



OPINION 6

INDIA MOVES CLOSER TO 'ONE NATION ONE ELECTION'

WORLD 8

HEZBOLLAH LAUNCHES MISSILE AT TEL AVIV

MONEY 10

INDIA REPORTS RECORD FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION AT 3322.98 LMT

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

Late City Vol.34 Issue 268 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4

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SRIKANTH LEADS INDIAN CHARGE INTO SECOND ROUND 11 SPORTS



JAMMU AND KASHMIR VOTE FOR DEMOCRACY

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A healthy voter turnout of over 56 per cent was recorded in the second phase of polling across 26 Assembly segments of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday amid unprecedented security arrangements. In the first phase, 61.38 per cent voter turnout was recorded across 24 Assembly segments. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat in the Jammu region recorded the overall highest voting percentage at 79.95 %, followed closely by Poonch Haveli at 73.78 per cent, till 6.00 pm. Compared to the recent Lok Sabha polls the voter turnout across six districts, which went to the polls in the second phase, recorded a tentative jump of 5 per cent. Since morning, the atmosphere at the polling stations was vibrant and the excitement was writ large as first-time voters, centenarians, and specially-abled people expressed their resolve to strengthen the grassroots democracy. Feeling elated, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar Wednesday described the ongoing Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir as "history in the making", saying people are standing in long queues outside polling booths at places where



Voters stand in a queue at a polling station to cast votes during the second phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, in Srinagar, Wednesday

calls were once given to boycott the democratic exercise. "It is a festival of democracy. Voting is taking place in areas where it did not take place earlier.... There were calls for disruption and boycotts in the past.... It is a standing ovation for democracy," the CEC said in the presence of fellow election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

A total number of six districts, three each in Jammu and Kashmir region witnessed healthy participation of voters. Barring a few incidents and allegations of slow polling, the overall polling process passed off peacefully. Briefing media persons in Srinagar, Chief Electoral Officer, PK Pole said in the second phase voter turnout of approximately 56.79 per cent

was recorded across 26 Assembly segments till 6pm. Out of six districts, Reasi district in Jammu recorded the highest voter turnout of over 74.14 per cent while Srinagar reported the lowest voter turnout of around 29.24 per cent. Poonch recorded a total turnout of 73.78 per cent, Budgam 63 per cent and Ganderbal 62.63 per cent. Continued on page 2

Congress imposed Dalal, Damad culture in Haryana: PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SONIPAT/NEW DELHI

In a veiled attack on Congress' first family, the Gandhis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the Congress on handing over Haryana to "dalals" (middlemen) and "damads" (sons-in-law). While Modi did not explicitly name anyone, his allusion was clear to many in the audience, who erupted in applause. "Wherever the Congress has put its foot, corruption and 'bhai-bhatijawaad' (nepotism) are inevitable. Congress has given birth to corruption in the Government system. The Congress party is the mother of corruption in our country," the Prime Minister said. During an election rally in Gohana, Sonipat that before the October 5 Assembly polls, he also lashed out at the Congress over the issue of reservation, alleging opposing reservation and hatred towards it are in its DNA. Modi firmly established that every Prime Minister from the Congress royal family has consistently opposed reservations. Voting for the 90-member legislative Assembly in Haryana will be held on October 5. Votes will be counted on October 8 along with that in Jammu and Kashmir. He cautioned the public that even the fourth generation of the Congress royal family is now advocating for the abolition of reservations. He urged citizens to remain vigilant against Congress' anti-reservation tactics.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini waves at crowd during a public meeting in Sonipat, Haryana, Wednesday

Ahead of PM Modi's rally in Sonipat, the Congress claimed that Haryana's farmers have completely lost trust in the BJP and asked Prime Minister Modi to spell out his party's vision for ensuring that the state's farmers can make a decent living. The Prime Minister observed that in every Congress-ruled State, their Chief Ministers and Ministers are embroiled in disputes, showing no concern for the people's suffering. He noted that the rising disputes within Congress are evident to all of Haryana, stating: "Voting for Congress means putting Haryana's stability and development at risk." Slamming the main Opposition party, he said Congress Governments are known for "instability." "In the past few years wherever it formed Governments, Chief

Ministers and Ministers were involved in infighting. They have nothing to do with the pain and problems of the people," Modi said as he cited the example of Congress-ruled Karnataka. "In Karnataka, its Chief Minister and deputy Chief Minister are busy in internal fighting. In Telangana and Himachal Pradesh, it is the same story," he said in his second rally in the State, the first being over a week ago in Kurukshetra. Modi also mentioned about alleged infighting in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh when the Congress was in power there. "Therefore, Haryana has to be cautious. Haryana has right over me. Remember, if Congress comes to power even by mistake, it will ruin Haryana due to its infighting," he warned. Continued on page 2

Yogi model in Himachal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SHIMLA

The Congress Government in Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday made announcement to make mandatory for the food vendors and eateries across the hill state to display the owners' names and addresses for the convenience of customers. A decision to implement this order was taken during a meeting of the state's Urban Development department and Municipal Corporations on Tuesday. Himachal Pradesh's order comes on the lines of a similar order issued by the Yogi Adityanath led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh under which operators, proprietors, and managers must clearly display their names and addresses at all food and drink establishments. During the meeting on Tuesday, Minister Vikramaditya Singh said that laws will also be introduced for hawkers, including the issuance of identity cards. The food regulation orders by both the Himachal and Uttar Pradesh Governments come in the wake of the Tirupati laddu row. The hill state's Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania has formed a seven-member committee, including Ministers Vikramaditya Singh and Anirudh Singh to implement the order. "In Himachal too, every restaurant and fast food stall will have the owner's ID displayed, ensuring that people do not encounter any issues," Singh stated. The food regulation orders by both the Himachal and Uttar Pradesh Governments come in the wake of the Tirupati laddu row. A lab report confirmed that the laddus offered to devotees as prasad at the famous



Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh contain animal fats and fish oil. A senior State Government official said that to enhance food safety and accountability, the Himachal Pradesh Government has joined Uttar Pradesh in mandating that food establishment owners prominently display their names and addresses. Additional regulations enforced in Uttar Pradesh include mandatory mask and glove usage for food service staff, as well as the installation of CCTV cameras in hotels and restaurants. These steps were prompted by a series of incidents concerning food contamination in the State. The push for these new regulations follows alarming cases of food contamination in Uttar Pradesh, highlighted by a viral video from September 12 that showed a teenager preparing food in unsanitary conditions, resulting in the arrest of the establishment's owner.

Link Insurance premium to traffic violation: Delhi LG

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of responsible and safe driving, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has written to Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, urging her to link insurance premiums of vehicles to the number of traffic violations recorded against the vehicle. Vehicles with a history of violations, including speeding, reckless driving, or other traffic offences, would be required to pay higher premiums. This financial deterrent would incentivise safer driving practices and foster a culture of responsible driving on Indian roads.

According to Saxena, this financial deterrent driven approach, practised in the US and European countries, would promote responsible driving behaviour, leading to reduction in accidents, saving lives, and ensuring more efficient management of insurance claims. The LG has requested the Union Finance Minister to consider his proposal for a tiered insurance premium system that directly reflects the driving behaviour of individual motor drivers. The proposal comes in the wake of alarming statistics from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which reported over 4,37,000 road accidents in 2022, resulting in approximately 155,000 deaths.



Saxena noted that over-speeding accounted for nearly 70 per cent of these accidents, while violations like red-light jumping also significantly contributed to fatalities. Saxena has underlined in his letter that implementing such a system would not only align insurance costs with the actual

risk posed by individual drivers but will also reduce the financial burden on insurers resulting from frequent claims. The LG has also urged the Union Finance Minister to engage the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to take immediate action to establish a framework

for index-linked insurance premiums. By implementing this policy, India can take a significant step towards creating safer roads, saving lives, and ensuring a more sustainable transport system for generations to come, the letter said. "I am writing to your kind attention to a matter of critical importance concerning road safety and vehicular insurance in India," Saxena wrote. "I would like to suggest for your consideration that insurance premiums should be index-linked with the number of traffic violations recorded against a vehicle, which would have a salutary impact on road safety and traffic discipline." Continued on page 2

Lokayukta to probe Siddaramaiah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

A Special Court on Wednesday ordered Lokayukta police probe against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case. The court also directed the police to file the investigation report by December 24. The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation



against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife BM Parvathi by MUDA. Reacting to the Special Court

order, Siddaramaiah reiterated that he was ready to face an investigation. "Already I have said that I am ready to face an investigation. I am not afraid of a probe," Siddaramaiah told reporters here. "I am ready for a legal fight. I had said this yesterday and I am reiterating it today as well." The Special Court deals exclusively with criminal cases related to former and elected MPs/ MLAs issued the order directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna. Continued on page 2

India ranks above China

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

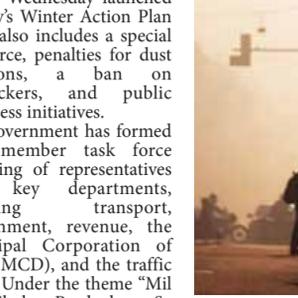
India ranks third in the annual Asia Power Index, released by an Australian think-tank, surpassing Japan on the back of strong post-COVID 19 economic growth, while China's power appeared to plateau just below the United States. The Sydney-based Lowy Institute has put the US at the top of its Asia Power Index with a score of 81.7, followed by China with a score of 72.7, India (39.1), Japan (38.9), Australia (31.9) and Russia (31.1).

The Index ranks 27 countries and territories in terms of their capacity to shape their external environment -- its scope reaching as far west as Pakistan, as far north as Russia and as far into the Pacific as Australia, New Zealand and the US. The index has cited economic growth, future potential and diplomatic influence as key factors for India's rise. However, it has pointed out that New Delhi's clout remains below the potential promised by its resources. Continued on page 2

Delhi prepares for a winter of discontent

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Come this winter, citizens of the national Capital can experience relief from the notorious air pollution that plagues Delhi, especially during the winter months, with a range of measures, including drone monitoring, an intensified anti-dust campaign, road-sweeping machines, and the deployment of 200 mobile anti-smog guns among others. Emphasising collaboration between the Government and residents to combat Delhi's seasonal pollution spike, State Environment Minister Gopal



Rai on Wednesday launched the city's Winter Action Plan which also includes a special task force, penalties for dust violations, a ban on firecrackers, and public awareness initiatives. The Government has formed a six-member task force consisting of representatives from key departments, including transport, environment, revenue, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), and the traffic police. Under the theme "Mil Kar Chale, Pradushan Se Lade", drone monitoring will be used for the first time to track pollution hotspots in real-time in a bid to ensure

more precise and targeted interventions. Starting from October 7, the anti-dust campaign will be rolled out, targeting construction sites larger than 500 square meters, which must register on a designated website. Strict penalties will be imposed on violators who contribute to dust pollution. Additionally, the city will deploy 85 road-sweeping machines and 500 water-sprinkling vehicles to control road dust, one of the major contributors to air pollution. In the plan, public awareness campaigns will play a crucial role in the plan with initiatives like the "Harit Padyatra," where participants will walk with plants on their heads to raise awareness about greenery, and the "Red

Light On, Gadi Off" campaign, aimed at curbing vehicular emissions, will be part of this effort. An electric vehicle parade and an anti-pollution march are also planned to encourage people to adopt more sustainable practices. As part of efforts to control air pollution during the winter, the Government will increase the use of mobile anti-smog guns, which will now be deployed three times a day, compared to once daily last year. The ban on firecrackers, introduced in previous years, will continue this year. Continued on page 2

GODDESS MAA DURGA



A clay idol of Goddess Durga placed under a shed for protection from rainwater on a rainy day, ahead of Durga Puja festival, at artisans' village Kumartuli, in Kolkata, West Bengal, Wednesday

DUSU polls 2024: Group of students storm into Miranda House, injure several female students

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and National Students Union of India (NSUI) on Wednesday engaged in mobilizing support for their candidates for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) polls on the last day of campaigning even as reports of clashes between the two student bodies in Miranda college came into light.

In a viral video, a group of people allegedly stormed into college and reportedly injured several female students around noon. According to the rules, the DUSU constitution allows only four students, along with the DUSU candidate, to enter

the premises of a college. Notably, it is being alleged that Ronak Khatri, the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) presidential candidate, along with a group of his supporters were the ones who broke into the college. Meanwhile, ABVP Secretary pick Mitravinda Karanwal, stated, "The incident of forcefully entering a women's college by NSUI candidate and bringing male outsiders, in large numbers, inside the college, is shameful. We stand united with the girl-students of Miranda House College who felt unsafe during this incident and strongly demands action into the matter." She also demanded cancelling of Khatri's candidature



Hitting back at the ruling student union in the DUSU, the Congress' student outfit claimed that ABVP is disrupting its campaigning and spreading false propaganda. "Their cadre, who don't even belong to Miranda, tried to scuffle and stop our candidates for DUSU. This is a clear attempt to intimidate, but students will respond decisively. Students of Miranda have time and again rejected ABVP's agenda of hatred," the union said in a statement. Further, NSUI organized a significant march led by its National President Varun Choudhary in support of Khatri and Joint Secretary candidate Lokesh Choudhary. Addressing the gathering,

Varun Choudhary said, "We are marching today in full support of our candidates Ronak Khatri and Lokesh Choudhary, who represent the change that Delhi University desperately needs. NSUI will ensure that once elected, all initiatives mentioned in our manifesto will be implemented." Moreover, ABVP's candidates for the polls campaigned across various colleges of DU and engaged with students across university on students' issues and highlighting the achievements of ABVP led DUSU of the previous year. ABVP Vice-President Candidate for DUSU Bhanu Pratap Singh stated, "We interacted with students throughout

our campaigning and have received an encouraging response from the students, with many expressing confidence in ABVP's leadership and vision for Delhi University." ABVP Candidate for Secretary Post, Aman Kapasiya, stated, "ABVP remains committed to addressing the concerns of Delhi University and raising their voice to the DU administration to ensure that Delhi University continues to be a space where students' voices are heard and respected. This year, like every year, we are requesting students to participate in the election and vote for an organisation like ABVP, working 365 days a year for the benefit of students."

Mayor chairs meet with private waste management concessionaires

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming festive season, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Mayor Dr. Shelly Oberoi alongside the Commissioner Ashwani Kumar on Wednesday chaired an important meeting with private waste management concessionaires for the improvement of the sanitation system. Mayor directed the concessionaires to take immediate steps for door-to-door waste collection, increasing auto tipper, and maintaining Dhalor ghars and waste collection points before the festivals. She also directed the officials to finalize the routing process for auto tipper by October 10 to improve door-to-door waste collection.

"To ensure accountability, the Mayor directed all the concessionaires to submit a detailed written report by tomorrow. The report shall outline how the sanitation services will be improved by October 10 this year," a statement by the civic body said. Waste management agencies



were also asked to provide a comprehensive report on their available resources, including manpower, the number of auto tipper, and other machinery. "Mayor emphasized on the urgency of improving sanitation, particularly in the Central Zone, Civil Lines, West Zone, Shahdara North, and Shahdara South Zones. Concessionaires were instructed to increase auto tipper in these areas and ensure regular waste collection from streets and narrow lanes," it added. She said, "If there is no significant improvement in san-

itation conditions before the festivals, strict action will be taken against non-compliant agencies. No compromise will be tolerated with Delhi's sanitation system. Every possible effort can be made to improve the cleanliness system to make Delhi clean, beautiful, and green as it is the top priority of the AAP government in MCD." The meeting was also attended by Leader of the House in MCD Mukesh Goyal, Additional Commissioner Tariq Thomas, and other senior officials of the DEMS department and private concessionaires.

AAP Dwarka MLA nominated as Vice Chairman of DJB

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party's Dwarka MLA Vinay Mishra has been nominated as the Vice-Chairman of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB).

Party MLA from Ambedkar Nagar Ajay Dutt and Trinagar MLA Preeti Jitender Tomar have also been nominated as members of the Board. "Hon'ble Speaker, the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is pleased to nominate the MLAs as Vice Chairman and Members to the Delhi Water Board," a Delhi Legislative Assembly order on Wednesday said.

The new Vice-Chairman has been nominated by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly as per the Delhi Jal Board Act of 1998, it added.

This comes as Somnath Bharti, who was the Vice President of the Delhi Jal Board earlier, had resigned from the post before filing the nomination for Lok Sabha elections in May. Vinay Mishra posted on X in Hindi, "I am very grateful to



our leader, Hon'ble Shri @ArvindKejriwalji, for making me the Vice President of Delhi Jal Board. "I will fulfil the important responsibility that you have entrusted to me as the Vice President of Delhi Jal Board with utmost responsibility and hard work and will try to ensure that the water supply in the whole of Delhi remains smooth and water is supplied in a better manner." "The people of Delhi are very happy with your mission of free electricity and water. Also, they want that you to take up the responsibility as the Chief Minister of Delhi soon and they continue to get free water and electricity as always," Mishra said in the post.

Cyber cell arrests two bank officials for providing details to cybercriminals

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A team from the cyber cell of the Gurugram police has arrested two bank officials of a private bank for allegedly providing bank accounts for cybercriminals, police said.

Priyanshu Diwan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (cybercrime), said that the arrested accused had been identified as Mukul Suhalka and Prahlad Suhalka, a native of Rajasthan. Mukul was earlier associated with Indusland Bank in Udaipur. According to the police, a man filed a complaint at the Cyber Crime Police Station East in February 2024, that he was duped Rs 1.78 crore in the name of investing in the stock market.

During the probe, the police froze Rs 39.60 lakh, which was returned to the victim. During the probe, Inspector Naveen Kumar, SHO of the said police station arrested the suspect on Monday for the alleged involvement in



the crime. The duo were arrested from Rajasthan. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that Mukul was earlier an employee of Indusland Bank in Udaypur branch and he kept in touch with the cyber thugs and had provided bank accounts to be used in committing cyber frauds. The cybercriminals had fraudulently transferred Rs 1.78 crore to the bank account provided by the accused to other accounts. In connection with the matter, the police have arrested

9 criminals. Police are questioning the accused to find out more details about the cyber fraudsters involved and the commission the bankers may have received from them for providing the account. "The accused have been taken on five days police remand for further proceedings. So far the Gurugram police have arrested 19 bank officials within three months who were allegedly involved in cyber fraud."

Law and order defines democracy and UP CM defines law, order: Dhankhar

PNS ■ GREATER NOIDA

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, while speaking at the inauguration of the UP International Trade Show-2024 at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida, praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, saying law and order defines democracy and the UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath defines law and order.

"How can one best describe CM Yogi Adityanath? Under his dynamic governance, the country's largest state is flourishing, and his 'game-changing'

approach is significantly benefiting the entire nation. I am truly impressed by his unique style of working tirelessly, 24x7," he said. "Nothing is more crucial for attracting investment than maintaining law and order. Law and order defines democracy and the Chief Minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath, defines law and order," he remarked.

Before the formal inauguration of the UP International Trade Show-2024, marked by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp 'Manideep', Vice President Dhankhar, along with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, toured



the various stalls set up across the exhibition halls. Expressing his delight at the event, the Vice President Dhankhar conveyed his heartfelt congratulations. He remarked,

"Walking through the stalls here, I felt as though I was in one of the most developed nations in the world. This trade show offers a tremendous platform, connecting the state's artisans and

craftsmen with global buyers. I commend Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his visionary, practical, and forward-thinking leadership."

The vice president expressed his pleasure at Vietnam, a nation with a remarkable GDP in Southeast Asia, joining as the 'partner country' for the second edition of the UP International Trade Show. He assured Vietnam that it was in the "right place" to connect with the "best minds" at this event. "Here, we experience the rich cultures of both India, especially Uttar Pradesh, and Vietnam. The similarities

between the two nations are truly fascinating," he remarked. Vice President Dhankhar stressed that the visitors from Uttar Pradesh and across India will also have the opportunity to savour authentic Vietnamese cuisine, known for its distinct flavours, further strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary leadership for raising the voice of the global south on the global stage, emphasising that this event will leave every attendee with a sense of joy and fulfillment.

Link Insurance...

From page 1

The letter mentioned the recent data from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) which reveals a disturbing trend of over-speeding and red-light jumping, that contribute significantly to fatal accidents. A comprehensive study by the World Bank further underscores the correlation between multiple traffic violations and a heightened risk of severe crashes and emphasises the need for urgent action. Analysis of accident data by the World Bank indicates that vehicles with multiple traffic violations have a 40 per cent higher risk of being involved in fatal crashes compared to those with a clean driving record. In support of his proposal, Saxena in his letter, has highlighted Delhi's own accident statistics that corroborate these findings. According to a 2023 report of the Delhi Traffic Police, 60 per cent of fatal road accidents involved, vehicles that had previously been fined for traffic violations, primarily over-speeding and red-light jumping.

Lokayukta to probe...

From page 1

The Court issued directions to take up investigation under section 156 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (that gives a magistrate the power to order an investigation into a cognisable offense.)

The HC had dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of the Governor's August 16 order granting approval for investigation under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988.

In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi

under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout.

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. It is alleged that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land at survey number 464 of Kasare village, Kasaba Hobli of Mysuru taluk. The Opposition BJP and JD(S) in Karnataka sought to step up its demand for Siddaramaiah's resignation. Holding posters, placards and raising slogans, members of BJP Yuva Morcha marched towards Chief Minister's residence 'Cauvery', but the police thwarted their attempt, took them into preventive custody and whisked them away in a bus.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR VOTE FOR...

From page 1

The maximum voting percentage among the 15 Assembly segments in the Kashmir valley was recorded in Kangan (ST) at 71.89 per cent and Khanshib at 71.66 per cent. It was followed by Char-i-Sharief at 67.44 per cent. However, the lowest 18.39 per cent voting was recorded in the Habbakadal constituency here till 6pm. Rajouri district also witnessed 70 per cent polling. All five Assembly constituencies in the district witnessed healthy voter turnout, especially in villages located close to the line of control.

The second phase of polling will decide the fate of 239 candidates including former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, contesting from two seats - Budgam and Ganderbal, J and K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina contesting from Nowshera Assembly segment of Rajouri, JKPCC Chief Tariq Hamid Karra Central Shelting in Srinagar. The Election Commission of India had set up 3,502 polling stations in these segments. There are 1,056 urban polling stations and 2,446 rural polling stations. A multi-tier security blanket was thrown around each polling station to instill a sense of security among the voters.

Delhi prepares...

From page 1

The city's Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) will also be activated to implement emergency measures when air quality deteriorates. The Government has formed 588 teams to prevent the open burning of garbage, another significant source of winter pollution. Rai also highlighted the improved air quality in Delhi over recent years, noting that the number of polluted days had decreased from 243 in 2016 to 159 in 2022, representing a 34.6 percent reduction. However, he acknowledged that pollution from neighbouring states, particularly stubble burning, remains a challenge.

To combat stubble burning, which significantly worsens air quality during the winter months, bio-decomposers will be sprayed across 5,000 acres of farmland to minimise its impact. Additionally, a 360-member team has been established to monitor vehicle emissions and ensure that older vehicles comply with emission standards. The Minister emphasised that, if necessary, the city could reintroduce the odd-even vehicle rationing scheme to reduce traffic emissions. The Government is also exploring the possibility of inducing artificial rain to clear pollutants from the air during critical periods of high pollution.

Youth dies by drowning after friends push him into Munak Canal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 21 year old died by drowning in Munak canal on Tuesday night after a group of boys pushed him in Rohini's Vijay Vihar area. According to the police on Wednesday, a PCR call was received by a sister who claimed that her brother had fallen into the canal.

DCP Rohini Dr G. S. Sidhu said, "On Tuesday, at 11:00 pm, a PCR call regarding pushing her brother into Munak canal by some boys was received at Vijay Vihar police station from a lady caller who is the resident of the area." Acting upon the call, the local police immediately reached at the house of the caller who stated that her brother namely Vishal, student of class 12 in a school of Rohini left the house for



school in the morning but had not returned so far. "She further informed that her brother had been thrown into Munak Canal by some boys of the area in the morning. Immediately, search of the missing boy was carried out in the Rohini district which revealed that a dead body of a young boy had been recovered from Munak Canal

and the same was preserved in the mortuary of the hospital," he said. He added that the dead body was identified as the deceased brother of the lady caller and the postmortem of the deceased is being done in the hospital. "Legal action is being taken into the matter. Further investigation is underway," he stated.

UP now favourite destination for investors, says Manjhi

PNS ■ GREATER NOIDA

Speaking at the event, Union SMSME Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi commended Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and extended his best wishes for the success of the second edition of the UP International Trade Show. He lauded the ODOP scheme, noting that UP is playing a pivotal role in fostering an industrial ecosystem in India. "The country's economic growth is closely tied to the progress of UP," he remarked, adding that the world-class infrastructure developed under Chief Minister Yogi's leadership has made the state a top choice for investors. The Union minister also assured that the Central Government would extend full support to Uttar Pradesh's MSME sector.

India ranks above...

From page 1

"India has shown remarkable post-pandemic economic recovery, contributing to a 4.2 point rise in its economic capability. India's massive population and strong GDP growth reinforce its standing as the world's third-largest economy in PPP terms," the think tank has said. It has noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has garnered

greater international recognition. The think tank has said India's non-aligned strategic posture has allowed it to navigate complex international waters effectively.

It has said India's participation in dialogues as well as its leadership in the Quad has allowed New Delhi to play a significant role in regional security dynamics, albeit outside of formal military alliances.

Congress imposed Dalal, Damad culture in...

From page 1

The way infighting is rising in Congress, entire Haryana is watching," he said. Voting for Congress means putting Haryana's stability and development at stake and opening the doors of destruction, he further said. "This instability will stop every work in Haryana. Investment and jobs will be

impacted," said Modi. Notably, with Haryana going to polls next month, the ruling BJP has been targeting the Congress over the alleged infighting in its Haryana unit and even claimed that Lok Sabha member and prominent Dalit leader Kumari Selja is unhappy with her party over ticket distribution and so is staying away from the poll

campaign. Former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had also invited Selja to join the BJP but she dismissed any possible switch, saying, "I am a Congress person, I will remain a Congress person." Referring to his US visit, Modi said he met top leaders and representatives of large companies. "I told them about the talent of Indian

youth. "He said under the BJP Government, Haryana has made a place among top states in industry and agriculture sectors. "Today, the world's biggest companies are interested in setting up factories in India, he said, adding "when industrialisation increases, its biggest benefit goes to poor, farmers and Dalits".

Ensure CAG reports tabled in Vidhan Sabha: LG to Chief Secretary

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Flagging the issue of pending CAG reports, Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has asked the Chief Secretary to take necessary steps to ensure the reports are tabled in the Vidhan Sabha during its two-day session commencing Thursday. The LG secretariat has also asked the Chief Secretary to bring to the attention of Chief Minister Atishi about the pendency of the reports and request her action in this regard. As of now, 12 CAG Reports dealing with matters that include three State Finances Audit, Prevention of Vehicular Air Pollution, Public Health Infrastructure and Services, Regulation and Supply of Liquor, Children in need of care and protection, Revenue in economic, social and general sectors and PSUs, two Finance Accounts and



two Appropriation Accounts, are pending since 2021. The LG Secretariat has also written to the Principal Secretary (Finance) to ensure laying of "Performance Audit Report of the CAG on Public Health Infrastructure and Management of Health Services relating to the GNCTD."

The letter has urged to bring to the notice of the Chief Minister the constitutional and statutory provisions of Article 151 of the Constitution, Section 48 of the GNCTD Act and Regulation 210 of the Audit & Accounts Regulations, 2007, which provides for mandatory laying of the reports of the

CAG by the GNCTD in the Legislative Assembly of Delhi. In accordance with the said constitutional and statutory provisions, the CAG has been forwarding Audit Reports on the State Finances and Performance on various sectors related to governance in Delhi. The CAG while forwarding the Audit Reports has very categorically asked the GNCTD to submit the same to the LG under Section 48 of the GNCTD Act for laying these reports before the Assembly according to Article 151 of the Constitution. These communications have been duly forwarded by the LG Secretariat to Finance Department, GNCTD for initiating process for their expeditious laying in the Assembly. In a series of communications, the LG Secretariat received such letters, last on 18.07.2024 and 19.09.2024

from the CAG to enable the laying of these reports in the Legislative Assembly of Delhi. The matter of delay of laying of all CAG Reports has been taken up with the Finance Department, GNCTD, Speaker (Vidhan Sabha) and the Chief Minister by the LG on various occasions. However, no proposal for laying these CAG Reports before the Assembly have been submitted by GNCTD to the LG, who constitutionally makes them to be laid in the Vidhan Sabha, have been received so far. The CAG reports are vital to assess the financial and the administrative health in a democratic setup. Adherence to the constitutional mandate of placing such reports on the table of the Legislature from time-to-time without any delay is an essential ingredient of a functional democracy so that future course corrections are made.

Atishi announces new minimum wage rates ahead of festive season

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Just ahead of the festive season, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi announced new minimum wage rates on Wednesday, setting the amount at Rs 18,066 for unskilled workers, Rs 19,929 for semi-skilled, and Rs 21,917 for skilled workers in the unorganised sector which is doubled as compared to the BJP ruled states. The new rates would be applicable from October 1. Atishi shared this significant development on her 'X' handle (erstwhile Twitter), stating: "The Delhi government has once again decided to increase the minimum wage in Delhi. Delhi has the highest minimum wage in the entire country. With the new rates applicable from October 1, the minimum wage for unskilled workers has now increased to Rs 18,066, semi-skilled workers to



Rs 19,929 and skilled workers to Rs 21,917. On one hand, there are BJP-ruled states where the minimum wage is half that of Delhi. Sharing the data of minimum wages in BJP-ruled states, Atishi said that the minimum wage for unskilled workers in Delhi is more than Rs 18,000, while the minimum wage for unskilled workers in Rajasthan is only Rs 8,063, Rs 10,000 in Madhya Pradesh, Rs 8,300 in Uttar Pradesh, Rs 10,000 in Haryana, Rs 10,900 in Chhattisgarh. The minimum wage in the Delhi government

is the highest in comparison to the whole country. Atishi said that before the Arvind Kejriwal government came to power in 2013, the minimum wage for unskilled workers in Delhi was only Rs 7,722. The minimum wage for semi-skilled workers was Rs 8,528 and the minimum wage for skilled workers was only Rs 9,388. Highlighting Delhi's top spot in wage rates nationwide, Atishi credited 10 years of AAP governance under the leadership of Arvind for improving the lives of the city's common people and promised continued progress in the months ahead. In her first press briefing since taking charge as CM, Atishi credited the AAP government's leadership under Arvind Kejriwal for ensuring that Delhi's minimum wages for labourers are the highest in the country.

DUSU polls 2024: VC should take strict action, defer polls till all defacement removed, says HC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Upset over the defacement of public property during the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections, the Delhi High Court on Wednesday said the vice chancellor should take strict action, including annulment of the polls, or defer them till all the defacement is removed. A bench of Chief Justice Designate Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said crores of rupees were prima facie being spent by candidates and orally asked the university vice chancellor to step in and take strict action. People are "behaving like illiterates" in a place of learning, the court said and added the election system is not there to corrupt the youth. The bench suggested that the university should defer the elections, scheduled for September 27, or disqualify the candidates and start nomination afresh or should allow polling but not declare the results till all the defacement is removed. The university counsel, on instructions of the chief election officer of the university who was present in the court, urged that the matter be taken up on Thursday as the authorities plan to take a decision on



it by then. The court then listed the matter for further hearing on Thursday and directed the Delhi Police to cooperate with the Delhi University, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Delhi Metro to ensure that no further defacement of public property takes place and the defacement already done is removed. "Look at the amount of defacement done. The vice chancellor should act on this and if it takes annulment of elections, let it be done. Let all the money spent go into drains. Whosoever's poster is there, send the bill to him," the bench said. Going through photographs of the defacement of public property, the bench said the situation during the DUSU

polls was worse than the general elections. It observed that elections are a festival of democracy and not of laundering money and said, "this amounts to corruption. If the students end up getting corrupt at this stage, there is no end." "People have so much money power in these elections. It is a festival of democracy and not a festival of laundering of money. This is laundering of money, which is going on. These are some crores being spent here. "The election system is not to corrupt the youth. The use of this amount of money in students' union elections is corrupting the students right at the inception. In a place of learning, people are behaving like illiterates. Only an illiterate can behave like this. Delhi

University is doing nothing. Take stringent action so that these people get to know that they cannot get away like this. This shows there is no dearth of money. Let the vice chancellor call a meeting today itself," an annoyed bench said. Justice Manmohan observed, "This is done by a literate group or is it an illiterate group doing this? This sort of defacement and all will be done by someone who is illiterate. I think this is the failure of our education system and these activities should be dealt with heavy hands." "You tell them to first clean it up, it must be repainted, restored and then you allow elections to take place," the court said. The court was hearing a plea seeking action against the prospective DUSU candidates and student political outfits involved in damaging, defacing, soiling or destroying the beauty of public walls. Petitioner Prashant Manchanda, a practising advocate, also sought action against those involved in damaging classrooms, thus denying the citizens a clean and beautiful environment and surroundings free from defacement as well as depriving the students of their right to education.

University students express concerns over increasing role of money, muscle power in DUSU polls

SAUMYA SHUKLA/ VIBHU JOSHI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid two days left for the keenly fought battle of Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) poll, university students expressed concerns over the increasing role of money and muscle power in the elections along with many complaining about inconvenience due to the campus rallies which have been keeping both North and South Campuses buzzing. Luxury cars, including Range Rover, Thar, SUVs, and other high-end vehicles, formed part of convoys of candidates contesting elections amid hundreds of people from other states being brought in as a show of strength ahead of the elections. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has brought in around 100-150 supporters from various states to bolster its campaign. National Students Union of India (NSUI) national delegate Y Pawan, from Telangana, mentioned that 100 supporters

from Telangana had come to support the students' union. However, even as Wednesday marks the last day of campaigning, students claimed that it is mainly ineffective with many unable to recall the names of any candidate from any student union including ABVP and NSUI. A student claimed that the rallies cause disruptions in their classes. "Whenever the rallies pass by a college gate, the authorities lock it up, including the faculty gates, to ensure that no one crosses the premises. This causes major inconvenience for us. If the rally goes on for ten minutes, we are stuck and get late for our classes," said Ritika, a student from the Arts Faculty. Aakansha, another student from the Arts Faculty, shared her indifference towards the elections. "I am not interested in all this college politics. Their campaigning revolves around just wasting paper. No one is even interested in looking at the pamphlets—they just walk over them." Many students also stated

how there is an increasing role of money and muscle power in the DUSU polls even as candidates use lavish cars for campaigning. "There is no connection with the candidates. All these student unions do is litter the roads and waste tons of money. They just released their manifesto but don't talk about it—they just focus on showcasing their money and muscle power. That disconnect is the reason I won't be voting," said Himanshu, a student from the Department of Library and Information Science. A Hindu college student Gauri said that these campaigners don't value private space and create nuisance on campus with wastage of resources and pamphlets with them creating noise pollution. She claimed that she has also seen girls being harassed during the campaigning. A law student Manthan Tripathi alleged that there is no law and order while the campaigning is ongoing for the polls which will not even benefit students.

The DUSU elections, slated to be held on September 27, have sparked concerns, as many first-year students will have barely spent a month on campus, with their classes beginning only on August 29. Many argue that this limited time leaves them unfamiliar with the university environment and student politics, making them more susceptible to influence by campaigners with some accusing campaigners of exploiting this inexperience to sway votes by offering them with superficial gestures. "The campaigning has changed over time. It's all about banners and clashes, with candidates focused more on politics than student issues. The nominees are not chosen based on the work they want to do but on their money and power. They don't want to connect with students anymore. Instead, they try to lure first-year students with movie tickets, canteen tokens, and trips," Vimlesh Tripathi, an MA student in Sanskrit, said.

Three AAP councillors join BJP ahead of MCD Standing Committee polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a big blow to the AAP on Wednesday, three councillors of the party joined the BJP, a day before election of one member to the MCD's Standing Committee even as several have already switched their loyalties. AAP's Dilshad Colony Garden councillor Preeti, Green Park councillor Sarita Phogat and Madanpur Khadar East councillor Praveen Kumar joined the BJP in the presence of party's state president Virendra Sachdeva and Leader of Opposition in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Raja Iqbal Singh. Delhi BJP has also claimed that AAP has lost majority amongst the elected councillors of MCD and thus has no more moral right to be in power. "MCD at present has an effective strength of 249 elected Councillors and AAP now has only 124 Councillors with it while majority mark is 125 hence it has clearly lost majority," the Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor stated. The election for filling up the



lone vacancy of 18 member Standing Committee, the highest decision making body of the MCD, will be held on Thursday, which was created by the resignation of BJP councillor Kamaljeet Sehrawat after her election from the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat earlier this year. The three councillors also took membership of the saffron party during an event at

the Delhi BJP office here. Welcoming them, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said, "At this time there are a lot of problems in Delhi, there is a shortage of drinking water, sewers are overflowing, there are potholes on the roads everywhere but the new Chief Minister Atishi has been only playing with things for the last five days." "Today, the people of Delhi

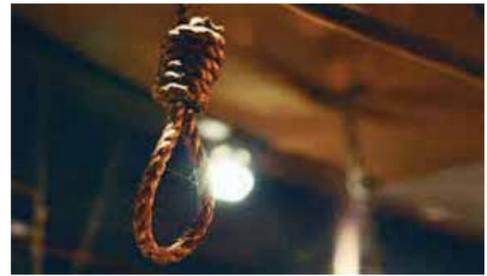
have completely understood the corruption of Kejriwal and his party and this is the reason that his own people have lost faith in him. People are constantly leaving AAP and they now want to serve the people by joining the BJP which is constantly raising the voice of the people of Delhi," he claimed. Preeti said that she was a four-time councillor and has

always remained among people trying to help in solving their problems related to civic issues. "I joined Kejriwal and his party believing they wanted to do something different but now I was forced to quit the AAP as a different atmosphere exists there and it became unbearable for me," she said. The MCD councillor also slammed Chief Minister Atishi and the local MLA of her area, claiming nobody in the ruling party in Delhi listened if anyone raised grievances of people like drains and dirty water supply. "Atishi was the first woman who incited all of us to beat up BJP's corporators. Being a woman, if Atishi is talking about beating up other women, then it reflects her character." Councillor Praveen Kumar said that he is a councillor of a very backward ward where there are deep problems. "The Mayor or other party leaders do not listen to the councillors at all and today I have taken membership of BJP to raise and solve the problems of the public," he stated.

Civil services aspirant hangs himself in Mukherjee Nagar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 22 year old civil services aspirant, who had cleared his prelims exam, allegedly committed suicide by hanging in Northwest Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Deepak Kumar Meena, resident of Dausa in Rajasthan, who arrived in Delhi in July this year to prepare for the UPSC mains exams which was 10 days away. He has been missing since September 11. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northwest) Jitendra Kumar Meena said, "On September 20, the day the exams began, the body of the 22-year-old UPSC aspirant was found hanging from a tree in a forest area near a coaching institute library in Northwest Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar," adding that prima facie it appears, that he had committed suicide due to the pressure of exams. However, the reason can be ascertained with certainty after the investigation is



over. He stated that his body was found in a wooded area near Dussehra Ground. Deepak had cleared the UPSC prelims exam and was preparing for the mains exam at a private coaching institute in Mukherjee Nagar. During the course of police investigation, his phone was searched and it was found that Meena had searched material related to suicide on Google and YouTube. While some students were suspecting murder as a liquor bottle was found at the crime scene, the DCP stated that CCTV footage has

confirmed that he went to buy the liquor himself. Further, according to police, CCTV footage from the day he went missing showed Deepak holding his bag and walking alone towards the area where his body was found later. However, no suicide note has been found yet. The body of the deceased was taken to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital for post-mortem which shows that it was a case of suicide by hanging. "In the post-mortem report, no external injuries or other marks were found on the body," he said.

Cops bust international syndicate running digital arrest scam, nab three men

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police busted an international syndicate running a "digital arrest scam" and have nabbed three men for allegedly swindling Rs 55 lakh from a woman by posing as customs officers at the Mumbai airport, an official said on Wednesday. The accused were identified as Prabhat Kumar Shah (24), Rajesh Kumar (27) and Arjun Singh (29), residents of Burari, police said. "We have busted an International syndicate running a digital arrest scam after a woman filed a complaint on

September 12. She told police that she was digitally arrested and the accused defrauded Rs 55 lakh from her," Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO) Hemant Tiwari said. "Digital arrest" is a tactic where the accused pose as law enforcement agency officials, like CBI or customs officials, and threatens people of arrest by making video calls in the name of fake international parcels. The officer said that on September 12, a woman filed a complaint at Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (Special Cell) alleging that on the morning of

September 9, she received a phone call from someone who claimed to be an officer at the Customs Office in Mumbai Airport. According to the officer, she was asked to confirm her identity and the caller informed her that customs officials had intercepted a parcel on September 6, containing 16 fake passports, 58 ATM cards, and 40 grams of MDMA (psychoactive substance), with her details listed as the sender. "The accused further claimed that Mumbai Police had issued an arrest warrant against her, and she must surrender. The fraudsters escalated the intim-



idation by asserting that a CBI investigation was underway and that her arrest was imminent. Till the pendency of physical arrest, she was put under "digital arrest" by keeping continuous surveillance

through video calls," DCP Tiwari said. Police said that throughout these calls, different individuals posing as senior officers from the Mumbai police, CBI and various law enforcement

agencies, pressured her to transfer funds under the pretext of verifying her accounts to avoid money laundering charges and cheated her of Rs 55 lakh. After receiving a complaint, an FIR was registered under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act and an investigation was taken up, police said. "Through a detailed analysis of mobile numbers and bank accounts used by the suspects, investigators identified the proprietors of a fake company. The team later identified three men Prabhat, Rajesh and Arjun Singh in Burari. Prabhat and

Rajesh were found to be the proprietors of a company which was used to funnel the defrauded funds," the DCP said. He said that the accused would pose as officials from police, CBI, customs and other government bodies. They would inform victims that parcels containing prohibited items had been intercepted, with their names listed as the sender. Initially, they threatened the victims with arrest and severe penalties, but later shifted to a more sympathetic tone, suggesting it could be a case of mistaken identity. To resolve the issue, they instructed vic-

tims to lodge a formal complaint and transfer money into specified accounts for verification, falsely promising that the funds would be refunded after the verification process, DCP Tiwari said. Police said that they had frozen Rs 20 lakh from the account of the accused which was returned to the victim, DCP said. The accused were arrested on Tuesday. Police seized three mobile phones, sim cards, passbooks, chequebooks, documents, two PAN cards, and stamps and seals related to fake companies. Further investigation is underway, DCP added.

Modi marks ten years of Make in India, calls nation unstoppable

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

On the 10th anniversary of this government's 'Make in India' drive, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday affirmed that the flagship initiative to boost manufacturing has transformed a dream into a powerful movement and its impact shows that "Bharat is unstoppable". In a blog on LinkedIn, he lauded everyone who played a role in making the initiative a "roaring success", saying each of them is a pioneer, visionary and innovator, whose tireless efforts have fuelled the programme's success, making India the focus of global attention as well as curiosity. It is the collective drive, relentless in nature, which has transformed a dream into a powerful movement. The impact of 'Make in India' shows that Bharat is unstoppable," he said. Asserting that a lot goes in India's favour today as it is a perfect blend of democracy, demography and demand, Modi said the country has

what it takes to be a key player in the global supply chain seen as a reliable partner for business. "The momentum is clearly in India's favour. Despite facing unprecedented challenges like the global pandemic, India has remained firmly on the growth track. Today, we are being seen as drivers of global growth. I call upon my young friends to come and join us in taking Make in India to new heights. We all must strive for excellence. Delivery quality should be our commitment. Zero defect should be our mantra," said Modi. "Together, we can continue to build an India that not only meets its own needs but also serves as a manufacturing and innovation powerhouse for the world," he added. 'Make in India' was launched to increase India's strides in manufacturing to ensure that a talented nation as India is not merely an importer but an exporter as well, the prime minister said. "Reflecting on this past decade, I cannot but be filled



with a sense of pride in how far the strength and skills of 140 crore Indians have got us. The imprint of 'Make in India' has become visible across sectors, including areas where we never even dreamt of making an impact," he said. Citing examples, Modi said India had only two mobile manufacturing units in the entire country and the number has risen to over 200. "Our mobile exports have skyrocketed from a mere Rs 1,556 crore to an astounding Rs 1.2 lakh crore - a mind-boggling 7500 per cent increase! Today, 99% of mobile phones used in India are Made in India. We've become the second-largest mobile manufacturer globally," he said. In the steel industry, the country has become a net

exporter of finished steel, with production increasing by over 50 per cent since 2014. "Our semiconductor manufacturing sector has attracted investments worth over Rs 1.5 lakh crore, with five plants approved that will have a combined capacity of more than 7 crore chips per day," the prime minister added. In renewable energy, the country is the fourth largest producer globally, with capacity increasing by 400 per cent in just a decade. The electric vehicle industry, practically non-existent in 2014, is now worth USD billion. Defence production exports have soared from Rs 1,000 crores to Rs 21,000 crore, reaching over 85 nations, he said. During one of the 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcasts, the prime minister said that he had spoken about the need to have a vibrant toys industry. "Over the years, we have seen exports increase by 239 per cent, with imports halved, particularly benefiting our local manufacturers and sellers, not to mention the little children as well," he noted. Modi said many of the icons of today's India - Vande Bharat trains, BrahMos missiles and the mobile phones - all proudly bear the 'Make in India' label. From electronics to the space sector, it represents Indian ingenuity and quality, he added. "Make in India initiative is also special because it has given the poor the wings to dream big and aspire - it has given them the confidence that they can be wealth creators. Equally notable is the impact on the MSME sector," he said. The prime minister said his government is committed to making this spirit even stronger. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes have been game-changers, enabling investments of thousands of crores and generating lakhs of jobs, he said. Modi said it is noteworthy how exports have risen in various sectors, capacities have been built and economy thus strengthened.



AIIMS Delhi celebrates 69th Foundation Day

New initiatives include AI diagnostic solutions, patient grievance portal to enhance healthcare services

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav on Wednesday hailed the recent role of the AIIMS, Delhi as the National Resource Centre of the National Medical College Network (NMCN) of the Ministry. "This has enabled linkages with more than 100 medical colleges for enhancing undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing medical education. "This objective is being facilitated by the creation of a National Learning Management and Information System, SAKSHYAM, which was launched last year," he said at the 69th Foundation Day ceremony of the premier health institute. Speaking on the occasion, Jadhav also lauded the institute for setting up a Centre of Excellence for development of artificial intelligence in healthcare. Created by the Ministry, this centre is expected to deliver AI based solutions for evaluation of chest x-rays, early detection of diabetic retinopathy, and identification of skin lesions, among other tools, for enhancing national programs. AIIMS Delhi has also started the Centre for Medical Innovation & Entrepreneurship as a Bio-Incubator under the BIRAC -

BioNEST Scheme and has been entrusted with the responsibility to operationalize the Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS) at Maidangarhi. On the occasion, the Minister also launched various initiatives undertaken by the AIIMS including SANTUSHT portal that enables patients to register their grievances online, track the status, and provide feedback regarding the resolution. The Minister also inaugurated a fire station at AIIMS which will have a manpower of six men. "It is the first such station exclusively for any medical institute," said an official from the institution. Prof M Srinivas, Director, AIIMS, Delhi said "AIIMS has already received NABH certification for some of its blocks and centers and is in the process of NABH certification of all the centers including the main hospital." He highlighted that NABL accreditation of all laboratories in a phased manner is under process. He also informed that AIIMS has also been the forerunner in the implementation of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM). "It has overcome various challenges and has been a role model for the country by creating more than 7 lakh ABHA IDs and more than 20 lakh scan and share tokens," he said.

BJP's Make in India stunt halts manufacturing growth: Kharge



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday alleged that 10 years of the Narendra Modi government's Make in India "stunt" has put a break on India's manufacturing and said that glitzy ads cannot sugarcoat its "colossal failures". Kharge said contrary to the BJP's high decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has become de-industrialised. "10 years of Modi Govt's Make in India Stunt has put Break in India's Manufacturing! 10 years ago, PM Narendra Modi crafted the slogan of 'Make in India' and claimed to build Aatm Nirbhar Bharat. Contrary to BJP's high decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has got de-industrialised due to Modi

government's FLOP policy initiatives," he said in a social media post. Kharge listed five "stark facts" which he claimed made India miss the bus on manufacturing. "The average growth rate of the manufacturing sector between 2014-15 and 2023-24 is just 3.1% (BJP-NDA) whereas between 2004-05 and 2013-14, the average growth rate was 7.85% (Congress-UPA). The number of employees in factories grew at 6.2% annually during the Congress-UPA regime. This growth fell spectacularly to just 2.8% under the Modi government," the Congress chief said. Between 2011-12 and 2022, India's manufacturing sector saw minimal growth in employment, increasing from 6 crore to merely 6.3 crore workers, he said. "This modest addition of 3 lakh jobs annually is insufficient, considering 1.5 crore youth enter the workforce every year," he said. Kharge said according to NSO, the share of employment in manufacturing accounted for 12.6 per cent of all workers in 2011-12. This declined to 10.9 per cent in 2020-21, before recovering 11.6 per cent in 2021-22, he said. Kharge said the share of manufacturing in India's GDP has hit "an all time low" of 12.83 per cent in 2023, which under the UPA in 2013 was 15.25 per cent. He claimed that most Production-Linked Incentive, or PLI, schemes have garnered "lukewarm and tepid" response from the industry and experts have criticised the schemes for their poor design, lack of clarity and no real value addition.

Indian Defence production hits ₹ 1.27 lakh crore, expanding exports to over 90 countries

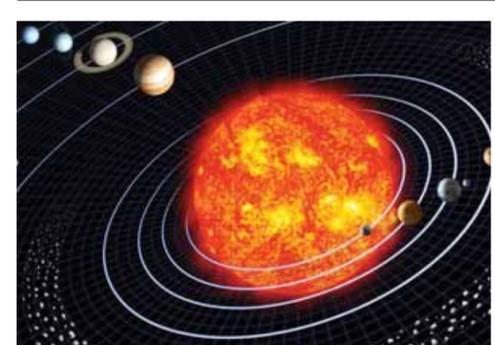
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's defence production has clocked an all-time high of Rs 1.27 lakh crore in terms of value in 2023-24 and it is now exporting weapons and military hardware to more than 90 friendly countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday. Indian armed forces are now using weapons and platforms manufactured on Indian soil and the country is rising on the global defence industrial landscape, the minister said in a social media post on the 10th anniversary of the NDA government's 'Make in India' programme. The government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "astute leadership" introduced the 'Make in India' programme with a vision to make the country self-reliant in every domain, he said. "Ten years since then, many reforms have been made in every sector including the defence sector. India is rising on the defence industrial landscape of the world," Rajnath said. "Today, Indian Armed Forces



are using weapons and platforms, which are manufactured on our own soil and we are also exporting defence items to more than 90 friendly foreign countries," the minister added. In the last few years, the government has taken a series of measures to promote the domestic defence industry. The focus has been to boost domestic defence manufacturing and bolster military preparedness especially in areas along the border with China. India's defence exports

crossed the Rs 21,000 crore mark for the first time in 2023-24 and the defence ministry has set a target of increasing it to Rs 50,000 crore in the next five years. India is one of the largest importers of arms globally. According to estimates, Indian armed forces are projected to spend around USD 130 billion in capital procurement by 2029. The government wants to reduce dependence on imported military platforms and has decided to support domestic defence manufacturing.



Indian astronomers map Sun's differential rotation using century old data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a groundbreaking discovery, Indian astronomers have mapped the variation in the rotation speed of the Sun's chromosphere from the equator to the poles using 100 years of data from the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory. The Observatory is just one of two such places in the entire world with such long-term data analysis of which has marked a significant advance in solar studies. Shedding light on the Sun's inner working, the research team from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST) found that unlike Earth, which spins at the same speed everywhere - irrespective of the location - the Sun rotates faster at its equator than its poles. That is, in other words, about 25 days at the equator compared to 35

days at the poles. While the phenomenon of differential rotation was first observed by Carrington in the 19th century through sunspots, this new study, "Equator to Pole Solar Chromospheric Differential Rotation Using Ca-K Features Derived from Kodaikanal Data", utilised solar plages and network features to measure rotation speeds at higher latitudes, filling in gaps left by previous methods. These features, captured at a specific wavelength, are continuously present and larger than sunspots, allowing for consistent data collection across the solar cycle. By analysing the digitised data, the discovered that the rotation rate decreases from 13.98 degrees per day at the equator to 10.5 degrees per day at 80 degrees latitude. Both plages and network features exhibited similar rotation rates, suggesting a shared origin within the Sun's interior.

India cuts HIV infections by 44 per cent, to end AIDS threat by 2030

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In keeping with its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goal of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, India has made remarkable progress in combating HIV/AIDS, achieving a 44 per cent reduction in annual infections since 2010, surpassing the global reduction rate of 39 per cent. This was stated by Union Health Minister Anupriya Singh Patel at a high-level side event at the UN on the theme "Revitalized Multilateralism: Recommitting to Ending AIDS Together."

The Minister also outlined India's progress and key strategies in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS, including the 5th phase of the National AIDS and STD Control Programme (2021-2026), fully funded by the government. Data from the recent India HIV Estimations 2023 report show that more than 2.5 million people are living with HIV in India. But with concerted efforts, the adult HIV prevalence is at 0.2 per cent and estimated annual new HIV infections are at around 66,400. "India has made great strides in combating HIV/AIDS



through innovative programmes and robust partnerships," the Minister said at the event which was organized by UNAIDS, the Global Fund, and PEPFAR. She emphasised India's

commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goal of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. This includes youth awareness campaigns like Red Ribbon Clubs in educational

institutions and mass awareness activities such as the annual RED RUN Marathon. "India offers comprehensive HIV and Syphilis testing to all pregnant women with more than 30 million free HIV tests being conducted annually," Patel said. Further, public healthcare systems in India are providing free Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) to "more than 1.7 million people". The Minister also delved into India's role as the world's largest supplier of antiretroviral drugs - over 70 per cent to ensure affordable access for nations

in need. "We are proud to contribute to the global fight against HIV/AIDS by making quality treatment accessible worldwide," said the Minister. Importantly, she added, the country has made efforts to address stigma around HIV with HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017. In addition, "India's approach to integrating national health programmes, including efforts to tackle tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, and non-communicable diseases, is helping address comorbidities faced by people living with HIV," she added.

Dental Council strict on zero ragging policy, names defaulters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Dental Council of India (DCI) has identified six dental colleges where more than one ragging case have been reported in the last 5 years. As per the information available from the Council's website on August 12, these defaulter colleges include Eklavya Dental College and Hospital in Rajasthan, Kusum Devi Sunderlal Dugar Jain Dental College in Kolkata. The four others are Saraswati Dental College in Lucknow, KD Dental College in Mathura, Government Dental College in Raipur, and SCB Dental College in Cuttack. In contrast, the DCI has also highlighted that 286 dental colleges across the country have not reported any cases of



ragging, establishing them as safe zones for newcomers. This includes colleges from various states, with notable numbers in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. Number wise, 15 are in Andhra Pradesh, 3 each in Assam, West Bengal and Kashmir, 4 each in Bihar, Puducherry and Jharkhand,

two each in Odisha, Uttarakhand and Manipur, five each in Chhattisgarh and Himachal, one each in Daman and Goa, five in Delhi, 12 in Gujarat, nine in Haryana, 42 in Karnataka, 27 in Kerala, 11 in Madhya Pradesh, 34 in Maharashtra, 16 in Punjab, 11 in Rajasthan, 30 in Tamil Nadu, 12 in Telangana, one in

Tripura, 20 in Uttar Pradesh, and three in West Bengal. Dr. Anil Kumar Chandna, executive member of DCI said that unlike medical institutions where cases of ragging and harassments to the students have been frequently reported at times leading to death by suicide, environment at the dental colleges is much conducive for the students. He said that time to time, meetings are held with student council members, the anti-ragging squad, floor-wise anti-ragging committee, mentors, and staff about the detrimental effects of ragging. The DCI has commitment to maintaining a ragging-free environment and raise awareness and promote a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity among students.

Giridhar Aramane to visit Kenya to enhance defence cooperation



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane will undertake a

visit to Kenya from September 26 to 27 in a significant effort to further deepen defence cooperation. During his visit, the Defence Secretary will hold discussions with the Principal Secretary for Defence of Kenya, defence ministry said here on Wednesday. A highlight of the visit would be the foundation stone laying ceremony for a new CT Scan Complex aimed at bolstering the healthcare infrastructure for military personnel in Kenya. The initiative underscores India's commitment to supporting Kenya in advancing its defence readiness and medical services.

Kejriwal challenges RSS Chief on Modi's leadership, questions BJP's tactics

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a new political strategy, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday sought answers from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, complaining him for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions in an apparent bid to diminish his stature by implying that the parent Hindutva organisation was the master.

Indians. The AAP supremo wrote that he's 'very worried' about the current situation in the country. "The direction in which the BJP's central government is taking the country and its politics is harmful for the entire nation," he said. "If this continues, our country and democracy will be finished," he said in the letter to Bhagwat. Kejriwal accused the BJP of deploying agencies like the CBI and ED against political rivals and giving protection to "the most corrupt leaders."

Adalat" rally on Sunday, the former Delhi chief minister demanded answers from Bhagwat on whether he agrees with the BJP's politics of "using" central agencies to break up political outfits and topple governments led by opposition parties, and inducting "corrupt" leaders into its fold. His other questions were if the RSS-BJP's rule on the age for retirement also applied to Modi as it did for leaders like LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, and how Bhagwat felt when BJP chief J P Nadda said his party does not need the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological mentor of the saffron party.



According to experts, Kejriwal was trying to cash in on the difference of opinion between the RSS' and BJP's top leadership, Kejriwal's questions to the RSS chief could be aimed at Hindutva adherents. The questions he



asked were political softballs but the implication of bringing Bhagwat into his new political narrative is new and unusual. "If this continues, our democracy will end, our country will end. Parties will keep coming and

going, elections will keep coming and going, leaders will keep coming and going, but India will always remain. It is our responsibility to ensure that the tricolor of this country always flies proudly in the sky. In this regard, there are some questions in the minds of the people which I am placing before you. My intention is only to save and strengthen Indian democracy," he added. Kejriwal reminded Bhagwat that RSS members pride themselves on being "nationalists and patriots," while criticising the inclusion of leaders into the BJP whom PM Modi and Amit Shah had previously labelled as "corrupt." Referring to the

BJP's origins within the RSS, Kejriwal questioned if Bhagwat had ever tried to stop PM Modi from engaging in these "wrong practices." He also cited Nadda's statement during the Lok Sabha elections, implying that the BJP had grown bold enough to challenge its "mother" organisation, the RSS. "Is it right for the country and its democracy to topple elected governments in this manner? Do you or the RSS approve of gaining power by any means of dishonesty," Kejriwal asked in the letter. The Former Chief Minister noted that some Opposition leaders, who were labelled corrupt by the Prime Minister and other BJP leaders,

including Home Minister Amit Shah, were inducted into the BJP on several occasions. Taking a veiled dig at NCP chief Ajit Pawar, the AAP leader said, "on 28 June 2023, in a public speech, Modi accused a party and one of its leaders of a scam of Rs 70 thousand crores. A few days after that, that party was broken and the government was formed with the same leader who was called corrupt till then. He was then made the Deputy Chief Minister. There are many such cases when corrupt leaders of other parties were inducted into the BJP. Did you or RSS workers imagine such a BJP? Don't you feel pain seeing all this," he asked.

Sandip Ghosh just an acquaintance of Didi's personal physician

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA



SP Das the personal physician of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee finally came out in the open challenging "various unfounded theories" connecting him with the general corruption prevailing in the State Health sector that allegedly led to the August 9 rape and murder of a lady doctor inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. "There are people who are unnecessarily linking me to the Healthy Department or any corruption if there be some just because I am the Chief Minister's personal physician," Dr Das an orthopaedic surgeon on Wednesday said. When asked as to whether he knew jailed former Principal of RGKMCH Sandip Ghosh he said he knew him but that was just an acquaintance and that there was no personal proximity. "I have seen him off and on in conferences and

our relationship was limited to 'his and hellos' ... we never ventured beyond that ... I knew him because he too is an orthopaedic surgeon like me," Dr Das said adding "the people who are allowing such dirty misinformation against me to float in the market because I am the Chief Minister's doctor." On whether he was aware of the corruption in the Health Department or whether he often times gave advice to the Chief Minister on issues related to the health services in the State, he said he was not in the habit of giving unsolicited advices. "I only give advices if she asks me ... otherwise I am not required

to give such advices as I am not a Government doctor and also there are plenty of senior people to advise the Chief Minister." Incidentally besides being the Chief Minister Banerjee is the minister in charge of the Health portfolio too. Earlier a number of doctors as also Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari had repeatedly said that Dr Das was at the helm of everything in the Health Department. "The Chief Minister runs the Health Department through Dr Das ... he will tell everything once he is interrogated by the CBI after taking him custody... the fountainhead of all the dirty things in the Health m=istry is this Dr Das," Adhikari had said. Reacting to his statement Das said that "Suwendu Adhikari is being supplied wrong information about me ... I am not acquainted with him but I know his father --- the former Union Minister Sisir Adhikari --- who is a gentleman ... he also knows me well."

Iconic tram to 'derail' ... but Minister says 'not tomorrow'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government has beaten a hasty retreat on the issue of "permanently discontinuing the iconic Tram --- the only such facility available in the country with it being withdrawn from Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai decades ago --- following a high decibel furor in the social media and elsewhere after reports became public that State had decided to 'derail' the tram forever. Bengal Transport Minister Snehashish Chakrabarty on Tuesday said that there was no need to panic as the Government was "not going to discontinue tram today or tomorrow ... we will abide by the Calcutta High Court order regarding this... we too are aware of the people's emotions." In the backdrop of a Public Interest Petition pending in the High Court and in view of a suggestion made last December by the Government could consider a "public private partnership" the State had made it clear

that in the hearing it would submit before the Court that barring for a small stretch in Khiderpore and Esplanade-Maidan area the Tram services would be discontinued. Soon the Netizens as well as the Kolkata Tram Users' Association exploded in rebellion saying they would hit the streets if the Government would take any such decision. "We will start a movement and gherao all the Tram Depots at Gariahat, Shyambazar, Tollygunge and elsewhere if the Government takes this decision ... Tram goes with our heritage and culture and we cannot see its end in Kolkata," said Benoy Singh one of the office bearers of the Association. The Tramways workers' union too said that they would jam streets of Kolkata "taking along with us the coon citizens if such arbitrary decision is implemented." The Transport Minister's statement comes in the aftermath of the warnings issued from various quarters the KTUA said. Once compared to "prehistoric



dinosaurs" by famous Bengali writer Mani Shankar Ray started its journey for the first time in Kolkata in the year 1873 when it was drawn by horses. Subsequently it was driven by steam power and later on electric tram was introduced in the year 1902. "We had celebrated the 150 years of Tram services in Kolkata on 24 th February, 2023 ... we were so proud of Trams and often people from other parts of the country who came to Kolkata would ride Tram ... sometimes more fondly than the Metro Railways because you have Metro services in many cities

but Tram is remaining only in Kolkata," said Animitra Majumdar a 99-year-old person who had worked with a now defunct colonial firm for 30 long years and "only commuted to my office by tram and nothing else." Even till recently he made it a point to ride his favourite vehicle at least once in a month. Like Kolkata Tram ran in Madras (now Chennai), Mumbai, Delhi, Patna, Bhavnagar too but in all those places the service was discontinued owing to either space crunch, lack of speed or economic non-viability. Bikash Sharma a

former employee of the Kolkata Tram Company said "the Government has already discontinued tram services in most of the routes ... they are allowing this vast industry to die a slow death though people not only prefer it but love it ... the Government is doing this in order to divert funds to politically viable sectors to garner votes but we will not let that happen." Another former worker said that "the KTC had hundreds of acres of lands in prime locations all over the city ... after sending Tram to the gallows they will sell these lands for a premium to their own people and construct malls ... this is another scam." However the Minister said that running the tram services was not becoming difficult economically but also causing space problems "as we have to handle ever increasing number of daily commuters. Unlike Delhi, Mumbai or Chennai, which have more than 20 percent space on an average for roads Kolkata has only six percent roads and Tram is eating up even that he said.

Assam Government, AASU forge path on indigenous rights

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam government and the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday discussed the implementation of Justice (Retd) Biplab Sarma committee's recommendations on Clause 6 of the Assam Accord to protect the interests of the indigenous population. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with his cabinet colleagues and AASU representatives, analysed the recommendations at the state secretariat. Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Sarma said, "It was made clear that the recommendations cannot be implemented in the three districts of the Barak Valley and the autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule areas without the explicit consent of the people in those regions." The recommendations will apply only to the districts of the Brahmaputra Valley and not in the three districts of

Barak Valley along with the Sixth Schedule areas of Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong and Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Sarma explained that the committee's report is divided into three parts - 40 recommendations for exclusive state implementation, 12 to be jointly implemented by both central and state governments, and 15 exclusively for the Centre. "The state government and AASU will collaborate to implement the 40 recommendations related to land, culture, and linguistics along with the 12 others which are in the shared domain of the state and central government," he added. Regarding the definition of an indigenous Assamese, Sarma noted that the committee recommended using 1951 as a cutoff date in specific cases under Clause 6, but "this should not be assumed as a general cutoff for all day-to-day activities."

SC accepts Karnataka Judge apology, stresses judicial impartiality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Accepting apology from Karnataka High Court judge for controversial comments, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said that every judge should be aware of own predispositions and the heart and soul of judging is the need to be impartial and fair. The apex court's observation came while hearing a suo motu over objectionable comments made by Karnataka High Court judge V Srishananda during court proceedings. The apex court also did not agree with the restriction of online streaming of the High Court proceedings. By closing the proceedings, the five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said it is necessary for every stakeholder in the institution to understand that the only values that must guide judicial decision making are those that are enshrined in the Constitution. "At the same time, it is important that

every judge should be aware of their own predispositions. The heart and soul of judging is the need to be impartial and fair," the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy, said. "Intrinsic to that process is the need for every judge to be aware of our own predispositions because it is only on the basis of such awareness that we can truly be faithful to the fundamental obligation of the judge to deliver objective and fair justice," the court said. The bench cautioned courts against making comments that should be construed as "misogynistic" or directed at a particular "gender or

community". It closed the proceedings initiated over the alleged objectionable comments made by the judge, noting that he had tendered an apology during the open court proceedings in the high court on September 21. In its order dictated in the courtroom, the bench said the observations that it would make would be consistent with the need to preserve the judicial system's dignity. Referring to the social media's reach and the live-streaming of court proceedings, the bench emphasised that this places an added responsibility on the judges, lawyers and litigants, who appear in courts in person, to conduct proceedings conscious of the wider impact of casual observations on the community at large. "But should I tell you, the answer to sunlight is more sunlight. Not to suppress what happens in the courts," the CJ observed, adding that the answer was not to close doors and shut everything down.

PM Modi to inaugurate ₹ 22,600 crore development projects in Pune

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In his fourth foray into Maharashtra in less than a month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Pune on Thursday to inaugurate, dedicate and lay foundation stones for several development projects worth Rs. 22,600 crore and inaugurate the Solapur Airport. Mod ---, who is in an Assembly poll campaign-mode even before the announcement of the schedule by the Election Commission of India (ECI) - had earlier addressed "Lakshmi Didi Sammelan" at Jalgaon in north Maharashtra on August 25, laid a foundation stone for Rs 76,000 crore Vadkhan Port at Palghar in coastal Konkan region August 30 and participated in the first anniversary function of the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana at Wardha in Vidarbha region. On Thursday, Modi will flag off the Metro train scheduled to run from District Court yMetro



station to Swargate, Pune. The inauguration of Pune Metro section of District Court to Swargate will mark the execution of the Pune Metro Rail Project (Phase-1). The cost of the underground section between District Court to Swargate is around Rs 1,810 crore. The Extension of Pune Metro Phase-I to be developed at the cost of around Rs 2,950 crore. This southern extension of around 5.46 km is completely underground with three stations --- Market Yard, Padmavati and Katraj.

Modi will lay the foundation stone for the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule's First Girls' School at Bhidewada. Modi will dedicate to the nation Bidkin Industrial Area, a transformative project covering an expansive 7,855 acres under the National Industrial Corridor Development Program of Govt. of India, situated 20 kms south of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (known earlier as Aurangabad). He will also inaugurate a High-Performance Computing (HPC)

Rahul Gandhi slams BJP over Kangana remarks on reviving farm laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday slammed the BJP over its MP Kangana Ranaut's remarks calling for bringing back the three farm laws and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi must clarify whether he is opposed to the comments or is "upto some mischief". Rahul asserted that any attempt to revive the farm laws will be met with opposition from the INDIA bloc. Ranaut on Wednesday withdrew her remarks calling for bringing back the three farm laws and said those were her personal opinions and did not represent the party's stand. The actor-politician said she must remember that

she is not only an artiste but also a BJP member now and her statements should be in line with her party's policies. In a video statement, Rahul Gandhi said, "The BJP people keep testing ideas. They ask someone to voice an idea among the people and then they see the reaction. This is what has happened, one of their MPs has talked about reviving the three black farm

laws. Modi ji you must clarify, whether you are against this or you are again up to some mischief." "Will the three farm laws be revived or not? If you do so, I guarantee you that the INDIA bloc will together stand against it. 700 people were martyred, they must be remembered and respected," the former Congress chief said.

"Modi ji had not allowed two minutes silence for them, we will never forget this," he said. In a social media post along with his video, Rahul said, "Who is deciding the government's policy? A BJP MP or Prime Minister Modi?" "Even after the martyrdom of more than 700 farmers, especially the farmers of Haryana and Punjab, the BJP people are not satisfied. INDIA will not allow any conspiracy of BJP against our farmers to succeed --- If any step is taken to harm the farmers, Modi ji will have to apologize again," the Congress leader said. Congress on Tuesday shared a video in which Ranaut said in Hindi, "Farm laws that have been repealed should be brought back. I think this may get controversial.

Amit Shah to hold major rally in Haryana for Rao Narbir Singh on September 29

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address Haryana's biggest public rally in support of Badshahpur constituency candidate Rao Narbir Singh on September 29. The rally will be organised in village Dhorka in Sector 95 of Badshahpur assembly constituency. Singh claimed that the rally to be held on September 29 will create a new history in Haryana. Singh said while addressing a public meeting organized in Farukhnagar, Bhangrola and Garhi village during his election tour on Wednesday. He said that before the ticket allocation, he had met the Union Home Minister Amit

Shah. At that time, Shah had promised him that he would come to Badshahpur in his support. The former minister said that Amit Shah is also coming to Badshahpur to fulfil his promise. Singh said that during the 56-day tenure of Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini's government, unprecedented announcements were made for the state. Not only made announcements, but he also worked to fulfil every promise he made. "The state has progressed under his leadership and there is no doubt that on October 8, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is going to form its government in the state for the third consecutive time," Rao said.

DRDO, IIT Delhi develop advanced light weight bullet proof jackets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), along with researchers of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi has developed Light Weight Bullet Proof Jackets named ABHED (Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat). The jackets have been developed at the DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) at IIT, Delhi, defence ministry said here on Wednesday. Giving details, officials said these jackets have been created from polymers and indigenous boron carbide ceramic material. The design configuration is based on characterisation of various materials at high strain rate

followed by appropriate modeling and simulation in collaboration with DRDO. The armour plates for the jackets have passed all necessary R&D trials as per the protocols. The jackets meet the highest threat levels, and are lighter than the maximum weight limits stipulated in respective General Staff Qualitative Requirement of the Indian Army. With minimum possible weight of 8.2 kgs and 9.5 kgs for different BIS Levels, these modular-design jackets having front and rear armours provide 360o protection.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A new era for Sri Lanka

Dissanayake's presidency signals a departure from dynastic politics and centrist governance in the Island nation

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the leader of Sri Lanka's left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), has been sworn in as the new president, marking a significant political shift for the island nation. A prominent leftist figure in Sri Lanka, Dissanayake's rise to power comes at a time when Sri Lanka is grappling with economic instability, post-war reconciliation challenges, and trust deficit with political parties. His presidency represents not only a new chapter for Sri Lanka but also has important regional implications, particularly for its closest neighbor, India. Dissanayake's election is symbolic of a larger political awakening in Sri Lanka. The country has been governed by a mix of family dynasties and centrist coalitions for decades. The Rajapaksa family's long tenure in power left behind a legacy of infrastructure development, but it also plunged Sri Lanka into deep economic turmoil, including a huge debt crisis. Dissanayake's presidency reflects a growing appetite for change among the Sri Lankan populace, particularly the youth, who are seeking accountability, transparency, and a departure from nepotism and corruption.



As a leftist, Dissanayake's ideology is rooted in socialist principles, advocating for wealth redistribution, land reforms, and a stronger welfare policies. His political platform laid emphasis on addressing economic inequalities, curbing corruption, and empowering marginalised communities. For a country with stark economic divisions and ethnic tensions, his approach signals a potential shift in how governance is conducted, focusing more on grassroots development and inclusivity. His presidency could usher in policies that prioritise social welfare over foreign investments. India

has long been a significant player in Sri Lanka's political and economic landscape. From the aftermath of the civil war to the island nation's economic collapse, India has consistently offered support, whether through financial aid, diplomatic backing, or humanitarian assistance. Dissanayake's presidency, however, may bring new challenges to this dynamic. Dissanayake may adopt a more cautious approach toward India. While he recognises the importance of India-Sri Lanka relations, he has also been vocal about maintaining Sri Lanka's sovereignty and avoiding over-reliance on any single foreign power. In his earlier speeches, Dissanayake has hinted at prioritising domestic economic reforms over international partnerships, potentially leading to more protectionist policies. This could mean that Indian investments might face more scrutiny. But it also means distancing from China. Dissanayake's presidency may open doors for deeper cooperation between the two countries, particularly in areas like agriculture, education, and social development. While India has been Sri Lanka's steadfast ally, regional dynamics involving China will also shape Dissanayake's foreign policy approach. Dissanayake has expressed concerns about Chinese debt-trap diplomacy which led to a lot of hardships for the people of Sri Lanka. It remains to be seen how he deals with China.

PICTALK



A Zebra in an enclosure during the 150th anniversary celebration of Allipore Zoological Garden, in Kolkata

India moves closer to 'one nation one election'

Momentum is building for simultaneous elections, but with constitutional and political challenges ahead, its successful implementation remains uncertain



KALYANI SHANKAR



The 'one-nation-one-poll' idea is moving towards Parliament and public debate, with the Modi government deciding to force the issue last week. The cabinet decided to bring a bill to Parliament in the coming session. The concept has been debated many times in the past, but no political consensus has evolved. The ruling BJP has been pushing to change the electoral system for a long time. Congress rejected the idea when approached by former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and later BJP leader L K Advani in the past. The timing of the move was excellent, as it was on the day Modi completed 100 days in office in his third term last week. This is one of the critical electoral reforms the BJP has suggested in its manifestoes for about two decades. While the idea seems reasonable and doable, several questions have arisen. Is India ready for such a reform? Does Prime Minister Modi have the required two-thirds majority to get the bill to amend the Constitution passed in Parliament? Is there a political consensus? These are a few questions that need answers. The primary and most important thing is that the bill can only be passed by mobilising two-thirds of the majority in Lok Sabha. In the recent 2024 polls, the BJP was 40 short of a majority in the house

and could form the government only with the help of J.D. (U) and TeluguDesam. The BJP needs the support of the allies and also friendly parties. The BJP is for the reform as it would stop disruptions caused by the frequent changes in the election cycle. It would also help cut down on poll-related expenditures. Most Opposing parties reject the idea of simultaneous polls. They include the Congress, the Left parties, the Trinamool Congress, and regional and smaller parties. They reject it mainly to settle political scores and apprehension that they may benefit the BJP. Former President Ram Nath Kovind's committee to go into the issue has unanimously endorsed the proposal after eliciting opinions from political parties. Thirty-two parties supported the problem, and 15 rejected it. The panel also indicated that the Centre formed a panel to oversee the implementation of this proposal. Also, there should be a joint electoral roll for all elections so that voters will use the same list for national, state, and local polls. It would reduce errors in voter registration. The panel plans to talk with all the stakeholders. They also suggest having the votes in two parts. The first will be for Lok Sabha and

FORMER PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND'S COMMITTEE HAS UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED THE PROPOSAL AFTER ELICITING OPINIONS FROM POLITICAL PARTIES. THIRTY-TWO PARTIES SUPPORTED THE PROBLEM, AND 15 REJECTED IT

Assembly votes, and the second for local groups. Historically, from 1952, the first election that was held, to 1967, it was a synchronised poll. But this changed when Indira Gandhi came to power. She began invoking Article 356 to dismiss the Opposition-led governments and thus started the independent election. It is continuing till today. However, the bill faces constitutional, legal, and political challenges. The panel has recommended amending the last five articles of the Constitution to hold simultaneous polls in the country. They are amendments to Articles 83 and 172. The BJP does not have a majority, while constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority. Also, the Constitution is silent over whether polls should happen simultaneously. The ultimate test is how Modi would mobilise an adequate number of MPs in Parliament. Second, a political consensus is yet to be made. The BJP has not tried to deal with or persuade the opposition parties to agree. The Opposition is in an aggressive mood and has yet to come on board because they believe simultaneous polls would mean an advantage for the BJP. Significantly bigger parties like Congress oppose it. The Left parties, Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen have rejected the idea. The 15 opposing parties account for 205 MPs, while Modi requires 362 votes. A legal framework is also needed to meet the necessary changes for simultaneous polls. It could address problems with the state governments collapsing in the middle of the term and toppling games played by the Centre. Since the idea is good and checks the wastage of money and policy paralysis, as well as the occurrence of elections every two years, the Opposition must think twice before rejecting the idea. They should bring that for public debate if they have an alternate plan. On the whole, Modi is bringing this legislation to Parliament with a game plan. Win or lose, Modi gets the benefit. If he wins, it is the fulfilment of the poll promise. He can always claim that he brought the reform with good intentions if the bill is defeated, but the Opposition sabotaged it. While the bill may be delayed, it is still worth debating and finding ways to do so eventually. After all, election expenditure is also taxpayers' money. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MPOX TRIGGERS HEALTH ALERT

Madam — It is with reference to the news "India reports first case of Mpox clade 1 strain" September 24. Recently in India one Mpox case has been diagnosed in Kerala which matches with clade 1b strain infection which has triggered WHO public health emergency alert. While another person was found to have Mpox infection in Delhi earlier this month, it was clade 2 infection. This led to the WHO sending its highest level of alarm and declaring Mpox as a public health emergency of International concern (PHEIC). India has reported at least 32 Mpox cases and one death since 2022 when the infection was first detected in the country. Mpox is highly contagious and can spread through close contact with an infected person or contaminated materials. It can also be transmitted through contact with infected animals. The Health Ministry has to place strong emphasis on early detection, swift containment and preventing any potential outbreaks within the country. Four years ago a 20 years old youth was diagnosed with first Covid 19 infection in Kerala who returned from China. Since 2018, 22 people have died of Nipah virus infection in Kerala and its outbreaks are becoming more frequent. Indian Health Ministry and Kerala Government should enhance surveillance and establish more modern clinical laboratories for early diagnosis of Mpox and other deadly infectious diseases in Kerala. P Vijan Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

KANGANA'S LOAN ALLEGATION

Madam — Ref: "Himachal Pradesh Government takes loans and gives it to Sonia, alleges BJP MP Kangana Ranaut" (September 23). The recent claims made by BJP MP Kangana Ranaut against the Himachal Pradesh government have stirred a political controversy. During a BJP membership provision drive in the State, she alleged that the current government that the Congress party heads divert the loans given by the State to Sonia

Historic chess triumph for India



India's chess masters have created history by winning team gold medals in both men's and women's competitions at the 45th International Chess Federation (FIDE) Chess Olympiad in Budapest. In addition to winning the team championships, India also walked away with four individual gold medals as the tournament wrapped up in the Hungarian capital. Wins for Gukesh Dommaraju, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi sealed gold in the men's event, known as the Open event, while Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali

Rameshbabu, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, and Tania Sachdev won their respective games to secure gold in the women's competition. Gukesh, Erigaisi, Deshmukh and Agrawal bagged individual gold medals on their respective boards. The feat was termed as extraordinary. It feels like a magical time for India. The men's team won 27 of their 44 games, losing just once and drawing six. Their final round of matches was against Slovenia, whom they defeated 3.5-0.5, while the women's team beat Azerbaijan with the same score. Gukesh, who has also qualified for the final of the World Chess Championship in November, said he was delighted that his team got over the line in a dominant fashion after having some close misses in the past. Eighteen-year-old Deshmukh was a standout performer in the women's competition and remained undefeated, winning seven of her 11 games and drawing four. Nikhil CK Subramaniam | Chennai

Gandhi leaving "hollow" the coffers of the State. From the above assertion, it was clear that Ranaut feels that the finances within the State are poor because of the high level of corruption and that the expensive behaviour of the Congress party during elections is not explained. She called upon people not to support the regime that misappropriated the funds meant for disaster relief. These appeals speak not just to the extent of political contestation today but also point toward bigger issues of governance and accountability in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Garima Singh | Kanpur

LEADERSHIP CHANGE IN SRI LANKA

Madam — Apropos to "Dissanayake sworn in as Lanka's new President" published on September 24, here is my response. Sri Lankans swung to the extreme left by voting Anura Kumara Dissanayake, a leader with spotless image and humble origins. He will have to understand the nuances of this verdict, which means economic revival and leg-up to federalism.

His main fight would be against corruption, nepotism and reckless spending by the political establishment, which led to the 2022 economic fiasco. He will have to address all that but protect people from vulnerable sections of society. For economic revival he will have to take along the IMF, China as well as India. New President is expected to be ideologically closer to China, Sri Lanka's biggest investor and creditor. International spotlight would also be on Sri Lanka because of its geographical location, right in the middle of the Indian Ocean, as they will look at how China plays its cards now. The new President has said that he would not like to be sandwiched between two big powers and this could be a positive sign for India. As far as India is concerned, it is going through a challenging phase as far as its neighbours are concerned, it should make all efforts to build strong ties with the island nation. Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Reflections from the Northeast: A call for peace amid violence

The deepening communal rivalry in Manipur demands urgent attention, dialogue and reconciliation for the future of this region



RICHARD HAY

As part of my responsibilities as a Member of Parliament, I have had the opportunity to visit Northeast India to expand the community development programmes initiated by the Government of India. Given the evolving turbulence in the region, I find myself reflecting on those visits, struggling to reconcile my previous perceptions with the current unrest. During my visits, I had the pleasure of meeting several tribes across different states in the Northeast. The warmth and hospitality of the people were touching. In many villages, I was welcomed with such affection that it left a lasting impression. The people of this picturesque region are generally peaceful, cultured, talented, and well-educated. Manipur, in particular, has a rich cultural heritage, with its people being tolerant and possessing high aesthetic values. Each tribe follows its traditions with pride and devotion, which I found remarkable. Traveling all the way from Kerala, I felt completely at home. However, it deeply saddens me to witness the current state



of Manipur, which has become a center of violence and atrocities committed by one community against another. This heartbreaking situation stems from a decision on April 20, 2023, when the Manipur High Court directed the state government to "consider the request of the Meitei community to be included in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list." This ruling enraged the Kuki community, who feared that granting the Meiteis ST status would allow them to purchase land in the hilly areas reserved for tribes. Tensions escalated, and the Meitei community became increasingly vulnerable to attacks by the Kukis. I view this crisis as more of a communal rivalry than a political or terrorist conflict.

In light of this, I believe that religious leaders, particularly those from the Church, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), as well as influential Cardinals and Archbishops, should step in to initiate a dialogue with the Central Government. Their involvement could help mediate and bring peace to this disturbed region. They could also appeal to Kuki rebel leaders to surrender their weapons and work towards eradicating illegal poppy cultivation, thereby contributing to lasting peace in Manipur. The region's significant involvement in opium cultivation has allowed certain groups to amass both wealth and power, fueling the cycle of violence. It is disheartening that despite their Christian faith, some are failing to adhere to the teachings of the Church and the laws of the land. Their actions not only perpetuate violence but also set a dangerous precedent for the younger generation, leading to a rise in drug addiction and moral degradation. The people of the Northeast yearn for peace, and the entire country prays for an end to this violence. The insurgency and militancy must cease. At this critical juncture, my heartfelt plea is that the Kukis, find it within themselves to share love, compassion, and respect for other tribes, so they may live together in peace. (The writer is a former Member of Parliament; views are personal)

ernment. Delaying justice will only embolden the perpetrators and prolong the violence. The citizens of India expect prompt and decisive action to restore peace in Manipur. The region's significant involvement in opium cultivation has allowed certain groups to amass both wealth and power, fueling the cycle of violence. It is disheartening that despite their Christian faith, some are failing to adhere to the teachings of the Church and the laws of the land. Their actions not only perpetuate violence but also set a dangerous precedent for the younger generation, leading to a rise in drug addiction and moral degradation. The people of the Northeast yearn for peace, and the entire country prays for an end to this violence. The insurgency and militancy must cease. At this critical juncture, my heartfelt plea is that the Kukis, find it within themselves to share love, compassion, and respect for other tribes, so they may live together in peace. (The writer is a former Member of Parliament; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF GRATITUDE

This simple yet profound act of thanking others can deepen our connection with God



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Our natural inclination is to see faults in others. This has to do mostly with our egos; we feel better about ourselves. We could also be feeling insecure or jealous, etc., when we do that. This harms us, if we communicate such feelings either by words or gestures. Others are not pleased about it. Contrarily, if we look for something to appreciate in others or thank them for something, we make friends. It is so logical. Let us not forget that we are small souls, who are intrinsically ignorant, helpless and insecure. But we have been given brains to seek help to get over these shortcomings, especially from God. Let me take up how we can gain by saying thanks to others. We don't become a debtor, if someone has done us some favour, except when it is a loan.

Even then we should be very thankful. Our relationships with others will become sound. Others will feel that this person is naturally grateful – a great quality to endear ourselves to others. We, ourselves, will feel good, having done the right thing. Wouldn't we wish to be thanked if we do some favour? Rather we all expect to be thanked. So shouldn't we thank others whenever an opportunity presents itself? I am very serious about thanking others. Rather I am looking for opportunities to thank. A service is provided, even against payment; still, I thank you, which is well appreciated. Someone has given me time, and does not make me wait, I thank. If a loan is given by a bank, I show my gratitude even if they have oversecured themselves. Someone says encouraging words, I thank them profusely. A gift, no matter what the value is, brings out heartfelt thanks from



me. My help—those who serve me, are thanked whenever they do something extra or better. This attitude has brought me enormous goodwill from those who I deal with. I register in their minds as a good person, who should be helped. This thanking propensity has especially brought me close to my Lord. I routinely pray for guidance. I have realised that my knowledge is extremely limited. Most importantly, I have no idea about what the future will bring; God does. He guides me through intuitions, and mediums like my family members, friends, etc.

God is very forthcoming in this matter because He is not taking away someone else's rights. The next reason for thanking God is the help He provides frequently. Nobody has to tell me that I am very small and mostly helpless. God must help, therefore, I pray whenever my efforts/duties take me only this far. God is very merciful; He helps if what I seek is 'dharma' (according to dharma). I deserve also to remain in God's shelter by doing spiritual practices like 'darshan' (seeing) a photo of my Lord, chanting Krishna and Ohm, doing 'namaskar' (obeisance), and thanking of course. I am slowly becoming positive from a very negative person. I am beginning to see the positive side of others and, of course, life; there is so much good in life.

By habit, we become judgemental, hateful, etc., which hurts the self mainly. Thanking is just one spiritual act; there are so many. The idea is to catch the attention of God somehow. When we do that, God becomes interested in us. He has so much to give, being the owner of everything. He does not need anything from us, and we cannot do any favour to Him. Isn't God the Creator, which He manages by Himself? The conclusion is: to develop a habit of thanking and turning positive.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views expressed are personal)

Molestation incident in Bhubaneswar sparks fury



SIDHARTH MISHRA

An incident of molestation inside a Bhubaneswar police station has sent shockwaves across the country and caused outrage among the Fauji fraternity



A most despicable and obnoxious incident has taken place in Bhubaneswar, which till the incident occurred was believed to be the safest place for people especially women. The incident involving molestation inside a police station of an Army veteran's daughter and a serving officer's fiancé has caused a turmoil within the community of the uniformed forces, which the government would find difficult to douse. The task has become more difficult with the IT Cell of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its troll soldiers adding fuel to the fire. Social media influencer Rishi Bagree, known outpost of the IT Cell, posted some videos of the incident trying to put the blame on victim for inviting outrage of her modesty by the cops.

While this video may have had thumps up from the IT Cell followers but it has further added to the anger within the Fauji (defence) community. A video released on the Daughter's Day last Sunday by a Fauji daughter and filmmaker Nidhi Sharma, admonished likes of Bagree on micro blog platform X saying, "Those who're outraged by the 'overconfident, arrogant' Army Daughter; who've convinced themselves she deserved to be assaulted, molested and flashed inside a police station because she dared the cops to do their job, and those what are now character assassinating her, need to know this. Fauji kids are no pushovers! And nor is the Fauji Fraternity. We stand together today."



IT'S TIME FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE POSITION OF POWER, WHO MAY BE YET TO REALISE THE ANGST THE INCIDENT HAS CAUSED AMONG PEOPLE IN GENERAL AND THE FAUJIS IN PARTICULAR, TO PUT THEIR EARS TO THE GROUND

The tweet has garnered more than 42K views. More damaging for the establishment is the fact that it has been circulated in the several thousand WhatsApp groups of the Fauji community, where the pain of a Fauji child being first molested and then berated is being severally expressed.

It's time for the people in the position of power, who may be yet to realise the angst the incident has caused among people in general and the Faujis in particular, to put their ears to the ground. The degree of anger is particularly high among the young officers and the armed forces brass has been working overtime to assuage the hurt feelings.

The petition before the Chief Justice of Odisha High Court was filed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC), Madhya Bharat Area, who on learning about the incident travelled from his headquarters in Madhya Pradesh to the Bhubaneswar for the purpose. This shows the enormity of concern which the brass had following the knowledge of the anger seething through the rank and file of armed forces.

In an extra-ordinary move to reach out the rank and file, a message purported to have been

released by the GOC was also circulated through the various WhatsApp groups explaining the course of action and the relief it brought for the harassed officer and his fiancé, including grant of bail by Odisha High Court. The message also gave the information that the police did its best to not let bail be listed for hearing and the High Court judge pulled up the Deputy Registrar for the oversight. This must have reassured the young officers.

However, this outreach initiative of the Army brass to keep the simmering anger under control would be thwarted if the IT Cell of the ruling party is left to its whims and fancies. Remember them calling the agitating farmers anti-nationals and terrorists. What did it end in, BJP being routed not just in Punjab assembly polls but all the farmer dominated seat in north India during the last Lok Sabha polls.

The Bhubaneswar incident came just a few days after the equally despicable incident in Indore. Earlier this month, two Army officers and their women friends were assaulted by six person at a picnic spot near Mhow cantonment. One of the women friends was also gang raped.

Though swift action followed and police arrested the alleged accused, what made the Fauji

angry was the local Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police announcing that a departmental enquiry has been ordered against the officers too. Why should police speak for an internal matter of the Army?

These incidents are adding to the long fermenting anger caused by the unresolved issues of one-rank-one-pension, Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), Agneepath scheme and pay disparity among others. While the Narendra Modi government has emphasized national security and military prowess in its public messaging, many Indian Army officers feel that their professional concerns, particularly related to pay, promotions, and long-term welfare, have not been adequately addressed.

This has created a growing sense of disillusionment among the officer cadre. The government must realise that this disillusionment could get critical if its social media handles promote trolling of the Fauji families falling victim to civilian callousness. The government has lost faith of the Kisans, it should not lose trust of the Jawans.

(Sidharth Mishra is author & president Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice; views expressed are personal)

Empowering women and nourishing children: Fight against unhealthy snacks

Through innovative interventions, families can be motivated to return to nutritious home-cooked meals

A couple of years ago, when CHETNA, a not-for-profit working on health and nutrition awareness among women, adolescents and children, was conducting a survey, it found a large number of children living in the urban slum of Vasna, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, almost addicted to packaged potato chips and other unhealthy snacks commonly found at grocery stores. They often skipped home cooked meals, preferring to eat such ultra processed food. As a consequence, many of them became undernourished and anaemic. One of the strategies CHETNA adopted to wean children away from packaged food, was to demonstrate how traditional Gujarati snacks and complementary foods like



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

shero, sukhiand lads could be tasty as well as nutritious. Cooking them in the presence of mothers and caregivers helped them learn new ways of improving the nutrition levels of their children. For five weeks the underweight children of 1 to 5 years were also fed supplementary food which had protein, fat and iron. The CHETNA team visited families thrice a week at a fixed time and followed a

30-minute approach'. This meant ensuring that the child sat down for 30 minutes while caregivers fed them home cooked food. For each child, there were 36 home visits. Within seven to nine months of the intervention, the children were eating only home-cooked meals. To increase their calorie count, recipes from a mix of wheat flour and Bengal gram were also added to their menu. Slowly calories along with the other nutrients the children were consuming increased. At the end of nine months 166 initially underweight children were weighed of which 36% of children were found to be fully nourished. All 35 children who were eating only food packets started eating home-cooked food. To sustain this habit, CHETNA

hit upon the idea of skilling the mothers and other women from economically marginalized communities living in these slums to also be able to gain financially from making such nutritious snacks. In August 2023, they began training women living in these slums to do both-- wean their children away from unhealthy snacks to homemade goodies and become nutri-entrepreneurs at the same time. The first batch of 25 women began with a few lessons on diets, the importance of healthy eating and adding nutrition to snacks. Besides enhancing their nutrition education, they were advised on packaging, marketing and business management. A kitchen was set up in the slum and the women were told



about the importance of being professional and maintaining hygiene. They learnt to make nutritious sweetmeats like date laddoos, traditional khadi made from millets like ragi and beetroot shakarparas as well as savoury puffed millet and nachos. Women began selling their products to neighbours as well as shopkeepers. In the first three months of 2024, the 25 women were able to sell about 60,000 kgs of home-

made snacks. They are now earning Rs 4000 to Rs 5000 a month. For 35-year-old Champaben Makwana, a homemaker and mother of two, becoming a nutri-entrepreneur has made her dream of being financially independence come true. Her monthly income of Rs 5000 has given her the confidence to spread her wings and venture into online business through WhatsApp.

She is not only able to contribute to the family's financial stability but more importantly, also stop her son's recurrent stomach aches by substituting packaged snacks with homemade alternatives. Becoming a nutri-entrepreneur has turned around the life of 18-year-old Bhavna Sargara. After failing in English, Maths and Science in

her 10th Board exam, Sargara lost hope and became directionless.

The entrepreneurial training opened new doors and innovative culinary techniques and recipes have enabled her to earn Rs 5000 a month. This increase in income has given her the freedom to enrol in tuition classes to fulfil her educational aspirations. She is preparing to take her 12th Board exams. Additionally, she is also providing financial help to her family and encouraging her younger siblings to continue their studies. It is well known that ultra processed food such as chips and noodles contain unhealthy levels of fats, salt and sugar. One of the reasons for this is that emulsifiers, additives, preservatives and stabilizers that are not usu-

ally used in home kitchens can be found in these products to prolong their shelf life.

Studies have shown that consumption of these contributes to increasing the risk of developing type-2 diabetes besides other lifestyle-related diseases. The biggest impact of aggressive marketing of unhealthy food products is among communities belonging to the lowest 20% income group who spend 5.5% on packaged foods, according to studies. However, the CHETNA initiative shows that all that is packaged does not have to be unhealthy. It can be nutritious and healthy. All it takes is will and nutrition education.

(The writer is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are personal)

Hezbollah launches missile at Tel Aviv

Starmer asks British nationals to leave Lebanon immediately

AP ■ BEIRUT
Hezbollah launched a missile in its deepest strike yet into Israel, marking a further escalation after Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed hundreds of people. The Israeli military said it intercepted the surface-to-surface missile, which set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv and across central Israel, and there were no reports of casualties or damage. The military said it struck the site in southern Lebanon from which the missile was launched. Hezbollah said it fired a Qader 1 ballistic missile targeting the headquarters of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, which it blames for a recent string of targeted killings of its top commanders and for an attack last week in which explosives hidden in pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands, including many Hezbollah members. The Israeli military said it was the first time a projectile fired from Lebanon had reached central Israel. Hezbollah claimed to have targeted an intelligence base near Tel Aviv last month in an aerial attack, but there was no confirmation. The Palestinian Hamas militant group in Gaza repeatedly



People gather near a damaged car at the site of an Israeli airstrike that hit a hangar in the southern town of Jiyeh, Lebanon, Wednesday. AP/PTI

ly targeted Tel Aviv in the opening months of the war. The launch ratcheted up tensions as the region appears to be teetering toward another all-out war, even as Israel continues to battle Hamas in the Gaza Strip. A

wave of Israeli strikes on Monday and Tuesday killed at least 560 people in Lebanon and forced thousands to seek refuge. Families have fled southern Lebanon, flocking to Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon, sleep-

ing in schools turned into shelters, as well as in cars, parks and along the beach. Some sought to leave the country, causing a traffic jam at the border with Syria. Israel said late Tuesday that fighter jets carried out "extensive

Israel activates reserve troops

Tel Aviv (AP): The Israeli military says it is activating reserve troops in response to rising tensions with the Hezbollah militant group. The announcement Wednesday indicates that Israel is planning even tougher action against the Lebanese group. It comes hours after Hezbollah fired a missile toward Tel Aviv for the first time. The army said it was calling up "two reserve brigades for operational missions in the northern arena." "This will enable the continuation of combat against the Hezbollah terrorist organisation," it said.

strikes" on Hezbollah weapons and rocket launchers across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa region to the north. The Lebanese militant group has steadily escalated over the last 11 months. Hezbollah has been firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in

Gaza and its ally Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group. Israel has responded with increasingly heavy airstrikes and the targeted killing of Hezbollah commanders while threatening a wider operation. The UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on Lebanon for Wednesday at the request of France. Nearly a year of fighting between Hezbollah and Israel had already displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border before this week's escalation. Israel has vowed to do whatever it takes to ensure its citizens can return to their homes in the north, while Hezbollah has said it will keep up its rocket attacks until there is a cease-fire in Gaza, something which appears increasingly remote. Israel has moved thousands of troops who had been serving in Gaza to the northern border. It says Hezbollah has some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including some capable of striking anywhere in Israel, and that the group has fired some 9,000 rockets and drones since last October. Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesperson, said the missile fired Wednesday had a "heavy warhead" but declined to elaborate or confirm it was the type described by Hezbollah.

London (PTI): Prime Minister Keir Starmer has called on British nationals to leave Lebanon "immediately" after fighting intensified between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah and around 700 UK troops were deployed to Cyprus in case an emergency evacuation is needed. Speaking on the sidelines of the Labour Party conference in Liverpool on Tuesday before he left for the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Starmer said the UK was ramping up its contingency plans in light of the "escalation" of violence, with fears growing of all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah. Thousands of British nationals are believed to be in Lebanon and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) continues to advise against all travel to Lebanon. "The most important message from me to British nationals in Lebanon is to leave immediately," Starmer told reporters in response to questions about his message. "It is important that we've been really, really clear: now is the time to leave," he said. On the situation in the region, he added: "I think we need to be clear, we need de-escalation, we need a ceasefire, we need to pull back from the brink." Meanwhile, the FCDO said the UK is focused on bolstering its presence in the region with around 700 UK troops moving to Cyprus as part of the first phase of its contingency plans following "significant escalation" between Israel and Lebanon in recent days. The military teams will be supported by Border Force and FCDO officials as the situation continues to "deteriorate rapidly, with devastating consequences." "Events in the past hours and days have demonstrated how volatile this situation is, which is why our message is clear, British nationals should leave now," said UK Defence Secretary John Healey, who left the Labour conference early to chair an emergency Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA) meeting with ministers, intelligence chiefs and diplomats to assess government planning. "We continue to urge all sides to step back from conflict to prevent further tragic loss of life."

NGO seeks help for Indian-origin soldier's family immigration

Jerusalem (PTI): An Israeli NGO, which has been at the forefront of immigration of Indian-origin Jews from the northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram who are commonly referred to as Bnei Menashe, has appealed for help regarding immigration of a deceased soldier's family to Israel. Staff Sergeant Geri Gideon Hanghal, 24, was killed on duty earlier this month in a vehicle ramming attack near Asaf Junction, close to the West Bank's Beit El settlement. "First Sgt Gideon Hanghal was a Bnei Menashe hero who made the ultimate sacrifice for Israel. Meanwhile, Gideon's brother, along with his wife and two children, are among those still waiting to be allowed to make aliyah (immigration)," a message issued by Shavei Israel said. "We must help Gideon's family and honour his memory in the best way possible: for the Israeli government to bring all the remaining Bnei Menashe to Israel," it further said. "Every last one of the 5,000 Bnei Menashe in India who wants to make aliyah should be allowed to do so — as soon as possible," the organisation said, asking people to "join us as we do what we can to help Gideon's family, and bring his remaining relatives on aliyah."

Netanyahu to address UN as Israel faces new war amid ongoing conflict

AP ■ JERUSALEM
From the dais of the UN General Assembly just a year ago, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu triumphantly hailed a new peace he said would sweep through the Middle East. A year later, as he travels back to that same world stage, that vision is in tatters. The devastating war in Gaza is about to hit the one-year mark. Israel is on the cusp of a wider regional war with the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah. And the country finds itself increasingly isolated internationally and led by a polarising leader whose handling of the conflict has sparked protests both in global capitals and on the streets of his own country. And it's not just the mushrooming regional conflicts weighing Israel down. Netanyahu will head to New York burdened also by what could be an imminent warrant for his arrest by the International Criminal Court, what would put him in a fellowship of sorts with Russian President Vladimir Putin and former Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir. "He arrives almost at a point of being persona non grata," said Alon Liel, a former director-general of Israel's Foreign Ministry and outspoken critic of Netanyahu. Netanyahu is set to address the General Assembly on Friday. A

gifted orator, he has long viewed speeches from such venerated perches as the optimal way to deliver a message and score political points with Israelis enthralled by his flawless English and fiery delivery. In July, he championed Israel's case for the war in Gaza in front of a joint session of the US Congress, where he received multiple ovations and plaudits even from some critics back home. "In his view, any such trips to New York, to the grand stage of world affairs, he considers an advantage," said Yossi Shain, a professor of international relations at Georgetown and Tel Aviv University. He said Netanyahu's speeches abroad were often meant to impress audiences at home, and this one was no different. Netanyahu is known for his showmanship at the United Nations and has repeatedly used the pulpit to try make a case for his ideology and policies. At a speech in 2012, Netanyahu famously brandished a placard with a cartoon bomb to illustrate what he said was Iran's race toward a nuclear weapon. In 2009, he showed up with a copy of the plans for the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, using it to highlight what he said was the former Iranian leader's "antisemitic rants". Last year, his focus was on what appeared to be a burgeoning normalisation with

Saudi Arabia that he said showed how a broader Middle East peace was not contingent on resolving the conflict with the Palestinians. He held up his prop, a map of the region, and used the word "peace" 42 times. The map appeared to show Gaza and the West Bank — territories claimed by the Palestinians for a future state — as being encompassed by Israel. But Netanyahu arrives at the United Nations this week at a time when his own diplomatic capital and legitimacy, as well as that of the country he represents, are at a low. Critics say that aside from a moment in the spotlight, it's not clear what Netanyahu will achieve with the visit. "He is a great believer in speechmaking," said Tal Schneider, an Israeli political commentator. "He thinks that if he delivers a speech in English, he can convince people in the justness of his ways," she said, adding that that demonstrated he was "disconnected from reality." Netanyahu's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Miki Zohar, a Cabinet minister who is close to Netanyahu, said the UN was a "very important stage" to lay out Israel's position and he hoped the speech would bolster international support. At the UN, Netanyahu will seek to persuade a world growing increasingly exasperated by

Israel's war in Gaza that its aims are righteous. He may try to galvanise the world behind an Israeli war against Hezbollah. And he is likely to lay blame for the region's chaos on Iran, a repeated focus of his speeches at home and abroad. That he is making the trip at all, at a time of escalating violence with Hezbollah, points to how much significance he places on the speech. But Netanyahu's words may fall on deaf ears. The Israeli leader "actually believes that his UN speeches have transformative effects on history. They do not," said Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul general in New York. Netanyahu's visit, Pinkas added, comes as Israel is now globally perceived as being "on the precipice of a condemned pariah state" with its leader seen as a "rogue war-monger". Protests are expected during his visit. New York is home to Columbia University, site of some of the most intense campus demonstrations of recent years this spring — by students objecting to the bloodshed in Gaza. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, has been a divisive figure internationally for years, with his hard-line approach to the Palestinians in particular frustrating world leaders. But his handling of the war in Gaza has further stained his global perception.

Island youth face existential choice: Stay or leave?

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS
It's the uncomfortable talk that as a young woman, she knows she should have with her parents. They alluded to it, once, but couldn't quite address it directly. And Grace Malie was glad to avoid the subject with them, though she and her friends do discuss it. As her home, the tiny but shrinking island of Tuvalu, slowly erodes from climate change's rising seas, should she rough it out on the remaining high land? Or should she flee her home, her culture, her heritage and her past to go to Australia — in what her government negotiated as "Plan B"? The 25-year-old, who on Wednesday addresses a special UN General Assembly summit on sea level rise as a representative for her country, has years to decide — decades, even. But it's a decision that, like the mythical sword of Damocles, hangs over a nation's entire generation. And two of the biggest issues facing the summit are what to do about people like Grace Malie and how countries like Tuvalu will keep the sovereignty even when they lose their land. "This is not about leaving," said Kamal Amakrane, managing director of the Global Centre for Climate Mobility and climate envoy to the president of the General Assembly. "This is not about giving up. This is not

about giving in. This is about agency." Such a situation is like no other. It can't be compared to when other climate, conflict or economic refugees have to flee with little or no notice as storms hit or drought takes away livelihoods, said Alex Randall, the United Kingdom-based coordinator of the Climate and Migration Coalition. The vast majority of people permanently fleeing climate-related disasters stay within their own country and travel short distances — such as those who left New Orleans after 2005's Hurricane Katrina. This is about young people today making a long-term, stay-or-go decision that lingers in the back of their minds. It's a conversation that's happening now, even though the fleeing won't happen until later. "It's a very difficult conversation, very emotional," Malie said in an interview. "And it's 50-50. Some of us wish to stay. Some of them, because they have families, will probably head to Australia. And that's what Malie thinks will be her own future. If she has children, she would think about "the life of my children. I would have to opt for Plan B. Worst comes to worst, relocate." "I want them to have a safe and to have access to quality living, access to quality water, quality life. And in order for me to have that for them to have that, relocation is an option," she said. "But if I were to live by myself, you know, no children in the future as planned, then I would choose to stay." Her parents wouldn't come right out and say it, but they have dropped hints that she should think about going to Australia, Malie said. She said they want what's best for her. Tuvalu Climate Minister Maina Talia has had the same discomfort but from the father's point of view. He said he talked to his four young children about the inexorable threat of sea-level rise on their home and future, but he has not yet quite raised the idea of leaving the island to them. Talia said he fears that if his children leave Tuvalu for higher ground, "their identity would be compromised." "It's not an easy conversation because I want my kids to grow up the way I grew up," Talia said. "It's an emotional thing to go through." Talia calls sea-level rise "an existential threat". And it's those two words — "existential threat" — that are at the heart of Wednesday's summit. For years, small island nations have used that phrase, as have leaders of the United Nations and climate activists. But now it's coming back to bite them because island nations want their sovereignty, their culture, to exist — even if their land does not.

Climate change doubles likelihood of flooding in Europe

Washington (AP): Human-caused climate change doubled the likelihood and intensified the heavy rains that led to devastating flooding in Central Europe earlier this month, a new flash study found. Torrential rain in mid-September from Storm Boris pummelled a large part of central Europe, including Romania, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Germany, and caused widespread damage. The floods killed 24 people, damaged bridges, submerged cars, left towns without power and in need of significant infrastructure repairs. The severe four-day rainfall was "by far" the heaviest ever recorded in Central Europe and twice as likely because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, World Weather Attribution, a collection of scientists that run rapid climate attribution studies, said on Wednesday from Europe. Climate change also made the rains between 7 per cent and 20 per cent more intense, the study found. "Yet again, these floods highlight the devastating results of fossil fuel-driven warming," said Joyce Kimutai, the study's lead author and a climate researcher at Imperial College, London. To test the influence of human-caused climate change, the team of scientists analysed weather data and used climate models to compare how such events have changed since cooler preindus-

trial times to today. Such models simulate a world without the current 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming since preindustrial times, and see how likely a rainfall event that severe would be in such a world. The study analysed four-day rainfall events, focusing on the countries that felt severe impacts. Though the rapid study hasn't been peer-reviewed, it follows scientifically accepted techniques. "In any climate, you would expect to occasionally see records broken," said Friederike Otto, an Imperial College, London, climate scientist who coordinates the attribution study team. But, "to see records being broken by such large margins, that is really the fingerprint of climate change. And that is only something that we see in a warming world". Some of the most severe impacts were felt in the Polish-Czech border region and Austria, mainly in urban areas along major rivers. The study noted that the death toll from this month's flooding was considerably lower than during catastrophic floods in the region in 1997 and 2002. Still, infrastructure and emergency management systems were overwhelmed in many cases and will require billions of euros to fix. Last week, European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen pledged billions of euros in aid for countries that suffered damage to infrastructure and housing from the floods.

Trump promises to be protector of women

AP ■ INDIANA
From former president Donald Trump to Ohio Senate candidate Bernie Moreno, male Republican candidates are struggling to speak to female voters, using language criticised as tone deaf and patronising as they try to win support from women and speak to issues important to them. On Monday night, Trump cast himself as a "protector" of women, saying in battleground Pennsylvania that he will save them from fear and loneliness and they will no longer have to think about abortion. "You will no longer be abandoned, lonely or scared. ... You will no longer be in danger. ... You will no longer have anxiety from all of the problems our country has today," Trump said. "You will be protected, and I will be your protector." At a town hall event on Friday, Moreno bemoaned the fact that abortion has become the deciding issue for many suburban women, calling the notion "a little crazy, by the way, but especially for women that are like past 50. I'm thinking to myself, I don't really think that's an issue for you". Former Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley responded with exasperation to Moreno in a social media post. "Are you trying to lose the election?" she asked. "Asking for a friend, #Tonedead #DonLemonVibes." The latter was a reference to former CNN anchor Don Lemon's suggestion during the 2024 campaign that Haley, at 51, was "past her prime". The comments underscore the GOP's challenges in appealing to women, especially when it comes to the issue of abortion. The problem has

become amplified since Vice President Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket. Women have emerged as a core weakness for Trump's campaign, and he is viewed less favourably by women than men. A September AP-NORC poll found more than half of registered voters who are women have a somewhat or very favourable view of Harris, while only about one-third have a favourable view of Trump. The gender gap — the difference between the share of men and women who say they're supporting each candidate — has been in the double digits for Trump and Harris in several recent polls. That split has been attributed, in part, to Trump's role in appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned the constitutional right to an abortion — a ruling he continues to celebrate at his events. "Women will be healthy, happy, confident and free. You will no longer be thinking about abortion," Trump said on Monday, insisting the issue "no longer pertains," even as women living in Republican-led states grapple with a wave of new restrictions that have left emergency rooms refusing to treat pregnant women and been linked by ProPublica to at least two preventable deaths. Instead of helping Trump expand his appeal with women, such language is likely to turn them off, argued Debbie Walsh, the director of the Centre for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. "This notion that women need to be protected, that women are somehow weak or vulnerable — this sort of protectionist, patron-

ising tone ... I think for a lot of women will just add to that sense of he doesn't understand their lives, that he doesn't understand where they are on a whole host of issues," she said. Many women, she noted, believe that overturning Roe v. Wade has "put their lives at risk". Trump's pledge to protect women is also complicated by his long history of personal attacks against women as well as a jury's finding last year that he sexually abused a magazine columnist decades earlier in a department store dressing room. Trump has denied the allegations, along with multiple others that have emerged over the years. "This kind of language is just more evidence that Donald Trump is out of touch with American women," said Jennifer Lawless, chair of the politics department at the University of Virginia. "Not only is the sentiment paternalistic, but the fact that he uttered these words while simultaneously berating women for caring about reproductive rights is stunning." Trump's campaign dismissed the criticism as coming from partisan voices and said Trump's comments reflected his voters' top issues. "President Trump is responding directly to the concerns that he hears and our campaign hears from women across the country everyday, their fear, the very real fear that women have about being assaulted or potentially raped by criminals or illegal immigrants who have been allowed in this country," said Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt. Harris' campaign said Trump's latest comments showed he was trying to tell women "what to think and what we care about".



US intelligence warns Trump on 'real' assassination threat from Iran: Campaign

Washington (PTI): US intelligence agencies have briefed former president Donald Trump on the "real and specific" threat to his life allegedly from Iran to allegedly "sow chaos" in the country, according to his campaign. Two apparent assassination attempts have been made in the same number of months on the life of the 78-year-old, Republican presidential candidate. "President Trump was briefed earlier today by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence regarding real and specific threats from Iran to assassinate him in an effort to destabilise and sow chaos in the United States," Steven Cheung, Trump's Campaign communications director said late Tuesday night. Intelligence officials

have identified these "continued and coordinated" attacks heightened in the past few months, and law enforcement officials across all agencies are working to ensure Trump is protected and the November election is free from interference, Cheung said. On July 13, the first failed assassination attempt on Trump was made during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, when a bullet grazed his ear. The second bid on his life took place on September 15 at the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida. Fifty-eight-year-old Ryan Wesley Routh, who was spotted with a gun outside the golf course, was officially charged on Tuesday for attempting to assassinate a major presidential candidate. Jimmy Carter: The power-playing loner from farm to WH & beyond
Plains (US) (AP): Barack Obama and his advisers had two living former presidents to consider as they planned the 2008 Democratic National Convention. Bill Clinton, eight years removed from the Oval Office, remained an image of centrism success that warranted a primetime speaking slot. But Jimmy Carter's landslide defeat to Ronald Reagan lingered, even 28 years later. "It was still an epithet: Another Jimmy Carter," David Axelrod, top Obama adviser and confidant, said in an interview. Obama decided against inviting Carter to the podium in Denver. The Georgia Democrat was featured in a video instead. "He, justifiably I think, he was a little miffed about that," Axelrod said, adding that the decision was a "painful one" for Obama. Now, as Carter nears his 100th birthday, the 39th president is being lauded not just for his longevity but for his accomplishments in government, his work as a global humanitarian and, as Obama himself said in a birthday tribute for his fellow Democrat, "for always finding new ways to remind us that we are all created in God's image". It's a preview, of sorts, of what will happen when Carter's long life ends and the nation pays tribute with state funeral rites in Washington. The praise, though, carries some irony for a president who campaigned against the ways of Washington and was an outcast of sorts even during his four years in the White House.

China successfully test-fires ICBM that can strike US cities

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday successfully test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that could hit the US cities, in a rare publicised launch to display its strategic deterrence capability. The launch tested weaponry performance and military training effectiveness and achieved desired goals, the Chinese Defence Ministry said in a statement. China had notified relevant nations about the test in advance, according to the PLA Rocket Force. This is the first time in decades that China has made its flight test of an intercontinental ballistic missile public in an apparent show of strategic deterrence, state-run China Daily reported. According to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post, the new missile could reach the US mainland, though the Defence Ministry has not specified its range. As per the information published previously by the Chinese military, the PLA Rocket Force now has multiple types of ballistic missiles with intercontinental ranges, including the DF-31AG, DF-5B and DF-41. Also, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has the JL-2 submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile, according to the China Daily report. The missile, launched into the Pacific Ocean, fell into expected sea areas, the defence ministry statement said, adding that "this test launch is a routine arrangement in our annual training plan."

"It is in line with international

law and practice and is not directed against any country or target," the statement said, without specifying the range of the missile. In May 1980, a DF-5 — China's first ICBM — flew more than 9,000 kilometres, according to the Post report. China's ICBM test comes as missile activities have been ratcheting up in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier this month, North Korea conducted several short-range ballistic missile tests, flying towards the Sea of Japan or East Sea. China, which according to recent reports is increasing its nuclear arsenal, maintains a "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons policy. China's latest known ICBM is the DF-41, which first came into service in 2017 and has an operational range of up to 12,000-15,000km, capable of reaching the US mainland. An ICBM typically has a range greater than 5,500km and is designed to carry nuclear warheads. The missile test also followed the US military deploying its mid-range capability (MRC) missile system during its joint

exercise with the Philippines amid the conflict between Manila and Beijing over the disputed South China Sea.] The Philippines also acquired India's BrahMos missile systems. According to a Pentagon report on China's military and security development published last year, the PLA Rocket Force is "advancing its long-term modernisation plans to enhance its 'strategic deterrence' capabilities," including the development of new ICBMs. The report said China has "doubled and continues to grow the number of launchers at most ICBM units", and estimated there were around 350 Chinese ICBMs, including DF-31 and DF-41, in 2022, with three new solid-propellant silo fields under construction, the Post reported. Chinese Military Commentator Song Zhongping noted that the launch marks China's second comprehensive test and evaluation of its ICBM capabilities, and showed the Chinese missile's reliability.

Australia's treasurer to visit China this week, signalling bilateral ties improving

AP ■ KYIV

Treasurer Jim Chalmers will this week become the first Australian government minister in that key economic role to visit China in seven years, in the latest sign that strained bilateral relations are mending. Chalmers flies to Beijing on Thursday for a two-day visit. The last Australian treasurer to visit China was Scott Morrison in 2017. Morrison rose to become prime minister a year later and bilateral relations further soured under his rule until his conservative government was replaced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's centre-left Labour Party after the 2022 general election. Chalmers said Wednesday that the main purpose of his visit was to co-chair the Australia-China Strategic Economic Dialogue on Thursday with He Lifeng, chair of China's National Development and Reform Commission. Discussions will focus on growing trade and investment with China and opportunities

for Australian and Chinese businesses to cooperate, government documents say. "This is another really important step towards stabilizing our economic relationship with China," Chalmers told reporters in Brisbane. "It will be part of the Albanese governments methodical and coordinated efforts to reestablish dialogue with China, Australia's largest trading partner," Chalmers added. The bilateral relationship plumbed new depths in 2020 after the Morrison government called for an independent investigation into the origins of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. China imposed a series of official and unofficial bans in 2020 on Australian products, including coal, cotton, wine, barley, beef, lobsters and wood that cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year. Most of those trade obstacles have been removed since the conservative government was ousted after nine years in office.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Narendra Singh S/o Sultan Singh, R/o E-213, Near Summerville School, Sector-22, Noida, has evicted his son Adit Bhandari from all his movable and immovable property and relations with effect from 02 July 2024 due to his leaving the house on his own will and misbehavior. He himself will be responsible for any future actions.

ENGINEERING WORKS UNDER ALPURDUAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No. 85/W-2/APDJ.: Dated: 23-09-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No:** 30-AP-II-2024. **Name of Work:** Alipurduar - Bamnanhat (SL) - TBCSR - 972 Nos. Tender Value: ₹3,39,99,911.73. Earnest Money: ₹3,19,700.00. E-tender will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 22-10-2024 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 22-10-2024. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website <http://www.reps.gov.in>

ENGINEERING WORKS UNDER ALPURDUAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No. 82/W-2/APDJ.: Dated: 23-09-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No:** 20-AP-III-2024. **Name of Work:** Siliguri - New Mal Junction TTR(TSR) - 19 Sets (1-12). Tender Value: ₹1,55,83,645.00. Earnest Money: ₹2,27,900.00. E-tender will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 18-10-2024 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 18-10-2024. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website <http://www.reps.gov.in>

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public that Mr. Vijay Kumar Poddar is the owner of the Residential Apartment bearing No. 100(W)/27, admeasuring around 180.65 Sq. Mtrs., of Tower No. "100 West", DLF Silver Oaks Apartment, of DLF City Phase 1, situated in revenue estate of Village Chakkarpur and Sikanderpur in Sector-26, Tehsil and District Gurgaon, Haryana, by virtue of the Transfer Deed (Daughter to Father) dated 24.07.2024, bearing Document No. 8122, executed by Mrs. Shruti Nada Poddar. Mr. Arjun Sharma (Purchaser) intends to purchase the above-mentioned property from Mr. Vijay Kumar Poddar (Seller). Any person who has any objection regarding the mortgage or the ownership of the above-said property may submit his/her objection within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice in writing. The objection may kindly be sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post at the address given below and by E-mail. Lavanya Sharma (Advocate) Trinity Legal Partners C-401, Fourth Floor, Nirvana Courtyard, Nirvana Country, Sector-50, Gurugram-122018 E: lavanya@trinitylegalpartners.com

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Admission Branch)
Admission Notice
Admission to MD/MS/PG Diploma/Six months training in Ultrasonography /DNB courses under NEET PG -2024
This is in reference to ONLINE MEETING held on 20.09.2024 with National Board of Examination (NBE) and Medical Counseling Committee (MCC), Govt. of India for admission to NEET PG-2024.
Keeping in view the instructions given by NBE all the NEET PG aspirants are apprised that there would be single time registration of candidates for online counseling in State of Punjab and no further registration would be allowed for further rounds. The online portal for registration will open till 30.09.2024.
All the in service PCMS candidates are informed to produce the NOC from the Secretary to Govt. of Punjab, Department of Health & Family Welfare up to 30.9.2024 positively for grant of incentive marks. The same must be sent to the university through email pgadmissions@bhuhsn@gmail.com and also upload on university online portal. The list of all the candidates including the PCMS candidates eligible for grant of incentive marks will be forwarded to NBE, New Delhi to prepare the merit list of the candidates under NEET PG-2024, as per the directions. University will not be in a position to consider any request for registration/addition of incentive marks after this cutoff date.
Registrar
NIL/12/231/2023/38007 Dated CHD :- 9/25/2024

THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.
C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058
Phone: 011-25111442, 25111443, 25111444
E-mail: legal@kangrabank.com, legal@kangrabank.com Website: www.kangrabank.com

APPENDIX IV [See rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", Head office at, C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 04-07-2024, calling upon the borrower & mortgagor namely Smt. Manju Bala W/o. Sh. Harish Chand R/o, K-8/66, Gali No.8, Block-K, Gangotri Vihar, West Gonda, Delhi-110053 and Smt. Manju Bala W/o. Sh. Harish Chand R/o, Gali No.8, Gangotri Vihar, West Gonda, Delhi-110053 and Smt. Manju Bala W/o. Sh. Harish Chand R/o. M/s. Hari Om Electrical, E-204, Mahadev Marg, Jagjeep Nagar, Delhi-110053, of the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.8,37,808/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Thirty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred and Eight Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice. The above mentioned borrower & mortgagor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagor and the public in general that the Bank has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 25th day of September 2024.

The borrower & mortgagor, in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", for an amount of Rs.8,37,808/- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount.

The borrower & mortgagor attention is also invited towards provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the below mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPERTY	
The property under consideration is a Builtup single storey property, land area measuring 281 sq. yds.	All that part and parcel of the A BUILT UP SINGLE STOREY PROPERTY, LAND AREA MEASURING 281 SQ. YDS. i.e., 22.15 SQ. MTRS., OF LOT NO. 108/5555, BEARING PROPERTY NO. K-8/66, CONSISTING WHATEVER THEREON ACCORDING TO THE SITE AND WITH THE RIGHTS TO CONSTRUCT UP TO THE LAST STOREY, SITUATED AT VILLAGE GHONDA GUJRAN KHADAR, IN THE ABADI OF K-BLOCK, GALI NO.8, GANGOTRI VIHAR, WEST GHONDA, ILLAGA SHAHDARA, DELHI-110053. Falling under the Registration of Sub-Registrar-IV, Seelampur, Delhi.

Bounded as under:-
EAST : GALI 15FT WIDE, WEST : PROPERTY OF OTHERS, NORTH : GALI 15FT. WIDE, SOUTH : PROPERTY OF OTHERS.
(HARISH SHARMA) AUTHORIZED OFFICER THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. HEAD OFFICE AT, C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.
DELHI. DATED : 25.09.2024

THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.
Head office at, C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058.
Phone: 011-25111442, 25111443, 25111444
E-mail: legal@kangrabank.com, legal@kangrabank.com Website: www.kangrabank.com

APPENDIX IV [See rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", Head office at, C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 04-07-2024 calling upon the borrower, Legal Heir of Mortgagor & Surety Sh. Gaurav Grover S/o. Late Sh. Vinod Kumar R/o. C-200, Second Floor, Prashant Vihar, Delhi-110085 also of Sh. Gaurav Grover S/o. Late Sh. Vinod Kumar C/o. M/s. Vish Shakti Enterprises, Kh. No. 86, Village Prashantpur, Bangur, Delhi-110042 and calling upon the Legal Heir of Mortgagor & Surety Ms. Tanvi Grover D/o. Late Sh. Vinod Kumar, R/o. C-200, Second Floor, Prashant Vihar, Delhi-110085, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 12,98,127/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Ninety Six Thousand One Hundred and Twenty Seven Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice. The above mentioned borrower, Legal Heir of Mortgagor & surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, Legal Heir of Mortgagor, surety and the public in general that the Bank has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 25th day of September 2024.

The borrower, Legal Heir of Mortgagor & surety in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", for an amount of Rs.12,98,127/- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount.

The borrower, Legal Heir of Mortgagor & surety attention is also invited towards provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the below mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPERTY	
The property under consideration is a ROOF RIGHTS, WITH COMMON STAIRCASE AND ENTRANCE Entire Built up Second Floor without Roof PROPERTY NO. 200, BLOCK-C, AREA MEASURING 70 SQ. MTR. Rights, area SITUATED AT PARSHANT VIHAR, DELHI-110085. Falling under the Registration of Sub-Registrar VI, New Delhi.	All that part and parcel of the ENTIRE SECOND FLOOR WITHOUT consideration is a ROOF RIGHTS, WITH COMMON STAIRCASE AND ENTRANCE Entire Built up Second Floor without Roof PROPERTY NO. 200, BLOCK-C, AREA MEASURING 70 SQ. MTR. Rights, area SITUATED AT PARSHANT VIHAR, DELHI-110085. Falling under the Registration of Sub-Registrar VI, New Delhi.

Which is bounded as under:- NORTH : Plot No.199, SOUTH : Plot No.201, EAST : Road 7 Mtrs. Wide, WEST : Service Lane.
(HARISH SHARMA) AUTHORIZED OFFICER THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. HEAD OFFICE AT, C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.
Place: DELHI DATED: 25.09.2024

आर्यभट्ट महाविद्यालय दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
ARYABHATTA COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF DELHI)

Accredited with grade A+ by NAAC

Adv. No. AC/Rect./Principal/2024/001 Date: 23.09.2024

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Principal, in the Academic Pay Level 14 of 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the College. The last date for receipt of application is 14.10.2024 or two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News, whichever is later. For details, please visit the College website, www.aryabhattachcollege.ac.in and at web link <http://rec3.uod.ac.in>

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the College website.
CHAIRPERSON, GOVERNING BODY

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

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

Sr. No.	Job No/Work Name	Amount (Rs in Lacs)
1.	32/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2024-25, D/o Park (C/o Badminton court, volleyball court, Lawn Tennis and Cricket practice Pitch at different places in Horticulture Div-1st), Noida	36.97

Which can be uploaded by date 03/10/2024 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 04/10/2024 at 11.00 AM. Director (Hort.) Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Satpal Singh alias Satpal Singh Nagar S/O Dal Chand R/O H. No-4 Street No. 1, Tukmir Pur Karawal Nagar, North East Delhi - 110094, have changed my name to Satpal Singh Nagar.

PD(796)C

PUBLIC NOTICE

To inform to all concern that **Sh. Gian Parkash Gupta S/o Late Sh. Mool Chand Gupta** Property Plot No. A-107, Sector-36, Noida, UP. Will was executed on in favour of **Mr. Avnish Kaur Gupta S/o Sh. Anil Kumar Gupta**. If anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.
Avnish Kumar Gupta

PUBLIC NOTICE

In compliance with the Para 5 of Notification No. DNBSP (PD) 029/CGM (CDS)-2015 issued by Reserve Bank of India on July 09, 2015, Notice is hereby given that **KARINA FINCAP LIMITED**, a company incorporated under the companies Act, 2013 and Registered with Reserve Bank of India vide Certificate Number N-14.03250 as a Non-Deposit taking Non-Banking Finance Company, with its Registered office situated at B-2, Lower Ground Floor-C, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi. The new director to be appointed is Mr. Hari Grover. The above Notice is being given pursuant to RBI Circular DNBSP, (PD) CC, No. 069/03.10.001/2015-16 dated July 09, 2015 and other relevant Regulations. The company has already obtained the prior approval for change of Management from RBI, Delhi vide letter No. S533/NBC-BL/05.11.106/2024-25 dated 02nd September, 2024. Any clarification/objection in this regard may be addressed to Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, 6, Sansad Marg, Delhi-110001 within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice stating therein the nature of interest and grounds of objection. This public Notice is being issued jointly by the Company and the above mentioned Acquirers.
For **KARINA FINCAP LIMITED**
Sd/- SHYAM LAL KAUSHIK (Director)
Date: 25.09.2024
Place: Delhi
Reg. office: B-2, Lower Ground Floor-C, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110013
CIN: U74120DL2008PLC173934
Email: info@karinafcap.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Md Shazad had acquired Property bearing Plot No. 54, area 32.32 sq. yds., Khastra No. 36, 37 & 38, situated in the revenue estate of Village Nawada Delhi, area abadi known as colony Vipin Garden Ext., Uttam Nagar, New Delhi vide GPA Dt. 28.12.2020 executed by Mr. Gaurav Sharma, Now Md Shazad is the undisputed owner of the said property.

OR

Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate) H. No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi - 110024.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Society for Development of Human Resources duly registered under Society of Registration Act, Delhi, is the owner of following khasra/khata numbers listed-50/20, 21/1, 21/2, 51/22/1, 22/2, 23/1, 23/2, 24, 25, 59/2/11, 21/2, 3, 4/1, 4/2, 5, 7, 60/1/1-Situated in Barkatabad (Naya Gaon), Bahadurganj, District Jhajar, are not available for sale. Any parties attempting to engage in transactions involving sale/purchase of the above khasra/khata numbers will be subject to legal and criminal prosecution. This matter is currently under judicial review in both the Delhi High Court and the Punjab and Haryana High Court. A high court order is in place prohibiting the entry of any individual onto the premises except Mr. Parvesh Kumar and the Governing body of Society for Development of Human Resources.

Pankaj Kumar (Advocate)

E-AUCTION FOR RAIL COACH RESTAURANT

E-Auction catalogue of Coach restaurant cum Food and Tea Stall over Katihar Division. Details are as under: **Auction Catalogue No.:** C-RCR-TKG-KNE: **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots):** 12:00 hrs on 08-10-2024; **Auction Close Date & Time:** 12:40 hrs. on 08-10-2024; **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee; **Trips/Days:** 1826.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	MSS-KIR-KNE-RCR-9-23-1 (Misc-Static-Services - Rail Coach Restaurant)	Allotment of Rail Coach Restaurant at Kishanganj Railway Premises/ circulating area.
AA/2	MSS-KIR-TKG-RCR-12-23-1 (Misc-Static-Services - Rail Coach Restaurant)	Allotment of Rail Coach Restaurant at Thakurganj Railway station premises/ circulating area at specified earmarked location for a period of 5 years.

Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

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

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer 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 to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described below, by exercising 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 are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Outstanding Rs (₹)	Name of Branch
1.	Gaurav Kumar/ Chanda Devi / TBDEL00006468680/ LBDEL00006471180	Property No.-138, First Floor, Block-C, Pocket-2, Sector-16, (Without Roof Rights) Situated In The Layout-Plan Of Rohini Residential Scheme, Rohini, Delhi (Admeasuring An Area Of Property Area Of 25.90 Sq. Meter North: Plot No. 139 South: Plot No. 137 East: S/ Lane 3.00 Mtrs. West: Road 6.00 Mtrs./ September 23, 2024	December 15, 2023 Rs. 24,52,673/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 days Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold for 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: September 26, 2024
Place: Delhi/NCR

Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified 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 Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Shivshankar Kumar/ Madhubala (LBUUC00006910643) & R/o K129, 1465A, 1805A Near Baba Hospital Uttar Pradesh Lucknow- 226028	Part Of Plot No 03 And 04, Khasra No. 1685a Minjulia, Situated At Village Hardasi Kheda, Ward Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Tehsil & District Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh- 226010	04/09/2024 Rs. 40,281/-	06/05/2024
2.	Shivshankar Kumar/ Madhubala (TBLUC00006898542) & R/o K129, 1465A, 1805A Near Baba Hospital Uttar Pradesh Lucknow- 226028	Part Of Plot No 03 And 04, Khasra No. 1685a Minjulia, Situated At Village Hardasi Kheda, Ward Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Tehsil & District Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh- 226010	04/09/2024 Rs. 14,57,810.36/-	06/05/2024
3.	Anil Kumar/ Snehlata Gupta (TBLUC00006429014) & Kasauldhan Barton Bhandari Sahjanwa Market Gorakhpur Uttar Pradesh Sahjanwa- 273209	Flat No- DHB- 0102, Block B First Floor At Ansal Orchard Greens, Vidyawati Nagar, Sector M, Aashiyana Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226012	02/09/2024 Rs. 47,30,529.88/-	18/06/2024
4.	Anil Kumar/ Snehlata Gupta (LBUUC00006475606) & Kasauldhan Barton Bhandari Sahjanwa Market Gorakhpur Uttar Pradesh Sahjanwa- 273209	Flat No- DHB- 0102, Block B First Floor At Ansal Orchard Greens, Vidyawati Nagar, Sector M, Aashiyana Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226012	02/09/2024 Rs. 3,45,301.72/-	18/06/2024

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Also, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: September 26, 2024
Place: Delhi/NCR

Sincerely, Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
HOME LOAN CENTRE, FIRST FLOOR, NEELAM CHOWK, NIT, FARIDABAD-121001

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Assets under Rule 8(1))

Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The Bank issued demand notices on the date mentioned against account and amount stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within sixty days from the date of receipt of said notices. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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 dates mentioned against account and amount below. The borrower and guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with property will be subject to the charge of State Bank of India for the amount and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to the recently amended provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, where under you can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Please also note that if the entire amount of outstanding dues together with the costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank is not tendered before publication of notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty, you may not be entitled to redeem the secured asset(s). Details of Property where Possession has been taken is as follow:-

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Name of the Borrower/ Guarantor	Description of the Mortgaged Property	Am. O/s (as per Notice U/s.13(2))	Date of Notice	Date of Possession
BORROWER: SHRI SANJAY KUMAR SRIVASTAVA S/O. SH. GANESH PRASAD SRIVASTAVA & CO-BORROWER: PUSHPA SRIVASTAVA W/O SH. SANJAY KUMAR SRIVASTAVA Both Address: Flat No.501, Fifth Floor, Tower/Block No.10, Aspen-D, OMAXE SPA Village, Sector 78, Faridabad Haryana. A/c.No.37674717198 and 37681283976.	All that part and parcel of Property Bearing - Flat No.501, Fifth Floor, Tower/Block No.10, ASPEN-D, OMAXE SPA Village, Sector 78, Faridabad, Haryana.	Rs.47,44,518/- (Rupees Forty Seven Lakh Forty Four Thousand Five Hundred Eighteen Only) plus future interest at the contractual rate w.e.f. 26.06.2024 and future interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental expenses, costs, charges, etc. thereon.	26.06.2024	21.09.2024

DATE: 21.09.2024 PLACE: FARIDABAD Sd/- Authorised Officer, State Bank of India

Jan Vishwas bill 2.0 to decriminalise minor offences, says Piyush Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry has received a number of inputs from stakeholders and departments to further decriminalise minor offences in the second edition of the Jan Vishwas bill, expected to be tabled in Parliament in Budget session next year, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said.

Last year, the Jan Vishwas law was rolled out to promote ease of business by decriminalising minor offences through amendments in 183 provisions of 42 acts. Now the ministry is working on the second edition of the bill and stakeholder engagements are going on for that.

"We have received a very good response so far. A number of departments have



come forward with proactive suggestions to decriminalise laws under their ministries and stakeholders have given good inputs on the areas where they are looking for decriminalisation without compromising on safety and security and national interest," Goyal told PTI.

When asked whether the bill can be tabled in the winter session of Parliament, he said it will need more time for consultation, "so possible more in the budget session". He said that the act was widely received as a progressive measure to decriminalise minor offences

and that has encouraged the government to work in partnership with stakeholders for another round of decriminalisation through Jan Vishwas bill 2.0.

He also said that these measures to improve the business environment of the country among other steps are helping to boost foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country. "India is a very attractive FDI destination. The government is taking significant steps to attract investments and coupled with that, growing aspirations of India will certainly help FDI increase in the years to come," he said. Foreign direct investment in India jumped 47.8 per cent to USD 16.17 billion in April-June this fiscal on healthy inflows in services, computer, telecom and pharma sectors, according to government data.

India reports record foodgrain production at 3322.98 LMT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Backed by good monsoon rains last year, the total foodgrain production in India is estimated at record 3322.98 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) during 2023-24 which is higher by 26.11 LMT than the production of food grains of 3296.87 LMT achieved during 2022-23. The Ministry of Agriculture's data released on Wednesday shows food grain production witnessed record increase due to good production of Rice, Wheat and Shree Anna. The final estimate for 2023-24 shows an increase of 2.61 million tonne from the previous year's 329.6 million tonne, the ministry said in a statement. The foodgrains basket comprises rice, wheat, coarse cereals, millets and pulses. Interestingly, during 2023-24, there were drought-like conditions in southern states,

including Maharashtra and prolonged dry spell during August especially in Rajasthan. The moisture stress from the drought also affected the Rabi season. This mainly impacted production of pulses, coarse cereals, soybean and cotton. "Total Rice production is estimated at record 1378.25 LMT. It is higher by 20.70 LMT than previous year's Rice production of 1357.55 LMT. The Wheat production is estimated at record 1132.92 LMT. It is higher by 27.38 LMT than previous year's wheat production of 1105.54 LMT and production of Shree Anna is estimated at 175.72 LMT as compared to 173.21 LMT during previous year," the agriculture ministry said in a statement. However, pulses production declined to 24.24 million tonne from 26.05 million tonne and oilseeds output fell to 39.66 million tonne from



41.35 million tonne. The ministry attributed the decline in pulses, coarse cereals, soybean and cotton production to "drought-like conditions in southern states, including Maharashtra and prolonged dry spell during August especially in Rajasthan". Sugarcane production decreased to 453.15 million tonne from 490.53 million tonne, and cotton output fell to 32.52 million bales (1 bale equals to 170 kg) from 33.66 million bales. "These estimates have been primarily prepared on the basis of information received from States/ UTs. The crop area has been validated and triangulated with information

received from Remote Sensing, Weekly Crop Weather Watch Group and other agencies. Crop yields estimates are majorly based on Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) conducted nationwide. The process of recording CCEs has been re-engineered with the introduction of the Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCES), which was rolled out in major States during the 2023-24 agricultural years. The new system has ensured the transparency and robustness of the yield estimates," the ministry said. India is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses and jute, and ranks as the second largest producer of rice, wheat, sugarcane, groundnut, vegetables, fruit and cotton. It is also one of the leading producers of spices, fish, poultry, livestock and plantation crops.

Diamond industry revenue to drop: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Natural diamond polishing industry is likely to witness a 25-27 per cent decline in revenue to a decadal-low of USD 12 billion this fiscal on lower demand in key markets and a shift in preference to consumer lab-grown diamonds, according to a report released on Wednesday.

The decline in revenue is mainly due to muted demand in key export markets of the US and China, a 10-15 per cent fall in diamond prices amid oversupply and a shift in consumer preference towards lab-grown diamonds (LGDs), Crisil Ratings said in its report. Declining for the third fiscal in a row, the natural diamond polishing industry's revenues are estimated to fall 25-27 per cent year-on-year to a decadal low of USD 12 billion this fiscal, it added. The industry's revenue contracted 29 per cent in the previous fiscal and 9 per cent in FY23. The report stated that tepid demand amid decreasing prices has seen



diamond polishers limiting the purchase of roughs and have curbed manufacturing. In turn, miners have cut production and eased inventory push, which has helped arrest the fall in the prices of roughs and polished natural diamonds. As a result, operating margins will stabilise at 4.5-4.7 per cent in FY25. Overall, lower working capital requirements will limit reliance on external debt and support credit profiles over the medium term. Sluggish demand from the US resulted in a 43 per cent decline in exports to that market in value terms over the past two fiscals, with the share of the US in India's diamond exports reducing to

35 per cent in FY24, from over 40 per cent two years back, Crisil Ratings said. On the other hand, the report said, preference for gold jewellery is growing in China, which accounts for 28 per cent of India's exports, as the yellow metal continues to be perceived as a safer asset providing better returns amid economic uncertainty. A sharp decline in diamond prices over the past 2-3 fiscals has hindered the revival of demand for natural diamonds. Further, the youth in these key export markets are increasingly embracing LGDs as limited disposable incomes are constraining discretionary spending, which eats into the share of natural diamonds,

Crisil Ratings said. "LGDs, which resemble natural diamonds, are 90 per cent cheaper. Their market share has increased to about 25 per cent by value in the US from 8 per cent, two years ago. The share would have been higher, if not for the sharp fall in LGD prices owing to supply outpacing demand. As a result, revenue of natural diamond exporters may continue to face serious headwinds," Crisil Ratings Director Rahul Guha said. As miners and polishers prepare for continued weak demand, they are focusing on reducing inventory and costs in FY25, which will lower working capital requirements. Meanwhile, liquidity will likely remain adequate, said the report. "Due to persistent price falls in recent fiscals, polishers have curtailed purchases and miners have implemented production cuts while offering flexible procurement terms to partially alleviate working capital pressure for polishers.

Airtel to launch AI solution to alert users about spam calls



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel is all set to roll out artificial intelligence enabled technology on its network to crackdown on spam calls and messages, company Managing Director and CEO Gopal Vittal said on Wednesday. The technology will be rolled out at midnight starting September 26, which will alert users about probable spam calls and messages. "There are several indicators based on which we have identified spammers. We have developed an AI-enabled spam detection solution which analyses calls in 2 millisecond and alert users on dialler," Vittal said. He said that the solution will be rolled out free

of cost for all Airtel smartphone users. "In 2 milliseconds our solution processes 1.5 billion messages and 2.5 billion calls every day. Our solution has been able to identify 100 million potential spam calls and 3 million spam SMSes originating every day," Vittal said. The technology will not block the call on its own but it will be for users to decide on blocking calls, as sometimes there are 'false positives', which means even genuine calls get displayed as spam. He said that the solution will not be able to help users getting spam calls on over-the-top apps like WhatsApp. "It is one of the pain points (spam calls on OTT apps) which we have not been able to address," Vittal said.

Domestic coal production up, imports still necessary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is a "critical need" for coal imports, and the country has reported a marginal rise of 0.9 per cent to 90.51 mt in the April-July period of FY25, according to an official statement. India, which has the fifth-largest coal reserves in the world, is also its second-largest consumer, driven by a rapidly growing economy, Ministry of Coal said on Wednesday.

Coal production during the April-July FY25 period increased 9.56 per cent to 321.40 MT from 293.35 MT in FY24. "However, the current consumption landscape reveals a critical need for imports, particularly for coking coal and high-grade thermal coal, which are not sufficiently available within domestic reserves. This shortfall necessitates imports to support key industries, including steel," it said. According to the ministry, coal imports during April-July period of FY25 reported a marginal increase of 0.9 per cent, reaching 90.51 million tonnes (MT) level compared to 89.68 MT in the previous year. While the non-coking coal imports increased 2 per cent, coking coal imports declined 2.6 per cent. In July alone, coal imports rose 15.9 per cent to 21.81 MT from 18.82 MT in July 2023. The ministry further said the imports for blending purposes have decreased 8.2 per cent despite a 10.18 per cent year-on-year growth in coal-based power generation from April-July 2024 compared to the same period last year.

British Petroleum holds meeting in India, reflects growing presence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The board of global energy giant bp plc is holding its meeting in India, reflecting the importance of the country and its confidence in the opportunities it presents, the firm said on Wednesday. The board of bp began a 5-day visit on September 23, holding board sub-committee meetings as well as meeting government leaders and business partners. In between, it will hold its full board meeting. This is the second time that the bp board is holding its meeting in India. The firm's board had visited

India in May 2013, two years after the firm spent USD 7.2 billion in buying a 30 per cent stake in 23 oil and gas blocks of Reliance Industries Ltd. Just like 2013, the bp board met Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri over dinner on Tuesday evening, flew to Gadimoga in Andhra Pradesh for a visit to the landing point of gas produced from deepsea in Krishna Godavari basin, and will meet partner Reliance Industries officials in Mumbai. It will also visit bp's global business services centre in Pune. In 2013, the bp board including the then chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg and

then CEO Bob Dudley dined with the then Oil Minister M Veerappa Moily and partner Reliance Industries officials including chairman Mukesh Ambani, visited their flagship KG-D6 fields in Bay of Bengal and called on the then President Pranab Mukherjee. "The 5-day visit of the bp board reflects bp's significant and growing presence in India and its commitment to further develop its businesses in and with the country," the company said in a statement on Wednesday. Recognising India's key role in global energy demand, during their visit the board will also hold meetings with the Indian



government and bp's business partners, as well as visiting key bp India locations. The statement, however, did not elaborate on the meetings or the venue of the board

meeting. On meeting Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri, bp chair Helge Lund commented, "bp is committed to working closely with the government of India to

support its changing energy needs. By leveraging our combined experience and expertise with our partners, we aim to facilitate the secure, affordable, and lower carbon growth of India's energy resources to meet the increasing demand". Bp chief executive Murray Auchincloss added: "There is huge potential for bp to work even more closely with India. We see growing business opportunities, including through our world-class partnership with Reliance (Industries Ltd), producing the country's gas and growing our joint retail presence. In turn, India's

highly skilled engineering and scientific talent can help us deliver our targets more effectively, efficiently and rapidly." Kartikeya Dube, bp's Head of Country said, "India is an important part of bp's strategy as we transform into an integrated energy company. Building on the century-old legacy with India through our Castrol brand, our presence across the gas value chain, mobility retail businesses and our global business and technology centre, we expect to grow a material business here, and help support India's aspiration for energy independence by 2047."

FICCI-CASCADE 2024: Urgent need for strict measures against illicit trade

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday emphasized on the need of harsh penalties and cracking down heavily on the nexus of people engaged in illicit trade and activities across the country. "Punishment is necessary, and it is important to instill fear in the minds of perpetrators that harsh penalties are in store for them if they engage in illicit trade activities," said Ravneet Singh Bittu, Minister of State for Food Processing Industries & Minister of State for Railways. Addressing the 10th edition of FICCI-CASCADE 2024, Bittu asserted that co-ordination between various enforcement agencies is key to overcome the battle against the nefarious elements ruining our economic growth. "Together, we build resilient economies, fostering global collaboration to combat these threats with robust initiatives. Let's safeguard Bharat's future

together," he added. He further stated that the opinions and views of FICCI CASCADE's report will help the government to come down heavily on illicit trade activities. Special Secretary to the Government of India and Member (Compliance Management), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Rajiv Talwar, said, "CBIC is serving as the fulcrum in the movement against counterfeit goods and smuggling. We have built a technology-driven risk management portal with very wide capabilities that help us predict possible smuggling operations. CBIC field officers are making on an average 60 detections a day with the help of this portal." Talwar added that over 3,000 people have been arrested in the last 15 months and foreign products worth Rs 40 crore were seized. FICCI CASCADE Chairman Anil Rajput said consumers



Illicit Market Size	
Industry	Value (INR Crores) 2022-23
FMCG - Packaged Foods	223875
FMCG - Personal & Household Care Goods	73813
Textiles and Apparels	403915
Tobacco Products	30017
Alcoholic Beverages	66106
Total	797726

have and will continue to remain the prime focus group for both legal and the illicit players. In today's technology-dominated landscape, artificial intelligence has assumed great significance and at present we are witnessing the positive impact of this technology on our businesses and society. "I believe that my mantra called the 'SECURE' framework which stands for Surveillance, Enforcement, Capacity Building, United Front against illicit trade, Rigorous Punishment, Entire Ecosystem built on simplicity-when looked at in totality, will provide a 360 degree addressal of the complicated issue of illicit trade and will also add value and significantly strengthen our strategy against this global menace," he said. Director, Compliance and Facilitation Directorate, World Customs Organization Pranab Kumar Das, Director General, Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA) and Former Director General, FICCI and

Think Tank Member, FICCI CASCADE Arun Chawla were present on the occasion. During the event, FICCI CASCADE, in association with the Thought Arbitrage Research Institute (TARI), launched a report 'Consuming The Illicit: How Changing Factors of Consumption Affect Illicit Markets in 5 Key Industries' which pegs the size of illicit market in India at Rs 7,97,726 crore in 2022-23. Considering 5 key industries—FMCG (packaged goods), FMGC (personal and household care), alcohol, tobacco, and textiles & apparel—where illicit trade is undermining legitimate businesses, distorting competition, and significantly eating into government tax revenues, the report attributes the burgeoning size of the illicit market to heightened consumption of high-value branded, luxury, high-end, taxed goods and services, especially among the expanding aspirational middle class, both in rural and urban India.

INBRIEF

PEC SIGNS MOU WITH PSPCL

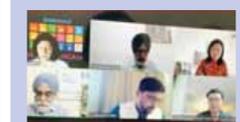
PATIALA: Punjab Engineering College (Deemed to be University), Chandigarh, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) today, aimed at fostering technical support and research collaborations.



INTER-COLLEGE YOUTH FESTIVALS FROM SEPTEMBER 28

AMRITSAR: Inter-College Cultural competitions, the Youth Festivals of Guru Nanak Dev University will be held from September 28, 2024. The Zonal Youth Festival will feature an array of performances and competitions, including music, dance, art, and theater.

GNUU PARTICIPATED IN SCIENCE SUMMIT



AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University participated in Science Summit for the third time in a row with three online sessions under the leadership of Prof Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Vice Chancellor.

GNUU AMONG SIX INSTITUTES FOR AMRUT FUNDED CENTRE

AMRITSAR: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has selected Guru Ramdas School of Planning, GNUU as "AMRUT funded centre of Urban Planning for Capacity Building."



PM MODI MEETS CHESS PLAYERS



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an interaction with 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad winning Indian teams, at his residence, in New Delhi, Wednesday. India won gold medals in both Open and Women's events of the olympiad PTI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday lauded India's young chess players for their historic achievement at the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, where both the men's and women's teams clinched their maiden gold medals.

India made history on Sunday as the men's team defeated Slovenia and the women's team triumphed over Azerbaijan in the final round, securing their first-ever gold medals at the prestigious event. In the men's competition, D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, and R Praggnanandhaa secured decisive wins in the 11th and

final round. The women's team secured their gold by defeating Azerbaijan. In a video shared on social media, Modi interacted with the chess champions, including R Vaishali, D Harika, Tania Sachdev, Vidit Gujrathi, Arjun Erigaisi, and Praggnanandhaa. D Gukesh, the star of the tournament, won 10 out of 11

rounds in the Open category, playing a crucial role in India's victory. During the interaction, the players presented the Prime Minister with a chessboard, after which Praggnanandhaa and Erigaisi played a quick game of chess, which left Modi spellbound. Earlier, the Sports Ministry

shared a video of the Indian chess contingent leaving their hotel and heading to meet the Prime Minister. The Indian men's team finished with an impressive 21 out of 22 possible points in Budapest, conceding only one draw (2-2) against Uzbekistan while defeating the rest of their opponents.

Macau Open: Srikanth leads Indian charge into second round

PTI ■ MACAU

Star shuttler Kidambi Srikanth, along with compatriots Ayush Shetty and Tasnim Mir, advanced to the second round of the singles event at the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament on Wednesday. In his first competition since recovering from an injury sustained in May, sixth seed Srikanth, a silver medalist at the 2021 World Championships, outclassed Israel's Daniil Dubovenko 21-14, 21-15, while Ayush, the 2023 World Junior Championships bronze medalist, also had a strong start, defeating fellow Indian Alap Mishra 21-13, 21-5 in another men's singles opening-round match. Former world junior number one Tasnim Mir triumphed over Devika Sihag, winning 15-21, 21-18, 22-20 to also secure her spot in the next round of women's singles. The second round will feature an all-Indian matchup, with Srikanth set to face Ayush, who was a runner-up at the 2023 Odisha Masters. Tasnim will take on fourth seed Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan, the 2022 World junior champion.



In mixed doubles, the pair of B Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy also progressed after a hard-fought victory against Malaysian qualifiers Loo Bing Kun and Ho Lo Ee, winning 24-22, 10-21, 21-13. They will next face the Malaysian duo of Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien. However, the tournament was challenging for other Indian participants, with Tanya Hemanth, Anupama Upadhyaya, Isharani Baruah, Chirag Sen, S Sankar Muthusamy Subramaniam, Sameer Verma, and Mithun Manjunath all exiting in the opening round. Tanya lost a close match to Taiwan's Liang Ting Yu, falling 18-21, 19-21, while Anupama put up a fight but lost 12-21, 22-20, 7-21 to Japan's Riko Gunji. Isharani struggled against Chinese qualifier Wu Luo Yu, losing 7-21, 15-21. In men's singles, Chirag Sen was defeated by second seed Ng Ka Long Angus of Hong Kong, losing 12-21, 17-21, while Sameer Verma fell to Wang Zheng Xing of China in three games, 21-18, 11-21, 13-21. Mithun was ousted by Huang Yu Kai of Chinese Taipei with a score of 12-21, 15-21. Sankar, who won silver at the 2023 World Junior Championships, also faced disappointment, losing 14-21, 21-10, 12-21 to Thai player Panitchaphon Teeratsakul. In mixed doubles, the pairing of Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde fought hard but were eliminated by the eighth-seeded Thai duo of Rittanapak Oupthong and Jhenicha Sudjairaparat, falling 21-23, 22-24.



Jasmine takes 3-shot lead in Leg 13 of Hero WPGT

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

Jasmine Shekar tamed the Golden Greens Golf Club course with one of her best rounds in her short pro career as she took a three-shot lead after the first round of Leg 13 of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here. The 19-year-old Jasmine, who turned pro last year, fired seven birdies against one bogey for a round of 6-under 66 and was three shots clear of the experienced Ridhima Dilawari (69), a multiple winner on the Tour. Three established players — Hitaashee Bakshi, the current Hero Order of Merit leader, Vidhatri Urs, winner of three of the last four events, and Gaurika Bishnoi, already a winner this year — shot 1-under 71 each and were tied third. Jasmine, whose best has been a runner-up finish in Kolkata in the third leg of the Tour last year at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club and again at Tollygunge this year, was playing alongside Astha Madan and amateur Nandita Kumar in the third group from the first tee. Jasmine birdied three in a row from third to the fifth and added a fourth birdie on the ninth to turn in 4-under. On the back nine she birdied the

12th, 14th and the 16th and dropped one shot on the Par-4 15th. Ridhima had four birdies against one bogey. Her birdies came on the first, fifth, 11th and the 12th and the dropped shot was on the par-4 10th. Gaurika had four birdies against three bogeys while Hitaashee, who has been in good form this season, also had four birdies against three bogeys. Vidhatri, whose seven starts as a pro on the Hero WPGT Tour includes three wins and four third-place finishes, had three birdies and two bogeys. Five players hold the tied-sixth place on a tight leaderboard. The five included experienced Amandeep Drall, the 2022 runner-up at the Hero Women's Indian Open, Sneha Singh, winner of Order of Merit in 2023, Gauri Karhade, amateur Anvvi Dahhiya and Khushi Khanjau. They all carded 1-over 73 each. Among other well-known names, Seher Atwal shot 75 and was T-13, Shweta Mansingh (77) was T-20 and Neha Tripathi (78) was T-28. A total of 41 players are playing in the Rs 14-lakh event, which is the last one before the flagship Hero Women's Indian Open next month.

Osaka cruises through opening round at China Open

AP ■ BEIJING

Former top-ranked Naomi Osaka started the China Open with a routine 6-3, 6-2 victory over Lucia Bronzetti of Italy on Wednesday. The four-time Grand Slam champion was the headline act on the opening day and showed her class in closing out the first-round match against the No.77-ranked Italian player in 83 minutes. Osaka, who claimed the 2019 China Open before COVID-19 and a WTA boycott of China over the wellbeing of Peng Shuai forced the cancellation of tournaments in China for four years, next plays Yulia Putintseva, a 21st-seeded player from Kazakhstan, in the second round. "I'm glad that I'm able to be able to play on this court again," Osaka said on court. "And I hope to be able to lift a trophy again sometime soon." After trading breaks in the first set, Osaka made the decisive break in the

seventh game of the first set. On the back of some big serving she increased the pressure in the second set, breaking Bronzetti twice more to seal victory. Former Australian Open winner Sofia Kenin progressed with a 7-5, 6-2 win over Ana Bogdan of Romania. The 25-year-old Kenin, one of a record 15 American women in the draw in Beijing, next plays 12th-seeded Diana Shnaider in the second round. American Taylor Townsend will join Kenin in the second round after beating Martina Trevisan 6-2, 4-6, 6-3. Also, China's Wang Xinyu beat Mai Hontama of Japan 6-1, 6-3 and Yuliia Starodubtseva defeated Laura Siegemund 6-4, 7-6 (3). U.S. Open champion and top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka begins her tournament in the second round on Friday against the winner of the match between Zarina Diyas and

not playing this week citing personal reasons. The men's tournament begins Thursday and is headlined by top-ranked Jannik Sinner and No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz, who accounted for all four Grand Slam titles this season. Second-ranked Alexander Zverev said earlier in the week he would not be playing in Beijing as he recovers from an illness. **JAPAN OPEN:** Matteo Berrettini started his Japan Open campaign with a straightforward 6-3, 6-4 win over Botic van de Zandschulp of the Netherlands. The big-serving Italian fired seven aces and broke van de Zandschulp four times. Former sixth-ranked Berrettini, now No. 45, could next play top-seeded Taylor Fritz in the second round. Fritz, who made his first Grand Slam final at the U.S. Open this month, plays Frenchman Arthur Fils in his opening match on Thursday. Earlier, Mariano Navone of Argentina beat Italy's Luciano Darderi 6-4, 6-4.



Mananchaya Sawangkaew. Top-ranked Iga Swiatek, a winner of four WTA 1000 events this season, is

Coach says Neymar is not ready for an imminent return to Al-Hilal

AP ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Neymar is not ready for an imminent return to play for Al-Hilal, the head coach of the Saudi Arabian club has announced. The Brazilian star signed for the Riyadh team in August 2023 but played just five games when he underwent surgery after rupturing his meniscus and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in his left knee while on international duty in October. After Neymar, 32, returned to training in July, speculation grew that he was close to a return but coach Jorge Jesus dampened expectations in a post-match media conference. "Neymar is an important player for Al-Hilal and the league in general," Jesus, who led Al-Hilal to a 19th league title in May, said on Tuesday. "I can't, however, specify a date as to when he will return but we will look at the situation in January." Neymar will be able to be registered by Al-Hilal in



January for the second half of the Saudi Pro League (SPL) season. With SPL teams allowed to register a maximum of eight foreign players over the age of 21, Neymar's place in the roster for the first half of the league campaign was taken by Marcos Leonardo, signed from Benfica earlier in September. Upon return to fitness Neymar, whose two-year contract ends next August, is eligible, however, to appear in Al-Hilal's ongoing AFC Champions League Elite campaign as the continental competition has no restrictions on the number of foreign players allowed.

Debutants Mohammedan Sporting brace for tough Chennaiyin FC test

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Newly-promoted Mohammedan Sporting have impressed with their attacking flair in their first two ISL matches but their defensive frailties will pose a real challenge when they face two-time champions Chennaiyin FC in an away game here on Thursday. In their debut game, Mohammedan Sporting showed promise but ultimately fell short, conceding a stoppage-time goal to NorthEast United FC. Facing FC Goa, led by India head coach Manolo Marquez, in their second match, Mohammedan displayed a fierce attacking intent and held a one-goal advantage until the 90th minute. However, in a familiar pattern, they conceded another injury-time goal, resulting in a 1-1 draw. Despite the disappointment, they managed to secure their first point in the ISL. While they have shown



resilience in their ability to create scoring opportunities, it's their defensive solidity that will be put to the test against Chennaiyin FC. Mohammedan SC head coach Andrey Chernyshov has expressed pride at the confidence with which his players have taken to the ISL, hoping that they work on their physical conditions to prepare well for the coming games. Facing Chennaiyin FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium is no small task. The Marina Machans have made their home ground a fortress, having won five of their last seven matches there. Moreover, their confidence is sky-high following a thrilling 3-2 victory over Odisha FC in their season opener, which saw them end the latter's 569-day unbeaten streak at home.

Mbappé extends scoring streak as Real Madrid beats Alaves 3-2 in Spanish league

AP ■ MADRID

Kylian Mbappé extended his scoring streak with his sixth goal in five matches as Real Madrid defeated Alaves 3-2 to move closer to leader Barcelona in the Spanish league. Mbappé's seventh goal since joining Madrid was a beauty, with the France forward starting a give-and-go with Jude Bellingham with a heel flick and then picking up the pass inside the area and using a nifty move to clear a defender before finding the net in the 40th minute at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Mbappé asked to be substituted in the 80th because of a muscle ailment, according to Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who said it was not

been given to Endrick after the Brazilian appeared to kick an opponent away from the play. Madrid's next match is the city derby against Atletico Madrid at Atletico's Metropolitan stadium. **NIGUEZ'S INJURY:** Sevilla midfielder Saúl Niguez was carried off the field on a stretcher with an apparent leg injury early in the second half of Sevilla's 2-1 home win over Valladolid. Chidera Ejuke scored the winner in the 85th minute for Sevilla's second victory in its past three league matches. Valladolid's only win this season came in its league opener against Espanyol. **VALENCIA HELD:** Valencia followed up its first win of the season — 2-0 at Girona — with a 0-0 draw against Osasuna.

in nine matches with Madrid in all competitions. He has five goals in the Spanish league, one behind leading scorer Robert Lewandowski of Barcelona. The France star who signed as a free agent after leaving Paris Saint-Germain, also had a goal disallowed for offside in the 22nd. Arda Güler came in for Mbappé in the 80th. Vázquez had put Madrid ahead one minute into the match with a shot from inside the area after a nice run by Vinicius Júnior through the left side of the area. Rodrygo added to the lead after a long run in the 48th. Ancelotti, in his 300th match with the club, used most of his regular starters and did not immediately rotate his squad despite a congested schedule.



Vázquez started as a right back in place of regular starter Dani Carvajal, who was rested with fitness issues. Teenage Brazil forward Endrick replaced Rodrygo in the 69th, his earliest appearance off the bench, and a couple of minutes later struck the post from inside the area. Madrid complained about yellow cards to Vinicius, Federico Valverde and substitute Luka Modric for protesting in a match in which Madrid felt its players were often subjected to tough tackles. "There is a different standard now and we have to adapt," Ancelotti said. "We have to stop protesting." Alaves, whose players were not shown any cards, complained that a red card should have

been given to Endrick after the Brazilian appeared to kick an opponent away from the play. Madrid's next match is the city derby against Atletico Madrid at Atletico's Metropolitan stadium. **NIGUEZ'S INJURY:** Sevilla midfielder Saúl Niguez was carried off the field on a stretcher with an apparent leg injury early in the second half of Sevilla's 2-1 home win over Valladolid. Chidera Ejuke scored the winner in the 85th minute for Sevilla's second victory in its past three league matches. Valladolid's only win this season came in its league opener against Espanyol. **VALENCIA HELD:** Valencia followed up its first win of the season — 2-0 at Girona — with a 0-0 draw against Osasuna.

PANT RE-ENTERS TOP 10; ROHIT, KOHLI SLIP IN ICC TEST BATTING RANKINGS

PTI ■ DUBAI

Riding on a sensational century in his Test comeback, wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday re-entered the ICC rankings at an impressive sixth position but India skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli slipped in a major shake-up in standings. Pant (731), who smashed a stunning century in the opening game of the two-Test series against Bangladesh in Chennai, was placed sixth, while opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (751), moved up to fifth thanks to a half-century in the first innings of the Test match. India skipper Rohit Sharma retained his place in the top ten, though he moved down five places with two underwhelming scores. He has 716 rating points. Kohli also dropped five spots to go out of the top-10 and he is now placed 12th in the standings. The Sri Lanka-New Zealand Test in Galle brought about top 10 bowling rankings shifts, with Prabath Jayasuriya solidifying his reputation as one of the game's best spinners, moving five spots into eighth after a nine-wicket haul. Jayasuriya (743) is the highest-ranked player representing Sri Lanka across the three disciplines, moving past Asitha Fernando, who slid down two spots to 13th (700). Kamindu Mendis, who moved up three spots to 16th in the batting rankings and



Dhananjaya de Silva, who climbed five spots to 18th on the All-Rounder Rankings (168) were other movers over note in the victory. In ODI rankings, young Afghan star Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Australian Travis Head leapt into the top 10 in the Batting rankings, thanks to quick-fire hundreds in action across UAE and England. Gurbaz continued his dream career start in ODI cricket, hitting his seventh century in the format before his 23rd birthday, and moving 10 spots in the process up to eighth (692) to become the first-ever Afghan batter to reach the top 10 positions of the ICC Men's ODI Batting Ranking. The previous best performer from the Asian country in the ODI Batting Rankings was Ibrahim Zadran, who had reached the 12th rank. Gurbaz edged Head, who moved seven spots to ninth (684) in large part thanks to his 154 not out (129) in the first of five ODIs against rivals England. Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan joined Rahmanullah in the rankings headlines, moving eight spots to third (668) in the ODI Bowling Rankings, claiming seven wickets across the team's two victories against South Africa in UAE. The contributions of the pair helped Afghanistan to an ODI series win over the Proteas, their first against a top five-ranked opposition in their history.



Delhi Ranji Probables: Kohli, Pant named in 84, no Ishant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Premier batter Virat Kohli and the flamboyant Rishabh Pant have once again been named in a jumbo 84-member Delhi Ranji Trophy probables list although the duo is unlikely to be available for any of the red ball games throughout the season. However, veteran pacer Ishant Sharma's name didn't figure in the list which has the country's fastest bowler Mayank Yadav along with another Team India contender Harshit Rana. Kohli had last played Ranji Trophy for Delhi in 2012 at Ghaziabad against Uttar Pradesh while Pant last featured in a red ball game for Delhi in the pre-COVID era.



"This is a protocol. They are our registered players and it is our duty to put their names in probables list in case they want to play," a DDCA official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. In case of the 35-year-old 100 Test veteran Ishant, it is understood that there is no point in him playing Ranji Trophy since he no longer figures in national team's scheme of things. Ishant didn't play in inaugural Delhi Premier League (DPL) either but it will be interesting to note if he makes himself available for Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament which will be held just before the IPL auctions.

A potential retirement from competitive cricket altogether can also not be ruled out. Member of Parliament Pappu Yadav's son Sarthak Ranjan has also made the cut. However, all eyes will be on Mayank, who captured global imagination with mid 150 click thunderbolts in the IPL before being ruled out due to abdominal muscle tear. Mayank, who now has a BCCI pace bowlers' contract, has been at NCA for better part of last five months and is now bowling at least 15 overs per day in simulation. He is expected to play for Delhi as the national selectors would be selecting the India A team for Australia and if he is fit, he remains a contender to make that team.



If McCullum calls, it's a 'yes': Stokes on white ball return

PTI ■ CHESTER-LE-STREET (ENGLAND)

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is open to rejoin the white-ball set up, especially following the appointment of Brendon McCullum as the head coach for both limited-overs and Test cricket. McCullum, who has already transformed England's Test team, is set to take over the reins of the limited-overs squads when England tour India next January. "If I get the call and (Baz) says, 'Do you want to come and play?' Then obviously, it's definitely going to be a yes," Stokes told Sky Sports on the sidelines of the third ODI against Australia here, which the hosts won by 46 runs. "But, I'm not going to be too disappointed if I don't, because I can just sit back and watch everyone else go out and smack it." The 33-year-old last played for England in the limited overs format during their unsuccessful ODI World Cup defence in India last year. While he has not featured in a T20 International since 2022, England's selector Luke Wright has hinted that both Stokes and Joe Root remain in contention for future white-ball squads, particularly with the upcoming Champions Trophy in Pakistan. Stokes however said there has been no formal discussion on this. For now, his focus remains firmly on England's Test team, with a three-match series against Pakistan scheduled to start next month. "I've played a lot of white-ball cricket for England, and I'm very happy with what I've achieved in that form of the game. But to be honest, we've not even spoken about anything like that whatsoever," he said. "I think he's just letting me concentrate on what I need to concentrate on, especially around the Test team." Stokes further heaped praise on McCullum's influence since taking charge of the Test team, expressing excitement over the prospect of the same approach being applied to white-ball cricket. "It's an amazing opportunity on the white-ball team to experience what Baz has brought to the Test team. He's an incredible coach who speaks with utter commitment, and it's nice to have all three teams now with the same messaging and the same philosophies towards playing cricket," he added.

We did not do justice to our talent, potential: Hathurusinghe

PTI ■ KANPUR

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe on Wednesday said his players did not do justice to their potential in the opening Test against India but promised a better approach in the must-win second game beginning here on Friday. Visiting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (20) and veteran Shakib Al Hasan (32) got starts in the first innings but could not convert into big knocks. In the second innings not only Shanto (82), top-order batters Zakir Hasan (35) and Shadman Islam (35) also got starts they failed to convert, resulting in a heavy defeat. "We are a bit concerned. We normally talk about if you get a start, make it big. That's the biggest concern because some of the guys got 30 balls. And then in cricket, it's the hardest thing to get in. "But then this team, India, is posing different challenges. So we know that as well. So we have to bat for longer," Hathurusinghe told reporters here. Bangladesh have five left-handers in the squad including the top-four that has Mominul Haque. A left-right combination usually works better as it forces the bowlers to adjust their line and length consistently. However, the Bangladesh team management will not pick the playing eleven thinking on those lines. "That's our best players, whether right or left. If there are any changes, it's depending on the surface tomorrow." "If we are making a change, whether batsman, or whoever is coming in, (we see) what he can bring and who will miss out. And we look at it holistically like that rather than left or right." It is likely to be a low and slow pitch at the Green Park stadium, favouring spinners. That may induce both the teams to probably drop a pacer for the addition of a spinner. Hathurusinghe said they are still not sure which track is going to be used for the match, so they will make a decision later. "We had a look at the pitch. But the groundsman prepared two pitches. So he didn't indicate which one they are finally going to play on. So probably tomorrow we have to come and see which pitch they are going to prepare," he said. The pitch in Chennai offered assistance to fast bowlers initially and Bangladesh bowlers indeed troubled the famed Indian batting line up. That is not a usual sight that pacers dominate batters in the Indian sub-continent.

IOA executive council to discuss 'threatening letters, additional expenses' incurred at Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association's executive council meeting here on Thursday is expected to be a heated affair with its members adding contentious items on the agenda, including the alleged "threatening letters" issued by president PT Usha to them. The meeting will take place in the backdrop of growing tensions between Usha and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav. On Tuesday, Yadav threatened legal action against Usha for "defaming" his image after she issued a show cause notice to him on the basis of a complaint challenging his eligibility to hold the post. The 14 agenda points added by the executive council cover a discussion on "illegal and threatening letters issued by the President to the members of the Executive Committee from time to time". As per two more items concerning the president, the council will "discuss and deliberate upon the scope of powers of the president under the IOA Constitution and



will decide on the need for reporting the conduct of the president to the IOA Ethics Commission". The official communication on the meeting was jointly issued by 12 council members, including senior vice president Ajay Patel, vice-president Rajalaxmi Singh Deo, vice-president and former Olympic medallist Gagan Narang, member and former wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt among others. The members who did not sign the document included boxer M C Mary

Kom and table tennis player A Sharath Kamal, who are on the IOA athletes commission. Issues related to the recent Paris Olympics will also be a substantial part of the meeting. They include the sponsorship details of the Olympics, "additional expenditure" incurred in Paris covering the room upgrade expense of president at alleged cost to the IOA and "bring to knowledge the list of accreditation cards issued to various people at Paris Olympics including various Passes and Invites". Another discussion will pertain to the process followed for selecting the Sportsman of Outstanding Merit (SOM) in November 2022 and their participation in the election of the IOA for elected posts. The athletes commission had picked eight SOMs back then including Usha, Yogeshwar Dutt, MM Somaya (hockey), Rohit Rajpal (tennis), Akhil Kumar (boxing), Shuma Sirur (shooting), Aparna Popat (badminton) and Dola Banerjee (archery).

Root will go down as England's greatest in Tests: Ian Bell

PTI ■ JODHPUR

Joe Root will go down as England's greatest batter in Tests even if he is not able to break Sachin Tendulkar's gargantuan record of 15,921 runs, reckons his former teammate Ian Bell. Root went past Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara recently to move to the sixth spot in the list of highest run-getters in the longest format. "He's played incredibly well in the last 12 months. I don't think he's overthinking too much what's ahead. He's just sort of living in the moment as we are," Bell told PTI in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of Legends League Cricket. "To think that he can even get close to someone like Sachin, a real great of the game,

someone that we've all admired growing up, as a hero to not just people and fans in India, but around the world. "To think that Joe could get close is an amazing achievement on his behalf. He'll go down as England's greatest batsman. There's no doubt whether he does get to Sachin or not," said the 42-year-old who played as many as 118 Tests for England. With 12,402 runs, the 33-year-old Root is 3,519 runs away from breaking Tendulkar's record. **BAZBALL HAS UNLOCKED TALENT OF CURRENT PLAYERS:** Bell feels England's much talked-about Bazball approach has unlocked talent of the current players. "From a fan point of view, you have to look at the results. Since Brendon (McCullum)

has come into this England side and (Ben) Stokes has took over, the results have been absolutely fantastic. "What they've managed to do with the talent that they have is to unlock some of that... Zak Crawley's, Ollie Pope, Harry Brook, they've managed to get the best out of them. "I don't think you could ask a Crawley or Pope to try and be an Alastair Cook or a Jonathan Trott who played in a different style, but were very successful. It's important to identify what they've got and they're adapting that as we go on now." However, with England not featuring among contenders for World Test Championship final in the first two editions, Bell said winning away would be as important as at home in the next cycle. "I'm sure they've got one eye



on the next 12 months, which has five Test matches (against) India at home, which will be a huge challenge," he said. "India are probably the best team in the world at the moment, and then, Australia away. Those 10 Test matches on the road will be hugely important for that group of players and something they're gearing themselves up for. "We were the last team to win in India, which was obviously (a) part of the journey to get to No 1 and we won in Australia.

For this England side to get to No 1, there's no doubt, ability and talent-wise, they have that," he said. He also stressed on consistency shown by the Indian team which has won 17 series in a row at home and its last two series in Australia. "That's what we've seen with India at the moment. They've managed to be able to win away from home as much as anyone and that's the reason why they are the No 1 team in the world at the moment." **NEXT GENERATION OF ENGLAND PLAYERS GROWING UP WITH BIG T20 DIET:** Bell agreed while one could argue saying England's white-ball revolution has also seen diminishing batting averages of the players in Tests barring Root.

"You could definitely have that argument. The next generation of players are growing up with a big diet of T20 cricket in early age and have a look at cricket in England at the moment, there's a lot of short format cricket in the early age group," he said. Himself known for his delightful cover drivers, Bell thinks Virat Kohli plays his favourite shot the best among his peers. "It's very hard to look past Virat Kohli, that is for sure. Not just his cover drive, but the way he plays, his desire for batting, his desire actually in competition and how he goes about his cricket. "When he plays his cover drive, whatever format of the game, it's a good one to watch. You know, my kids who love cricket, I certainly get them

watching as much cricket from Virat Kohli as possible," he said. Bell added the likes of Gus Atkinson and Matthew Potts have huge shoes to fill following the retirement of James Anderson and Stuart Broad. "It's very difficult for any players to come in and emulate straight away what Broad-Anderson have done for England for such a long time," he said. "It's probably very similar to when (Shane) Warne and (Glenn) McGrath finished at the same time for Australia. It took a little bit of time for Australia to adapt and adjust. "It's unfair for anyone who's to follow in those shoes to be seen in the same way. Hopefully people don't get too hard on them too much," he added.