern," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

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Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr No	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Head Office - Thermofforming packaging film for vacuum packing of Paneer for Verka Mohali Dairy - Providing and laying of interlocking tiles along with allied jobs in parking area of new milk bar at Verka Ludhiana Dairy.	Annual Four Months
2.	For Verka Mohali Dairy Hiring of- - Tankers for transportation of furnace oil from oil depots/refineries to Verka Mohali Dairy. - Insulated S.S. road milk tankers for transportation of milk from verka mohali dairy to sister unions/plants within or outside Punjab.	Annual Annual/06 No's
3.	For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy a) E-auction for dismantling & lifting of old refrigeration plant with its allied accessories, old vehicle and old vehicle tyres and other old dairy machinery. b) Supply of Rice Husk c) e Auction of unserviceable/unusable material	One time rate contract basis/01 No 500 MT 01 No
4.	For Verka Sangrur Dairy Purchase of Rice Husk	Nov 2023-500 MT Dec 2023-500 MT
5.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Hiring of refrigerated vehicles for supply of White Butter, Table Butter and Ice cream etc. b) Outsourcing of Milk Booth at- Park Back Side Main Shopping Centre sector 32 A, Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana	One year with extension up to one year Three Years
6.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) Purchase of- - Steam coal - Printed shrink sleeves rolls for PP Bottle 180 ml b) Hiring of- - Insulated single portion road milk tankers (capacity-10000 Ltr) - Bolero/swift Dzire, Toyota Etios or equivalent for official use Model 2019 & above	2000 MT Annual Annual/14 No's Annual/02 Bolero Camper, 07 Office Cars
7.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy Labour Contract for loading/unloading of Milk Products and Empty tins, Cartons, Jars etc.	01 No Annual
8.	For Verka Mehta Dairy, Bassi Pathana Transport vehicle for supply of UHT Milk and Milk products to upcountry market	1.5 MT, 2.5 MT, 4.5 MT, 9 MT, 15 MT, 20 MT, 27 MT & 32 MT
9.	For Verka Cattle Feed Plant, Ghanja Ke Banger Auction condemned truck No. PB06H 8586	01 No

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Incharge (Purchase)

DMI HOUSING FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED ("COMPANY")
(U65923DL2011PTC216373)
Registered Office: Express Building, 3rd Floor, 9-10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002;
T: +91 11 41204444; F: +91 11 41204000;
Email: dmi@dmihousingfinance.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the public in general, and the customers in particular, that the management of the Company has decided to close the following branch:

Name, Address and contact details of Closing Branch	DMI Housing Finance Private Limited Office no 309, 3rd Floor, Om Shubham Tower, Plot No 69-71, Neelam Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001 (+91 9717001553), (kiran.jha@dmihousingfinance.in)
Date of Closure	31.12.2023

It is clarified that due care is being taken by the Company to ensure that no inconvenience whatsoever is caused to the Company's customers during the process of closure. The loan accounts of all the valued customers shall continue with the base branch (i.e.C-110, 2nd Floor, Lajpat Nagar-1, New Delhi - 110024). Customers holding loan accounts may transfer their account to any other branch of our company, provided the same is approved by the competent authority. The relevant Application form is available at the branch. Customers are hereby requested to kindly take note of the aforesaid change which will be effective tentatively from 01.01.2024.

In case any further clarification is required and/or in case of any difficulty, the customer may contact the officials of DMI Housing Finance Private Limited (+91 9717001553, Mr. Kiran Jha)
Place :- Faridabad
Date :- 19th Sep 2023

DMI HOUSING FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED ("COMPANY")
(U65923DL2011PTC216373)
Express Building, 3rd Floor, 9-10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002;
T: +91 11 41204444; F: +91 11 41204000;
Email: dmi@dmihousingfinance.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the public in general, and the customers in particular, that the management of the Company has decided to relocate the following branch:

Name, Address and contact details of Closing Branch	DMI Housing Finance Private Limited 21, Third Floor, Bada Mohalla, Duggal Colony, Devli Road, Khanpur, New Delhi - 110062. (+91 9899627841), (jagdish.goyal@dmihousingfinance.in)
Date of Closure	31.12.2023

It is clarified that due care is being taken by the Company to ensure that no inconvenience whatsoever is caused to the Company's customers during the process of relocation. The loan accounts of all the valued customers shall continue with the new branch (i.e.C-110, 2ndFloor, Lajpat Nagar-1, New Delhi - 110024). Customers holding loan accounts may transfer their account to any other branch of our company, provided the same is approved by the competent authority. The relevant Application form is available at the branch. Customers are hereby requested to kindly take note of the aforesaid change which will be effective tentatively from 01.01.2024.

In case any further clarification is required and/or in case of any difficulty, the customer may contact the officials of DMI Housing Finance Private Limited (+91 9899627841, Mr. Jagdish Prasad Goyal):
Place:- Khanpur Devli, New Delhi
Date:- 25th Sep 2023

SENSEX RISES 320 POINTS

Nifty closes above 19,600 on buying in metal, energy shares



Benchmark Sensex rose by 320 points while Nifty closed above the 19,600 mark on Friday after value-buying in metal, financial and energy stocks aided by positive trends in the US and European markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 320.09 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 65,828.41. During the day, it jumped 643.33 points or 0.98 per cent to 66,151.65.

The Nifty advanced 114.75 points or 0.59 per cent

to end at 19,638.30.

Among the Sensex firms, NTPC climbed over 3 per cent emerging as the biggest gainer. Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance, Reliance, ICICI Bank and IndusInd Bank were the other

major gainers.

Power Grid, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Titan were among the laggard.

"Markets made a recovery attempt after Thursday's fall and managed to close half a per cent higher. The tone

was positive for most of the session however dip in the final hour trimmed the gains," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said that while stocks witnessed a rebound on

Friday, the market is facing stiff resistance at higher levels due to insipid liquidity and a lack of triggers to overcome the bears.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 1.31 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.57 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral

indices, metal jumped 2.71 per cent, healthcare rallied 2.22 per cent, oil & gas (1.30 per cent), commodities (1.25 per cent), energy (1.16 per cent) and power (1.02 per cent).

IT and teck were the laggards.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark fell 180.74 points or 0.27 per cent, and the Nifty declined 35.95 points or 0.18 per cent.

In Asian markets, Tokyo ended lower. Markets were closed in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taiwan and Seoul. European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended in the green on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.49 per cent to USD 95.28 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,364.22 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.



Govt hikes interest rate to 6.7 per cent on 5-year recurring deposit

Retains rate on other small savings schemes

The government on Friday raised the interest rate on five-year recurring deposit scheme to 6.7 per cent from 6.5 per cent for the December quarter and retained the rates for all other small savings schemes. According to a finance ministry circular, the interest rate on savings deposit has been retained at 4 per cent and on the one-year term deposit at 6.9 per cent.

The rates were the same

during the September quarter.

The interest rate on both the two-year and three-year term deposits is 7 per cent while on the five-year term deposit, the rate is 7.5 per cent.

Senior citizens savings scheme will fetch an interest rate of 8.2 per cent. On the monthly income account scheme, the interest rate is 7.4 per cent while it is 7.7 per cent on the National Savings Certificate and 7.1 per cent on the Public Provident Fund (PPF) scheme.

The interest rate on the Kisan Vikas Patra is 7.5 per cent and the investments will mature in 115 months.

As per the circular, the interest rate on the popular girl child scheme Sukanya Samridhi Account has been retained at 8 per cent.

Jet Airways shares jump 5 per cent as Jalan Kalrock Consortium infuses ₹100 crore into company

Shares of Jet Airways on Friday rallied 5 per cent to hit its upper circuit limit after Jalan Kalrock Consortium said it has infused an additional Rs 100 crore into the airline.

The stock jumped 5 per cent to Rs 55.91 -- its upper circuit limit -- on the BSE.

On the NSE, it rallied 4.98 per cent to Rs 55.80 -- its upper circuit limit.

Jalan Kalrock Consortium, the winning bidder for the revival of grounded carrier Jet Airways, on Friday said it has infused an additional Rs 100 crore in the airline as per the court-approved resolution plan.

With this, the consortium has "fulfilled" its total financial commitment of Rs 350 crore to revive the airline,



which would pave the way for it to take over the ownership of Jet Airways, JKC (Jalan Kalrock Consortium) said in a statement.

JKC also said it is expecting the airline to be up and

running next year with the launch date likely to be announced in the next few days.

Jet Airways has been grounded since April 17, 2019.

"Kalrock Consortium

(JKC) today (Friday) completed an additional infusion of Rs 100 crore, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to a successful resurgence of Jet Airways," the consortium said in the statement.

"With this infusion, JKC has now fulfilled its total financial commitment of Rs 350 crore equity as per the court-approved resolution plan, and all commitments by JKC now stand fulfilled to take control of the iconic airline," it added.

It also said the consortium's strategy to revive the airline remains unaltered.

"The new promoters are determined to re-establish the operations of the airline up and running in 2024," it said, adding that further announcements regarding the launch date of Jet Airways will be made in the coming weeks.

Online sellers see 15 per cent rise in festive sales

After a rocky first three quarters of 2023, online sellers expect to see at least a 15 per cent jump in festive sales year-on-year, according to a report by Redseer Strategy Consultants that underlined market readiness and bullish sentiments for a profitable festive season up ahead.

The latest report of Redseer which surveyed a few hundred sellers (primarily the smaller sellers) prior to the festive sales 2023, said anticipation for a festive sales boost among the sellers is "high across categories".

"After a rocky first three quarters of the year CY23, online sellers expect at least a 15 per cent jump in festive sales year on year," Redseer said in a release.

The findings revealed that despite modest sales growth on e-commerce platforms recently, anticipation for a festive sales boost amongst the sellers is high.

Sellers expect a minimum 15 per cent online sales growth compared to last

year's festive event, with the median growth figure of 26 per cent sales increase expected.

E-Commerce platforms are tailoring solutions to meet the optimism of sellers and as a consequence of which, seller perceptions around support provided by eTailing platforms have seen an uptick.

"Through our surveys, sellers have highlighted the strong support received from platforms in terms of data analytics, trends predictions, consumer visibility, among others," it said.

Driven by seller bullishness, they are expected to ramp up their ad spendings on the online platforms meaningfully, thus creating the right sales impact for themselves and also benefiting the platforms.

"The festive period is expected to enable sellers especially the smaller ones to come out of the challenging sales environment seen through this and sellers are optimistic of strong sales growth," Mrigank Gutgutia, Partner at Redseer Strategy Consultants said.

Dee Development Engineers seeks Sebi nod to raise funds via IPO

Piping solutions provider Dee Development Engineers Ltd has filed draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to mop up funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO).

The initial share sale comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 325 crore and an offer for sale of 79 lakh equi-

ty shares by a promoter Krishan Lalit Bansal, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

Currently, Bansal owns 74.74 per cent stake in the company.

In addition, the company may consider mobilising Rs 65 crore in a pre-IPO placement round. If such placement is undertaken, the fresh issue size will be reduced.

As per the preliminary papers filed on Thursday, the funds mopped up through the fresh issuance of equity shares will be used for payment of debt, supporting working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

SBI Capital Markets and Equirus Capital have been appointed as merchant bankers to manage the company's maid-



en public issue. Equity shares of the engineering company will be listed on the BSE and NSE.

Dee Developments is an engineering company providing specialised process piping solutions for industries such as oil and gas, power (including nuclear), chemicals and other process industries through engineering, procurement, and manufacturing.

The company has six manufacturing facilities at Palwal in Haryana, Anjar in Gujarat, Barmer in Rajasthan, and Bangkok in Thailand.

Its customers include JGC Corporation, Nooter/Eriksen, MAN Energy Solutions SE, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, John Cockerill S A, Reliance Industries, HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, and Toshiba JSW Power Systems.

Godrej Properties acquires 109 acre in Nagpur for about ₹200 crore to expand biz



Realty firm Godrej Properties Ltd on Friday said it has acquired around 109 acre of land parcel in Nagpur to launch residential plots.

In a regulatory filing, Godrej Properties informed that the development on this land will comprise primarily plotted residential units and offer an estimated saleable area of 2.2 million square feet.

The company did not disclose the deal value and the name of the seller.

However, market sources said the deal has been struck at around Rs 200 crore.

Godrej Properties MD and CEO Gaurav Pandey said the acquisition of this new land parcel further enhances the company's presence in Nagpur.

With the strong revival in housing demand post-COVID pandemic, Godrej Properties

has been acquiring land parcels aggressively outrightly and through partnerships with land owners to expand its business.

The demand for plots has also gained momentum.

Godrej Properties, an arm of business conglomerate Godrej Industries, is one of the leading real estate developers in the country.

It primarily focuses on the Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Bengaluru and Pune markets for the development of residential projects. The company expects 14 per cent growth in sale bookings this fiscal to a record Rs 14,000 crore.

During the April-June quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal, Godrej Properties' sales bookings declined 11 per cent to Rs 2,254 crore from Rs 2,520 crore in the year-ago period.

On financial performance, Godrej Properties has posted a nearly three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 124.94 crore in the June quarter against Rs 45.55 crore a year ago.

The total income during the first quarter of this fiscal rose to Rs 1,265.98 crore from Rs 426.40 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Recently, Godrej Properties Ltd said it has sold about 670 flats worth more than Rs 2,000 crore in its new housing project at Noida following strong demand.

Rupee rises 14 paise to 83.05 against \$



Gold declines ₹250; silver rallies ₹1,200

Gold prices declined Rs 250 to Rs 58,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a fall in precious metal prices overseas, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had closed at Rs 58,950 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

However, silver surged Rs 1,200 to Rs 74,300 per kilogram.

Delhi spot gold prices fell to their lowest level since March 19, Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

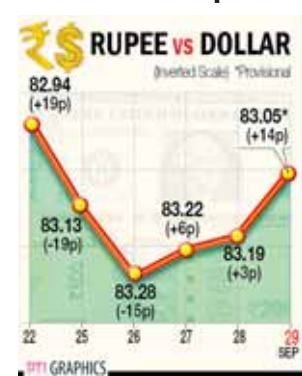
In the global markets, gold was trading lower at USD 1,871 per ounce, while silver was up at USD 23.05 per ounce.

Gold have been trending lower since the beginning of the week, after the US Federal Reserve's hawkish signal that interest rates would remain higher for longer, Gandhi said.

The rupee appreciated 14 paise to settle at 83.05 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, boosted by a firm trend in equity markets and a sharp correction in the greenback against major rivals overseas.

However, selling pressure from foreign equity investors and rising crude oil prices in international markets weighed on the domestic unit, forex traders said.

The rupee opened strong at 83.13 against the US dollar and moved in the range of 83.03 to 83.13 against the greenback. It finally settled at 83.05 (provisional), registering a gain of 14



account deficit (CAD). However, rising interest rates and US bond yields prompted foreign investors to stay in selling mode.

CAD almost halved to USD 9.2 billion, or 1.1 per cent, of GDP in the first quarter of the current fiscal from USD 17.9 billion (2.1 per cent of GDP) a year ago, the Reserve Bank of India said on Thursday.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhya by BNP Paribas, said: "Indian rupee strengthened on Friday on weak US dollar index and a decline in crude oil prices. Positive tone in domestic markets also strengthened the rupee. However, FII outflows capped sharp gains."

The dollar declined on con-

cerns over looming US government shutdown fears. Disappointing economic data from the US also weighed on the greenback, he added.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on as US government shutdown worries may keep the dollar pressure. Recovery in global markets may also support the local currency."

"However, expectations of recovery in crude oil prices and selling pressure from foreign investors may weigh on the rupee," Choudhary said, adding "Traders may also take cues from India's fiscal deficit data. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.70 to Rs 83.40".

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined by 0.52 per cent to 105.68.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.36 per cent higher at USD 95.72 per barrel.

On the domestic equity front, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 320.09 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 65,828.41. The broader Nifty climbed 114.75 points or 0.59 per cent to end at 19,638.30.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,364.22 crore, according to exchange data.

RBI reviews flow of credit to MSME sector

The RBI's Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) reviewed the flow of credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises on Friday at its meeting held in Lucknow, a central bank said in a release.

The 28th meeting of SAC was chaired by RBI Deputy Governor Swaminathan J, and attended by senior officials from ministries of MSME and finance.

"During the meeting, the SAC reviewed the flow of credit to MSMEs and deliberated on issues related to assessing and bridging the credit gap for the sector, exploring digital solutions for improved credit linkage,

accelerating adoption of TReDS, credit support to women entrepreneurs, revival and rehabilitation of stressed MSMEs, and credit guarantee schemes, among others," the RBI said.

The deputy governor in his keynote address emphasised the significant role of the MSME sector, particularly in the context of the goal of attaining developed economy status by 2047.

He stressed the need for collaborative efforts on the part of all stakeholders to unlock the full potential of MSMEs.

Swaminathan highlighted various initiatives taken by the RBI such as the Account Aggregator (AA) framework, the digital Public Tech Platform

to enable delivery of frictionless credit and the regulatory sandbox on MSME lending.

He also dwelt on the important role of industry associations in information dissemination and capacity building among MSMEs, the RBI said.

Chairman of SIDBI, Executive Director of RBI, senior management of major banks and NABARD, senior executives of credit guarantee fund trust for micro and small enterprises, National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Indian Banks' Association and MSME Associations, too participated in the meeting.

BUSINESS BRIEF

KIIT RANKED 6TH BEST INDIAN UNIVERSITY IN TIMES WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2024

BHUBANESWAR: The KIIT Deemed to be University (KIIT-DU) has emerged as the 6th best university in the country out of 91 institutes that featured in the prestigious Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024. It secured the top position in Odisha. Like every year, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings has been published and KIIT-DU has retained its position from the last year.

FIRM SECURES ₹5,400 CRORE WORK ORDER

NEW DELHI: Home-grown Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL) has secured a USD 648-million (about ₹5,400 crore) work order in Mongolia. The order has been awarded by Mongol Refinery State Owned LLC, MEIL said in a statement on Friday. "MEIL has clinched a significant deal in Mongolia. The company received a Letter of Agreement (LOA) for constructing a state-of-the-art crude oil refinery plant."

SRM SPECIAL CONVOCATION ON OCTOBER 3

KATTANKULATHUR: The convocation of SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) will be held on October 3 at its premises in Kattankulathur. Prof Ricardo Leon Borquez, President, World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) will be the Chief Guest.

Nikhat bags Olympic quota and medal

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
Without break a sweat, Nikhat Zareen secured a Paris Olympic quota place by reaching the semifinal of the Asian Games here on Friday, a just reward for the indomitable boxer who missed out on the Tokyo Games.
The 27-year-old has come a long way since pleading for a "fair trial" for a shot at competing at the Tokyo Olympic qualifiers four years ago.
The Telengana boxer is now a two-time world champion, Commonwealth Games champion and an Asian Games medal winner.
Earning an Olympic quota was Nikhat's top priority at Hangzhou. On Friday, she achieved that by cantering to the (50kg) semifinals with a first round RSC (referee stops contest) win over Jordan's Nassar Hanan.
"I'm really happy to have won this quarterfinal and achieve the Olympic quota. I was looking to get the Olympic quota. Now I have got it, finally, and I am looking forward to winning that gold medal," she said after



the win.
The boxer has not lost a bout in the last two years and she needed less than three minutes to notch the win against Hanan.
Nikhat had to wait patiently in the wings to make the fly-weight division her own as it was dominated by the legendary MC Mary Kom. But, as soon as she got a chance, Nikhat wasted no time in establishing herself as a fitting heir to the six-time champion.
She is the only Indian boxer after Mary Kom to win two world titles and win one outside

India.
Nikhat, the reigning Commonwealth Games champion, set the tone of the quarterfinal bout early on with a sharp jab. She continued to dominate with a flurry of accurate combination punches, pummeling her opponent.
Such was her domination that the referee was forced to give the Jordanian pugilist three standing counts.
"I watched the previous fight, and my strategy was to go out there with the right leading hand, and that's what I did. I got



the RSC (referee stops contest) in the first round," Nikhat said.
On her hopes for the rest of the competition, she said, "Hopefully I keep performing like this in my next matches. My focus is on performing in these Hangzhou Asian Games. Hopefully, I win the gold medal and make my country proud."
Nikhat will take on two-time world championship bronze medalist Chuthamat Raksat of Thailand in the semifinals on Sunday.
World Championship bronze medalist Parveen started her campaign with a win as she managed to outplay local favourite Zichun Xu 5-0 to move to the quarters. Lakshya Chahar, on the other hand, made a first round exit after he went down 1-4 to Kyrgyzstan's Omurbek Bekzhigit Uulu in the 80kg Round of 16 bout.
In the women's events, the semifinalists in the 50kg, 54kg, 57kg, and 60kg while the finalists in the 66kg and 75kg will qualify for the Paris Olympics.
The gold and silver medalists in each of the seven weight divisions in the men's event will receive Olympic quotas.

India off to winning start in chess team events

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
Indian men and women opened their campaign in the chess team event at the Asian Games with easy wins over Mongolia and Philippines respectively, here on Friday.
Both the teams won by identical 3.5-0.5 margins in the first round.
The team event at the Asian Games is being played in the classical time format while the individual events were held in the rapid format.
While the top-seeded Indian men's team saw GM Arjun Erigaisi opening the scoring with a win over IM Amartuvshin Ganzorig of Mongolia with black pieces, Vidit S Gujrathi and R Praggnanandhaa added to the points.
GM D Gukesh was, however, held to a draw on the top board by a lower-ranked GM Bilguun Sumiya.
Praggnanandhaa defeated Batchuluun Tsegmed while Gujrathi got past Gan-Erdene Sugar.
The second-seeded Chinese began with a 3-1 win over



Philippines while a strong Uzbekistan beat Kyrgyzstan by a similar scoreline.
In the women's section, R Vaishali and B Savitha Shri won their games to put India on the road to victory.
IM Vantika Agrawal then drew with Jan Jodilyn Fronda with black pieces.
D Harika then won by 3.5-0.5 margin against HM Janelle Mae Frayna.
Vaishali and Savitha Shri beat Marie Antoinette San Diego and Bernadette Galas respectively.
Meanwhile, a strong Chinese team, the top-seed, was held to a 2-2 draw by Uzbekistan, seeded seventh.



India's Esports contingent concludes campaign

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
India's 15-member Esports contingent wrapped up its remarkable journey at the ongoing Asian Games after its DOTA 2 team exited the competition at the China Hangzhou Esports Centre here on Friday.
The DOTA 2 squad led by skipper Darshan Bata (A35), and comprising Krish Gupta (Krish-), Abhishek Yadav (Abhi-), Ketan Goyal (Evil-Ash), and Shubham Goli (Madness) endured a 0-1 defeat against Kyrgyzstan in their opening group game before going down 0-1 against the Philippines in the second group stage game to bow out of the competition.
In what was Esports' debut as an official medal sport at the prestigious tournament, India had participated in four of the seven total titles namely: DOTA 2, League of Legends, EA Sports FC Online, and Street Fighter V: Champion Edition.
India's League of Legends team captained by Akshaj Shenoy (Kai), and comprising Samarth Arvind Trivedi (CrankO),

Mihir Ranjan (Lotus), Sanidhya Malik (Deadcorp), Aakash Shandilya (Infi), Aditya Selvaraj (Krow) finished fifth after suffering a hard-fought 0-2 defeat against Vietnam in the quarterfinals. The country's star EA Sports FC Online athlete, Charanjot Singh, secured the ninth place out of a total pool of 36 leading athletes from the continent in this competition.
The 20-year-old began his campaign with a 0-2 defeat to China's Liu Jiacheng in the Round of 32 but bounced back strongly with three consecutive wins against Aristorenas Jorrel of Philippines, Alrowaihi RKM of Bahrain, and Yessentayev Olzhas of Kazakhstan in the Losers Bracket Round 1, 2, and 3 respectively.
However, his campaign came to an end after enduring another 0-2 defeat against Liu Jiacheng of China in the Losers Bracket Round 4. His compatriot Karman Singh exited the competition after going down 1-2 against Aldhafiri Meshari of Kuwait in the Losers Bracket Round 2.

Dominant India beat Malaysia 6-0 in women's hockey



PTI ■ HANGZHOU
Brimming with confidence after the 13-0 win over Singapore, the seventh ranked Indians maintained their momentum and completely dominated the play from the word go.
As expected, India took the lead in the seventh minute through Monika's field strike before Deep Grace doubled the score a minute later, converting their first penalty corner.
In the 20th minute, Lalremisami's tomahawk from top of the circle, after getting a loose ball from midfield, went just wide. But a minute later, Navneet Kaur's brilliant stick work made it 3-0 in the favour of India. She got the ball inside the circle and converted after Deep Grace failed to score with a reverse tomahawk. India secured another penalty corner in the 15th minute and Vaishnavi found the net from the chance to hand her side a 4-0 lead. India extended their lead in the 24th minute through Sangita. Neha got the ball into the D and passed it to Sangita, who found the back of the net with a reverse hit.
India secured a penalty corner in the 27th minute but Deepika's try was denied by a brilliant save by Malaysia goalkeeper AB Mashitah.
Seconds before half time, Lalremisami secured another penalty corner for India but it went in vain as the Savita Punial side led 5-0 at the break.
Malaysia started on a much better note after the change of ends and looked more compact in defence, while trying for attacking runs in between.
But India got their act together and started to mount raids on the Malaysian goal. In the 38th minute, Deepika's reverse hit goal from top of the circle was disallowed after the video umpire found out that she was marginally outside the circle when she took the hit.
India secured a few penalty corners but wasted all of them.
In the 50th minute Lalremisami scored India's sixth goal from a field play.
In the remaining minutes of the match, India secured two more penalty corners but failed to find the back of the net.
India will next play Korea in their next pool match on Sunday.

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Bridge: Indian men maintain second place; women, mixed teams fail to impress

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
The Indian men's team continued their excellent show by maintaining their second position but the women and mixed sides could not make much headway in the bridge competition of the Asian Games here on Friday.
The men's outfit is firmly entrenched in the second position with 155.09 points after playing 140 boards.
Japan are leading the table with 155.49 points after playing 140 boards.
The Indian men started the day blanking Pakistan 20-0 in the 1-9 round robin phase. They made light work of Chinese Taipei in the round robin 1-10, registering a 15.26-4.74 win.
They concluded a fruitful day going past Hong Kong 15.26-4.75 in the round robin 1-11 segment.
However, the Indian women started day with a heavy 4.74-15.26 defeat against Hong Kong in the round robin 1-6 session.
But they managed a brighter end to the day, narrowly defeating Singapore 10.33-9.67 in the next round.
It meant that the women could not move up from their previous day's seventh place, and have 52.83 total points from 98 boards.
Like the men's team, India's mixed outfit too started the day with a win over Pakistan, beating the arch-rivals 10.66-9.34 points.



In the afternoon session, the Indians gave no chance to Thailand while scoring a 16.72-3.28 victory in the round robin 1-10 phase.
In the final match of the day, the Indians put it past Thailand 10.97-9.03.
The Indian mixed team is now placed at fifth with 128.81 points having played 140 boards.

Indian men enter final; women's team signs off with bronze

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
The Indian men humbled defending champions Malaysia 2-0 to reach the final of the men's squash event after the seasoned Saurav Ghosal and Abhay Singh registered identical wins at the Asian Games here on Friday.
India thus set up a marquee gold medal clash with Pakistan, against whom they lost in the pool stage and will seek revenge heading into the final.
Abhay Singh started the proceedings for India on a positive note, securing a 3-1 (11-3 12-10 9-11 11-6) win over Muhammad Addeen Idrakie Bin Bahtiar in the opening match. He took 57 minutes to ward off the challenge of Bin Bahtiar. The experienced Ghosal then got the better of Eain Yow NG 3-1 (11-8 11-6 12-10 11-3) in 69 minutes to wrap up the second semifinal in favour of India.
Mahesh Mangaonkar was not required to play his match against Mohammad Syafiq Bin Mohd Kamal.
The Indian men had settled for the bronze medal in the last edition of the Games in Indonesia.
Earlier, the Indian women's squash team signed off with a



bronze medal after going down fighting to Hong Kong in the semifinals of the continental showpiece.
Joshna was the only Indian who won her match as she defeated world number 24 Tze Lok Ho 3-2 (7-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8) to level the tie after Tanvi went down meekly (3-0) to Sin Yuk Chan in the opener.
"Sometimes it's just about hanging in there and fighting through. There were moments where that's exactly what I did. I didn't think too much about having a plan or a strategy. I knew today no matter what happens I had to keep fighting through," Joshna said.
Playing against high-ranked and experienced opponent in Lee Ka Yi, the 15-year-old Anahat then tried her best but was undone by her inexperience.
The teenager saved eight match points as she went from 10-2 to 10-10 in the third game but eventually lost the final (0-3) 8-11, 7-11, 10-12 and the tie.
India had finished with a silver in the previous edition. They had lost to Hong Kong in the final at the 2018 Jakarta Games.
"It was 1-1 (in matches) and my match was a really important match, and if we had won that we would have gone to the finals. I feel like it could have gone better and I could have won it. They were really pushing me and hoping I would win the match and we would get a better medal," Anahat said.
Joshna, who was a part of the silver winning side in 2018, was left a "little disappointed that they couldn't get over the finish line."

Manika progresses to quarterfinals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU
Commonwealth Games gold medallist Manika Batra progressed to the women's singles quarterfinals but veterans A Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyana crashed out in the pre-quarterfinals of the table tennis competition in the Asian Games here on Friday.
In the men's singles, Sharath fought bravely against Chinese Taipei's Chih-Yuan Chuang but eventually the latter prevailed 11-7, 12-10, 9-11, 11-5, 10-12, 6-11, 11-8.
Sharath had fought back from a two-game disadvantage to make it 3-3, but he could not hold his composure in the final game.
Earlier, G Sathiyana lost to China's Chioung Wang 3-11, 3-11, 6-11, 3-11.
India endured a mixed day in the women's doubles event as well.
Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ayhika Mukherjee reached the quarterfinals

SHARATH, SATHIYAN CRASH OUT



with a 11-8, 11-7, 11-4 victory over Thailand's Jinnipa and Wanwisa.
But Sreeja Akula and Diya Chitale were ousted by fifth seeded Japanese Miwa Harimoto and Miyuu Kihara 11-3, 11-5, 11-8.
However, Manika gave something to cheer for India in the morning session

with a valiant win.
In a close contest, Manika defeated Suthasini Sawettabut of Thailand 4-2 (11-7, 6-11, 12-10, 11-13, 12-10, 11-6) and confirmed her place in the quarterfinals.
Manika, a bronze winner in mixed doubles at the Jakarta Asian Games, will face world No. 3 Yidi Wang of China on Saturday.
It is her last chance to win a medal at this Games, as she has already lost in the mixed and women's team events.
In the men's round of 16, the Indian duo of Manav Vikash Thakkar and Manush Utpalbhai Shah beat Isaac Quek Yong and Yew En Koen Pang 3-2 (3-11, 11-9, 11-6, 5-11).
Manav and Manush will take on Korea's Woojin Jang and Lim Jonghoon next.
However, the other Indian pair of Sharath and Sathiyana lost 0-3 (5-11, 4-11, 7-11) against the Chinese pair of Chuqin Wang and Fan Zhendong.

Medal-winning shooters hope Karni Singh Range will be upgraded now

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The Asian Games medal-winning shooters have expressed hope that their long-standing wish to see an upgraded Karni Singh Shooting Range will be fulfilled after their impressive performance at the showpiece in Hangzhou.
With two more days of shooting events left, the Indians have already produced their best-ever performance in the Asian Games, surpassing the 14 medals they had won in Doha in 2006.
The Indian shooters have so far clinched 18 medals, including six

gold, seven silver and five bronze, from the ongoing Games. The shooters now want the best of the facility at the national capital's Karni Singh Range where they train for a better part of the year, to help them replicate their performance in Hangzhou at next year's Paris Olympics.
"The Karni Singh Range was made before 2010 Commonwealth Games, so the same range is quite functional but now we have made better ranges which are there in Bhopal and other places. So we had requested the minister to put on similar kind of range here," Asian Games gold medal-winning shooter Rudransh Patil told PTI.
"It doesn't make that much of a difference but it is always good to have better quality as most of the time we train in Karni Singh."
"It is always good to have better quality because most of the time we are training in Karni Singh, it's the best option to have the best equipment there on the spot," he added.
Rudransh, who had already secured an Olympic quota for the country, won the team gold in 10m air rifle event at the Asian Games, pairing up with Divyansh Panwar and Aishwarya Singh Tomar. Another Asian Games medal winning shooter, who



spoke on the condition of anonymity, echoed the same feeling.
"We were just requesting the minister to upgrade the facilities of the new hostel made in Karni Singh Shooting Range. The hostel is new and good but there are some issues which need to be addressed," the shooter said.
"Besides we have requested the minister to upgrade the Karni Singh Shooting Range. It was done before the Commonwealth Games and has not been upgraded till date. The other ranges in the country are better than this."
"But, as we train in Karni Singh for most part of the year, we want the range to be upgraded."
National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) secretary Rajiv Bhatia said that they have been requesting the ministry for the same since 2016 and hoped the rich medal haul in shooting at Asian Games will help settle the matter.
"It's not new, we have been talking to SAI (Sports Authority of India) for the upgradation of the facility since 2016-17."
"But I hope, after such a brilliant performance from the shooters at the Asian Games, the ministry will finally pay heed to our plea," Bhatia told.

WARM-UP GAME TODAY

CHANCE FOR INDIANS TO TEST AGAINST ENGLAND'S BLASTERS

Good opportunity for Yadav, Ashwin, Jadeja to test themselves

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Indian team management will try to keep cards close and assess defending champions England's batting depth when the home team takes field for its first World Cup warm-up match game, here on Saturday.

The warm-up games don't have an official status. Both teams can use as many players as they want and check out how some of the players respond in specific match situations.

However no team would like to go full throttle and expose all their players or strategies during these games.

But with England's philosophy across formats undergoing a sea-change over the last few years and a batting line-up comprising Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler, Dawid Malan, Ben Stokes, Harry Brook, Liam Livingstone and Moeen Ali sending shivers down the spine of any opposition, the home team bowlers will get a chance to test themselves.

It will be a good opportunity for Kuldeep Yadav, Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja to test themselves and it is expected that all bowlers will be taking turns to bowl a few overs.

Similarly, one might find



that a top player like skipper Buttler or the talismanic Stokes cooling his heels in order to not give a chance to the Indian bowlers to have a go at them.

The best part about England's team is its batting depth. Sam Curran at No. 8 and Chris Woakes, who hammered India to hit a Test hundred at the

Lord's coming in at No. 9, surely speaks volumes about the team's balance.

Kishan vs Iyer debate

In an ideal world, there shouldn't be any debate if Shreyas Iyer, a fine player of spin bowling in the middle-overs of an ODI innings, should walk

into the playing XI, especially with his enviable record in the format.

But since Iyer's injury break and Ishan Kishan coming into his element, the calculations are a bit different.

Kishan has proved himself at every position in every opportunity that the team has given

him. Being a left-hander and the manner in which he goes after the bowling, Kishan does make a compelling case for selection when Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma decide on the playing XI for the opener against Australia in Chennai.

If India go in with Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli,

Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya, there is not a single left-hander between number one and six and it is only when Ravindra Jadeja walks in at No. 7, there is some variation in the line-up.

With Rahul earmarked to keep wickets and bat at No. 5 on more days unless Hardik Pandya is used as floater, Kishan's only competitor would be Iyer, who recently showed his class with a century against Australia in Indore.

It is only imperative that both Kishan and Iyer get a decent hit out there in the middle.

Iyer looks favourite to start against Australia but Kishan can't be ruled out yet.

India squad: Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya (vc), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav.

England squad: Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Gus Atkinson, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley, David Willey, Mark Wood, Chris Woakes.

Chahal or Washington could have been picked as Axar's replacement: Yuvraj

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian squad is packed with quality players but either wrist spinner Yuzvendra Chahal or Washington Sundar should have found place in the home team's line-up, reckons 2011 World Cup hero Yuvraj Singh.

All-rounder Axar Patel was ruled out of the global event due to quadriceps tear and the management replaced him with senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. Ashwin was summoned for the ODI series against Australia and eventually he was included in the final 15-man squad as Chahal and Washington miss out.

"I personally feel the only miss in this side is Yuzvendra Chahal. I think the only aspect that is missing from this team is a leg-spinner," Yuvraj told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I was very keen to see Washington Sundar in the side if we are not picking up Yuzi. But maybe the team wanted an experienced bowler, so that is why I think they went with R Ashwin," said one of India's greatest ODI cricketers. Yuvraj spoke on the sidelines of an event, organised by Vicks, to release the World Cup anthem.

The performance of Jasprit Bumrah will have a massive bearing on India's campaign in the World Cup at home, felt former India batter. Bumrah returned to the Indian side during the T20I series against Ireland recently after a long injury lay-off and he also produced intense



efforts in the Asia Cup. "Jasprit is a match-winner, like Zak (Zaheer Khan) did for us back in 2011. What makes Jasprit a threat is he has skill and pace. He is an asset to the team."

"To make a comeback from the back injury at this stage is quite big too. As a team you feel confident to have bowlers like that, they win you matches from any situation." Yuvraj, who was the player of the tournament during the 2011 World Cup, was pleased to see the growing maturity of Bumrah as a cricketer.

"Bumrah has matured in the last couple of years, he has captained India and has become a smart bowler. Rohit knows how to use him wisely, especially because he has captained Bumrah in the Mumbai Indians," said Yuvraj.

"The advantage with Bumrah is that initially he can get wickets with pace but when he starts going for runs, his skillset will come into play. There will be days when you will win a game after scoring 300 or 350-plus but these kinds of bowlers like Bumrah are needed to defend scores like 250s and 260s," he said.

Marsh set to return to top of order for Australia at Cricket World Cup in India

AP ■ BRISBANE

A month ago Mitch Marsh thought he may have to return down the order to create room for others in Australia's preferred starting lineup at the Cricket World Cup despite his recent success batting at the top of the innings.

The man who once joked that everyone in Australia hated him because he hadn't made the most of his chances at international level now appears to be the go-to option as an opener.

With Travis Head expected to miss at least the first half of the Oct. 5-Nov. 19 World Cup because of a fractured right hand, and with Steve Smith returning from injury to bat at No. 3, the best direction for Marsh to go is up.

And if the big, burly all-rounder can form an opening partnership with veteran David Warner like he did with Head in Australia's series win in India in March, it gives the five-time champions serious firepower to start their innings.

Australia captain Pat Cummins all but confirmed the two would open to start the World Cup following his side's 66-run consolation win over India in the final game of a



three-game series this week. India won the first two matches.

"Potentially Trav Head won't be ready for the start of the tournament," Cummins said when asked who might open the batting in Australia's first match against India on Oct. 8. "But I think the way him (Marsh) and Davey (Warner) started today, it looks like a pretty dangerous combination."

Marsh's 84-ball 96 in the third match with three sixes and 13 fours had earlier helped

well," Marsh said. "There's plenty of positives to take."

The Australians had a lot of experience to recall ahead of losing the first two matches - and the three-match series - against India, with Cummins, strike left-arm paceman Mitchell Starc, former skipper Smith and all-rounder Glenn Maxwell returning from injuries.

Coach Andrew McDonald said Marsh "did an incredible job" covering for Cummins and without so many regular starters.

"We had a lot of moving parts - multiple changes each game with some injuries and making sure we're prepped as well as we can be for the World Cup," McDonald said.

Marsh will be relying for success again on his uncomplicated approach to batting in all forms of cricket. That is: see the ball, hit the ball - a long, long way. It's been working so far in his career resurgence, which gained traction with his player of the final performance when he batted at No. 3 in Australia's first ever Twenty20 World Cup title in 2021. It worked again in his recall to test cricket in July after four years when he posted a run-a-ball 118 - batting at a conventional No. 6 - during the Ashes in England.

Australia rectify its batting issues and fellow opener Warner (56 in 34) also scored his third successive half-century. A recent white-ball tour to South Africa, where Marsh led an injury-depleted team to a Twenty20 series sweep and a 2-0 lead in the ODI format before losing three consecutive one-dayers, hasn't dented his confidence. "I certainly thought we started the series well. Played some really good cricket, got back to the T20 series we played some really good cricket as

Bavuma confident South Africa can make Cricket World Cup history

AP ■ Johannesburg

Quinton de Kock will make a last hurrah at the Cricket World Cup in India starting next week as part of an in-form South Africa team which will lean on his experience and a pace-heavy bowling attack as it attempts to win the tournament for the first time.

At 30, the wicketkeeper-batsman has already retired from test cricket and this will be his one-day international swansong. It could also be a crowning moment in his career if South Africa can maintain the form that took them from 2-0 down to beat Australia 3-2 in a recent ODI series.

South Africa's best result at the 50-over World Cup has



been three semifinal appearances. Temba Bavuma will again captain South Africa and can rely on the counsel of players such as de Kock, who has captained the Proteas in all three formats.

Bavuma leads a powerful team diminished only slightly by the absence of fast bowlers Anrich Nortje and Sisanda

Magala, who failed fitness tests before the squad left for India.

Both played in the series against Australia but Nortje has been forced out with a back issue, having also missed the 2019 World Cup with a thumb injury, while Magala has a knee problem.

Paceman Lizaad Williams and all-rounder Andile

Phehlukwayo have been called up in their place in a squad which also includes fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi and Gerald Coetzee.

"It's great having a mix of experienced players and players who will be competing in their first 50-over World Cup," Proteas coach Rob Walter said. "You get that sort of exuberance or excitement to be doing something for the first time."

"We have endeavored to curate a well-balanced group of players and skill that will allow us to effectively adapt to the conditions in India. Our strength has been fast bowling and we want to be able to have four high-quality fast bowlers in the park in most situations."

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