

OPINION 6

HISTORICAL WRONG
MUST BE RIGHTED

WORLD 8

UK BOOSTS UKRAINE SUPPORT
WITH HIGH-TECH MISSILE SYSTEM

MONEY 10

AUTOMOBILE RETAIL SALES
IN SLOW LANE IN MAY

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY JUNE 7, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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WALES TO
PLAY IN 2022
FIFA WORLD CUP
11 SPORTIndia calls Pak, OIC
barbs 'unwarranted'MEA slams Pakistan
criticism as 'absurdity
of a serial violator of
minority rights...'PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/
AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/
ISLAMABAD

India on Monday hit back at Pakistan and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for their criticism of the country in the wake of controversy surrounding objectionable comments made by BJP spokespersons against Prophet Mohammad.

In a related development, Pakistan on Monday said it summoned the Indian chargé d'affaires to convey its categorical rejection and condemnation of the controversial remarks.

The Indian diplomat was told that these remarks are totally unacceptable and have not only deeply hurt the sentiments of the people of Pakistan but of Muslims across the world, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement.

Rejecting Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's criticism of India on Sunday, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "Absurdity of a serial violator of minority rights commenting on the treatment of minorities in another nation is not lost on anyone."

"The world has been witness to the systemic persecu-



tion of minorities including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Ahmadis by Pakistan," he said.

"The Government of India accords the highest respect to all religions. This is quite unlike Pakistan where fanatics are eulogised and monuments built in their honour," Bagchi said.

"We call on Pakistan to focus on the safety, security and well-being of its minority communities instead of engaging in alarmist propaganda and attempting to foment communal disharmony in India," the Spokesperson said.

His reaction came after Shehbaz Sharif condemned the controversial remarks on Sunday. In Islamabad, Pakistan foreign office conveyed the country's categorical rejection and strong condemnation of the highly derogatory remarks.

"The Indian diplomat was further told that Pakistan deplores the belated and perfunctory disciplinary actions taken by the BJP Government against the said officials, which cannot assuage the pain caused to the Muslims," the FO said.

Continued on Page 2

More nations join outrage
against remarks on prophetPIONEER NEWS SERVICE/
AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ DUBAI

A day after Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran condemned the controversial remarks made against Prophet Mohammad, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Afghanistan and Indonesia joined these nations and called for "respect for beliefs and religions." Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian is due to make his first visit to Delhi this week.

To assuage the sentiments of these countries, New Delhi on Sunday had said the derogatory tweets "do not reflect the feelings of the Government of India, and these are views of the fringe elements".

However, that has now

pacified the growing rage in the Arab world. Demand has flooded Twitter in the Arab world calling for a boycott of Indian products.

Moreover, this row erupted even as Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu began his visit to Doha, part of a three-nation tour on Sunday. An official dinner for Naidu to be held by the Deputy Emir of Qatar Abdullah bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani was cancelled on Sunday.

The dinner was cancelled as the Deputy Emir was suspected to have come in contact with an individual who had tested positive for coronavirus, sources said. Officials said the cancellation was not connected to Qatar's protest.

Continued on Page 2

Kuwaiti supermarket takes Indian
products off shelves in protest

AFP ■ KUWAIT CITY

A Kuwaiti supermarket pulled Indian products from its shelves as a row grew on Monday over remarks about Islamic Prophet Mohammed by a BJP spokeswoman, who has since been suspended.

At Al-Ardiya Co-Operative

Society store, sacks of rice and shelves of spices and chilies were covered with plastic sheets. Printed signs in Arabic read: "We have removed Indian products".

"We, as a Kuwaiti Muslim people, do not accept insulting the Prophet," said Nasser Al-Mutairi, CEO of the store.

Punjab ups prison
security on MHA
alert on jailbreak
plan to free ultras

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Alarmed over the intelligence inputs from the Centre regarding a possible "jailbreak" attempt by terrorists to release "prominent gangsters and militants", the security has been tightened across jails in Punjab. The security has been beefed up primarily at four jails — Bathinda, Ferozepur, Amritsar, and Ludhiana — which are the "likely targets".

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sent a communiqué to the Punjab Police alerting that the Babbar Khalsa International operative and wanted terrorist Harvinder Singh Rinda have planned a "jailbreak plan" to ensure the release of some prominent gangsters and militants.

Following the alert, more force has been pressed into services at jails, particularly the four mentioned in the MHA's letter.

Continued on Page 2

Metro halts for 1.5 hrs as
tech snag hits Blue LineSTAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro's Blue Line came to a halt for an hour and a half on Monday due to technical snag, leaving thousands of commuters stranded at Metro stations in Delhi and Noida in the evening.

According to the Delhi Metro, two loops — from Yamuna Bank to Vaishali, and Noida Electronic City to Indraprastha to Dwarka Sec-21 sections — were affected. Blue Line connects Dwarka Sector-21 in Delhi and Noida Electronic City, along with a branch line to Vaishali.

"Train services between Yamuna Bank and Indraprastha station of the Blue Line were affected from 6.35 pm to 8 pm to undertake the repair work of a broken contact wire (part of OHE) on the Uttar Pradesh line (going towards Dwarka) due to some



Delhi Metro commuters stranded on a road near Noida Sector 15 metro station following a massive technical fault on Monday evening Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

external object (bird) hitting the pantograph of the train," said Anuj Dayal, spokesperson of the Delhi Metro.

Following the huge crowd at the metro stations, the metro officials closed the shutters of

a few stations.

The metro officials advised the commuters to take alternate metro or any other mode of transportation to reach their destination.

Continued on Page 2

Severe heatwaves in Delhi, Punjab,
Haryana, UP for 4 days, alerts IMD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday issued an "orange alert" for a severe heatwave in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. According to the IMD, presently the temperature is varying between 44 to 47 degrees Celsius and it shall continue for four more days.

The IMD also advised people to venture out carefully as the heat spell is very severe and can impact the health.

Delhiites witnessed an "extreme heatwave" condition on Monday with the maximum temperature reaching 46.4 degrees Celsius at Najafgarh observatory in the national



Women use scarves and an umbrella to shield themselves from the heat on a hot summer afternoon in New Delhi on Monday PTI

Capital. Amid scorching heat in the city, most of the roads in the city wore a deserted look during the day, with most of the residents avoiding going out.

However, the minimum temperature in the Capital city was recorded at 29.5 degrees Celsius at 8:30 AM, at Safdarjung Observatory, as per the weather department.

At Delhi's base station, the maximum temperature settled at 43.5 degrees Celsius as against 44.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday and 43.9 on Saturday. Sports Complex, Pitampura and Jafarpur recorded a high of 46.1 degrees Celsius, 45.8 degrees Celsius and 46 degrees Celsius respectively.

Continued on Page 2

Make banks, currency part
of global supply chain: PMModi releases
visually-impaired
friendly ₹1, ₹2, ₹
5, ₹10, ₹20 coinsPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday released a special series of ₹1, ₹2, ₹5, ₹10, and ₹20 coins. These special series of coins will have the theme of the logo of the "Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav" (AKAM) and will be easily identifiable to visually impaired persons.

Inaugurating the "iconic week celebrations" of the Ministry of Finance (June 6-11), Modi also launched the National Portal — "Jan Samarth Portal" — a credit-linked portal of 13 Government schemes, to ensure ease in credit availability to youth, entrepreneurs, and farmers. The celebrations are part of the AKAM.

In his address, the Prime Minister said it was necessary to focus on how to make Indian banks and currency an important part of the international supply chain and trade.

"We have shown in the last eight years that if India collectively decides to do something, then India becomes a new hope for the world. Today, the world is looking at us not just



Prime Minister Narendra Modi releases a special series of coins during 'iconic week celebration' of the Ministry of Finance, in New Delhi on Monday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

like a big consumer market but looking at us with hope and confidence as a capable, game-changing, creative, innovative ecosystem," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said the country has borne the brunt of Government-centric governance in the past, but today 21st century India is moving ahead with the approach of "people-centric governance".

He said earlier it was the responsibility of the people to go to the Government for availing benefits of the schemes but now the emphasis is on taking governance to people and freeing them from the rigmarole of

doing rounds of different Ministries and websites.

He said the launch of the national portal for credit linked Government schemes — Jan Samarth Portal — is a major step in this direction. This portal will improve the lives of students, farmers, businessmen, and MSME entrepreneurs and will help them in realising their dreams, he added.

"Any reform if its objectives and goals are clear and there is seriousness in its implementation then good results are assured," the Prime Minister said.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

SALMAN GETS THREAT OF
FATE LIKE MOOSE WALA

Mumbai: Mumbai Police on Monday recorded the statement of Bollywood actor Salman Khan's father Salim Khan, a day after a letter threatened that the father-son duo will meet the fate of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moose Wala. Police, who visited Salman's house in suburban Bandra and enhanced the security around the building, could not record the actor's statement as he was not available, an official said.

WALIULLAH GETS DEATH
FOR VARANASI BLASTS

Ghaziabad: A local court on Monday sentenced terror convict Waliullah Khan to death for serial blasts in Varanasi that killed at least 20 people 16 years back. District Sessions Judge Jitendra Kumar Sinha convicted Khan on Saturday but had held back pronouncement on the quantum of punishment for the blasts in 2006 at Varanasi's Sankat Mochan Hanuman temple and a railway station.

MUSK THREATENS TO
CANCEL TWITTER DEAL

Detroit: Elon Musk has threatened to end his \$44 billion agreement to buy Twitter, accusing the company of refusing to give him information about its spam bot accounts.



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India tests Agni-4 successfully

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of maintaining operational readiness, India on Monday successfully fired Agni-4 intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM). It can hit a target at more than 4,000 kms and cover many cities of China. It is also capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The latest test of the missile was carried out at approximately 1930 hours from APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha. The successful test was part of routine user training launches carried out under the aegis of the

Strategic Forces Command (SFC). The SFC is responsible for all the tactical and strategic nuclear weapons and comes under the Nuclear Command Authority.

Giving details of the test, officials said here later the launch validated all operational parameters as also the

reliability of the system. The successful test reaffirms India's policy of having a 'Credible Minimum Deterrence' Capability.

Agni-IV is the fourth in the Agni series of missiles - earlier known as Agni II prime - developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The missile is a two-stage weapon systems and is road mobile.

India, last year, successfully test-fired the nuclear-capable Agni Prime missile with the capability to hit targets between 1,000 to 2,000 kilometres.

The latest test came in the backdrop of the persisting stand-offs between the armies of India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh for the last two years.

At present, more than 50,000 troops each from both the sides are in a face-off at some friction points.

AAP hits out at Modi as Qatar, Kuwait and Iran summon India's Ambassadors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi after Qatar, Kuwait and Iran summoned India's ambassadors to their countries over BJP leaders' derogatory references to Islam and Prophet Mohammad.

"These small countries have gathered the courage to challenge a great country like India. This is what Modi ji and BJP have done. Every Indian is pained by it, the sorrow is endless (Itne chhote chhote desh ko Bharat jaise mahan desh ko aankhn dikhani ki himmat ho gayi? Modi Ji aur BJP ne desh ka kya haal kar diya. Aaj har bharatbasi behad pirit hai, dukh ki seema nahin hai)," tweeted Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister and AAP leader Manish Sisodia. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal retweeted Sisodia's statement.

Sisodia's remarks came after the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

slammed India for comments by two BJP functionaries against Prophet Mohammad and even urged the UN to take necessary measures to ensure that the rights of Muslims are protected.

Sanjay Singh, the AAP Rajya Sabha MP, while hitting hard at BJP said that India was insulted and disgraced at an international level because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "BJP's hate-riddled politics has brought shame and mockery to the country. In the last 75 years of independence not a single Indian PM has brought so much shame to India as PM Narendra Modi has. Indian diplomats are being insulted in foreign countries. Ambassadors are being summoned by foreign governments to issue apologies," said Singh, while addressing après conference here in national Capital.

Singh questioned that why the country was being made to apologise for the hate BJP has spread and called the whole

incident an aftermath of PM Modi's backing for such goons.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran and Kuwait expressed their condemnation of the controversial remarks against the Prophet and called for "respect for beliefs and religions."

Pakistan summoned the Indian chargé d'affaires to convey its categorical rejection and condemnation of the controversial remarks by the two BJP leaders.

As the row escalated both domestically and abroad, the BJP on Sunday suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal.

The party also issued a statement asserting that it respects all religions and strongly denounces insults of any religious personality.

Sharma's comments, made in a TV debate nearly 10 days ago, and Jindal's now-deleted tweets sparked a Twitter trend calling for a boycott of Indian products in some countries.

Delhi Police begins probe as Nupur Sharma gets death threats after Prophet Mohammed remarks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have initiated an investigation after the suspended Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Nupur Sharma received threats from unidentified people for her controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammed.

Police said that on May 28, a complaint by Sharma was received at cyber cell unit against various persons regarding death threats and targeted hatred to her. On this complaint, a case was registered under the aforesaid sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"During investigation, another complaint by Sharma was received against certain persons regarding promoting enmity. After examining the complaint, Section 153A of IPC was added to this case. Notices have been sent to Twitter Inc. And a reply from it is awaited. Investigation of the case is in progress," the senior police official said.

According to a police, the FIR has been registered under IPC sections 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence), 506 (criminal intimidation), 507 (Criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication) and 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) against unknown people.

IN BRIEFS

YOGA CAMP HELD FOR TIHAR JAIL INMATES

New Delhi: A Yoga and Naturopathy Health Camp for the Tihar Jail inmates and officials were held jointly by Peoples' Foundation and Central Council of Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN), Ministry of Ayush on Monday. It was presided by Rajkumar, jail superintendent of CJ-04



and Dr. Mohan Rao, Research officer, CCRYN. On the occasion, V N Jha, president, Peoples' Foundation was present with his team and said that Yoga & Naturopathy are parts of our traditional knowledge which inspires us to remain healthy and safeguard our health by adopting a healthy lifestyle.

AAP MLAs MEET LG

New Delhi: A delegation of AAP MLAs met Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and appealed himnot to interfere with the elected Government's work. According to AAP leader Somnath Bharti, LG refuses to fall in line, expresses desire to continue infringing upon Kejriwal Government's powers. Earlier, the LG also took it to Twitter and wrote, "Members of the Delhi Legislative Assembly called on today. We discussed various issues pertaining to the City and their constituencies

HC DECLINES URGENT HEARING PLEA BY WAQF BOARD

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to grant an urgent listening to a plea by the managing committee of the Delhi Waqf Board against the stopping of offering namaz by devotees at the Mughal Mosque in South Delhi's Mehrauli area. The plea was mentioned for an urgent hearing before a vacation bench of Justices Manoj Kumar Ohri and Poonam A Bamba which said there was no urgency in the matter.

BAG CONTAINING HUMAN BODY PARTS FOUND

New Delhi: A bag containing human body parts was found at the Ramtila Ground in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area. Police said that all CCTV cameras in or around the area are being scanned to identify the culprits and ascertain the sequence of events.

CPWD FLOATS TENDER TO HIRE AGENCY

New Delhi: The CPWD has floated a tender to hire an agency at an estimated cost of around Rs 28.39 crore for housekeeping and cleaning work of the newly-developed Central Vista Avenue, besides providing security guards on the entire stretch in Lutyens' Delhi for two years.

DU GOES PAPERLESS

New Delhi: The Delhi University (DU) has gone almost paperless with the majority of its operations, including those relating to administrative and accounts departments, now linked to the varsity's 'E-Samarth' portal. The official said that the varsity has been successful in making most of the processes, like admission and examination, online.

585 State, 1,030 Central Govt buildings made barrier-free for disabled: Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

About 585 buildings of the states/Union Territories and 1,030 central government buildings have been made barrier-free for persons with disabilities under the Accessible India Campaign with the release of Rs 553.59 crore, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar said on Monday.

For Accessible India, a meeting will be held with states on June 24 and it will be assessed that how much work has been done and a future roadmap would be set for the same, a senior official said.

Addressing a press conference, Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Kumar listed out various initiatives taken by his ministry in the last eight years.

In the disability sector, he said about 585 buildings of the states/Union Territories and 1,030 central government buildings have been made barrier-free under the Accessible India Campaign with the release of Rs 553.59 crore.

The campaign was launched in December, 2015 for creation of a barrier-free environment in public buildings, transportation and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) ecosystem.

On the Unique Disability Identity Card Project launched in 2016-17 to create a national database of persons with disabilities, Kumar said as on June 1, as many as 73.89 lakh Unique Disability ID cards were generated in 716 districts across all states/UTs.

He also said India has

signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Australia for cooperation in disability sector on November 22, 2018. Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Project is being implemented in collaboration of University of Melbourne which is in line with the area of cooperation mentioned in the MoU.

The minister said the Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of aids and appliances (ADIP) scheme was revised from April, 2022 for providing contemporary aids and assistive devices to Divyangjan and supporting cochlear implant surgery for children with hearing impairment (0-5 years) at Rs 7 lakh per beneficiary and Rs 6 lakh in case of children with acquired hearing loss between 5 to 18 years.

SC irked over mining activities continuing without forest clearance in Odisha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday took strong note of continuing "illegal mining" of minerals by some firms in Odisha without obtaining forest clearance (FCs) from authorities under the garb of "status quo" orders, and asked the state high court to dispose of such matters in six months.

The top court was irked over the fact that the mining companies, which have not been granted FCs by the Centre and other authorities, are continuing with the "illegal excavation" of minerals on grounds that the high court has passed the status quo orders with regard to the dispute.

More nations join outrage...

From Page 1

The Vice President was informed in advance; and his visit was on as per schedule, they said.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia in a statement expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the statements made by the BJP spokespersons against the Prophet.

The Ministry reiterated its "permanent rejection of prejudice against the symbols of the Islamic religion". It also rejected anything that gives rise to prejudice against "all religious figures and symbols".

While welcoming the measures taken by the BJP to suspend the spokesperson, Saudi Arabia reaffirmed the "Kingdom's position calling for

respect for beliefs and religions".

Bahrain's Foreign Affairs Ministry welcomed the decision of the BJP to suspend the party's spokesperson stressing "the need to denounce any reprehensible insults against the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH), as a provocation to Muslims' feelings and incitement to religious hatred".

The Ministry in a statement stressed "the importance of respecting all religious beliefs, symbols, and personalities, and the concerted efforts of the international community to spread the values of moderation, tolerance, and dialogue between religions and civilizations, and to confront extremist ideas that feed sedition and religious, sectarian, or

racial hatred."

The interim Afghan Government, led by the Taliban, condemned the derogatory remarks against Prophet Mohammad, Pajhwok News, Afghanistan's largest independent news agency, said.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan strongly condemns the use of derogatory words against the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) by an official of the ruling party in India," the agency quoted Government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid as saying in a tweet.

"We urge the Indian Government not to allow such fanatics to insult the holy religion of Islam and provoke the feelings of Muslims," he said.

This development came a day after Qatar and Kuwait

summoned India's Ambassadors and expressed their strong protest and condemnation.

Taking exception to controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammad, the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs also summoned Indian envoy Deepak Mittal in Doha to register its protest. He was handed an official note expressing "disappointment" and "total rejection and condemnation" of the remarks.

Clarifying his country's position, Mittal said the tweets do not reflect the views of the Government of India. These are views of fringe elements, he said.

The Qatar Ministry said, "HE Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State, handed this note to the Ambassador of the Republic of India."

Make banks, currency....

From Page 1

"Our youth can easily open the company they want, they can start their enterprises easily, and they can run them easily. Therefore by reducing more than 30,000 compliances, abolishing more than 1500 laws, and decriminalizing several provisions of the Companies Act, we have ensured that Indian companies not only move ahead but also achieve new heights," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the Government is focused on simplification of the governance. "GST has now replaced the web of many taxes at the Centre and the State. The country is also seeing the result of this simplification. Now it has become normal for GST collection to cross one lakh crore

rupees every month," he said.

He said that the GeM portal has brought in new ease for procurement in Government and made selling to the Government very easy. The purchase figure for the portal has crossed 1 lakh crore, the Prime Minister informed.

"Today when we move with the power of reform, simplification and ease, we attain a new level of convenience ... We have shown in the last 8 years that if India collectively decides to do something then India becomes a new hope for the world. Today the world is looking at us not just like a big consumer market but looking at us with hope and confidence as a capable, game-changing, creative, innovative ecosystem", Prime Minister said.

Metro halts for....

From Page 1

Most of the commuters, during peak rush hours, however, stayed at the station waiting for authorities to give any update regarding the metro service.

According to Dayal, a shuttle train service was made available to passengers between Indraprastha and Yamuna Bank stations.

Ranjan Dimri, a daily commuter, said that he was stuck at Sector-15 metro station for 45 minutes, as the officials closed the entry at the station citing technical snag.

"I was told by officials to go to Mayur Vihar metro station and take the pink line from there," said Dimri, a resident of Model Town area.

Rahul Dutta, whose office

is near Sector-15 metro station in Noida said that after standing for atleast an hour, we decided to go to the Botanical Garden and take the Magenta line metro to Hauz Khas.

"The metro officials were not sure when the service will resume," he said.

Syed Raza Nawab, another daily commuter said that following the no metro service on Blue Lines people have queued up to take the Magenta Line at Botanical Garden in Noida.

"There are kilometers long queues of people to take the metro and metro on the magenta line is also taking time to come. It is also coming after an interval of 15 minutes which has led to long queues here," said Nawab.

Punjab ups prison....

From Page 1

Punjab Jails Minister Harjot Singh Bains personally visited the jails to review the security arrangements. Taking to Twitter, he shared pictures of his visit to Central Jails in Bathinda, Faridkot, and Ferozepur. "Made Surprise visits to Bathinda, Faridkot, and Ferozepur Central Jails. Checked Security Measures and got frisked High-Security Cells," he tweeted.

As per the MHA communiqué addressed to the Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) based on "reliable inputs", the MHA has pointed out that Pakistan-based operative Harvinder Singh alias Rinda has conceived a jailbreak plan in Punjab in the coming days. It added that apart from utilising his "Punjab-based cohorts", Rinda is also likely to take the help of some jihadi elements in the execution of the plan.

Rinda, a Pak-based wanted terrorist-gangster, is considered close to BKI chief Wadhawa Singh. A 35-year-old Rinda is also a close associate

of Lakhvir Singh Landa — the key conspirator of the RPG attack on Punjab Police's intelligence headquarters, currently hiding in Canada.

The development comes at a time when the law and order situation in Punjab has hit a new low, witnessing back-to-back incidents of violence and security breach, allegedly planned and executed by the gangsters operating from abroad with the help of local criminals.

In fact, Punjab jails have also hit the headlines with the seizure of a large number of mobile phones, and other banned objects from the inmates raising questions over the security arrangements inside the state's prisons.

Only recently, the Faridkot Modern Jail superintendent was suspended after a clip of Canada-based gangster Sukha Duneke's aide, making a video call from the jail, was widely shared on social media. In the viral video, the accused, Karan Sharma, can be seen talking to someone on a video call from his barrack and he was also seen showing him around.

India calls Pak....

From Page 1

Brushing aside the OIC's similar criticism of India, Bagchi said India categorically rejects the OIC Secretariat's "unwarranted and narrow-minded comments" and asserted that New Delhi accords the highest respect to all religions.

"The offensive tweets and comments denigrating a religious personality were made by certain individuals. They do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India," Bagchi said. He said strong action has already been taken against these individuals by relevant bodies.

"It is regrettable that the OIC Secretariat has yet again chosen to make motivated, misleading and mischievous comments. This only exposes its divisive agenda being pursued at the behest of vested interests," Bagchi said.

The spokesperson urged the OIC to stop pursuing its communal approach and show due respect to all faiths and religions. The OIC on Sunday criticized India for the com-

ments and urged the United Nations (UN) to take necessary measures to ensure that the rights of Muslims are protected.

Pakistan strongly urged the BJP leadership and the Government of India to unequivocally condemn the sacrilegious comments of the BJP officials and ensure that they were held accountable through decisive and demonstrable action against them for attacking the dignity of the Prophet.

"The Government of India is also reminded of its obligations under international law to take immediate steps to protect its minorities from human rights violations, ensure their safety, security and well-being and allow them to profess and practice their faiths in peace," the FO said.

Pakistan also asked the international community to take cognizance of and stop the "dangerously rising 'Hindutva' inspired Islamophobia" in India and prevail upon the Indian authorities to prevent the human rights violations against minorities.

BLUE LINE SNAG COMPOUNDS MONDAY BLUES



A large number of commuters on Delhi Metro's Blue Line faced hardship for nearly an hour and a half on Monday



PNS

ED raids Jain's house in hawala case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday conducted searches against arrested Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain as part of a money laundering probe linked to alleged hawala dealings.

The searches, including that at the residential premises of Jain in Delhi and other locations, are being conducted as part of a "follow up" in the case, officials said.

Jain, 57, was arrested on May 30 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he is in ED custody till June 9.

During Jain's custodial interrogation, the ED is said to have found some new evidence and links with hawala operators. The searches were launched to gather further details on these inputs and connect the dots, they said. Jain is currently a Minister without any portfolio in the Delhi Government. Over half-a-dozen of Jain's portfolios were

transferred to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on June 2. In April, the ED had attached assets worth Rs 4.81 crore of Jain's family and companies "beneficially owned and controlled" by him as part of the probe.

The money laundering case against the AAP Minister follows an August 2017 FIR filed by the CBI against him and others on charges of alleged possession of disproportionate assets.

In December 2018, the CBI filed a chargesheet stating that the alleged disproportionate assets were valued at Rs 1.47 crore, about 217 per cent more than his known sources of income, during 2015-17.

The Income Tax Department, too, had probed these transactions and issued an order attaching "benami assets" allegedly linked to Jain.

In a statement after attaching Jain's assets, the ED had said it issued a provisional order under the PMLA to "attach immovable properties worth Rs

4.81 crore belonging to Akinchan Developers Pvt. Ltd., Indo Metal Impex Pvt Ltd, Paryas Infosolutions Pvt. Ltd., Manglayatan Projects Pvt. Ltd.,

J.J. Ideal Estate Pvt. Ltd., Swati Jain, wife of Vaibhav Jain, Sushila Jain, wife of Ajit Prasad Jain, and Indu Jain, wife of Sunil Jain."

AAP: ED raids way to divert attention from insult to India

NEW DELHI: AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh alleged that Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids at Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain's house on Monday was to divert people's attention from the insult that the country had to suffer due to the BJP's hate politics.

"ED raided the house of Jain this morning and he has been interrogated for five days but nothing has come out of it. No evidence of corruption was found by PM Modi's puppet agency ED till date," said Singh, while addressing a press conference here in the national Capital. "When the High Court had asked, ED said that there

is no FIR, no complaint against Satyendar Jain. If there is no FIR, no complaint against him then why is he still in custody? He is paying the price of being an honest leader who is working day and night to improve the health facilities in Delhi," said Singh.

"When the ED was done insulting and harassing him for five days, they reached his house to insult and harass his family. This is not the first occasion as CBI, ED and Income Tax Department have conducted raids at Jain's house before but they were never able to find anything against him," said Singh. SR

Rajesh Bhatia files nomination for bypolls



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP candidate Rajesh Bhatia on Monday filed the nomination for Rajinder Nagar Assembly bypolls. He was accompanied by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi and other senior party workers. Bhatia filed his nomination at around 10:30 at Pusa ITI, New Delhi. According to an affidavit filed by Bhatia before the Election Commission, his net income for financial year 20-21 was ₹5, 95, 660 and his spouse Amisha Bhatia's net income

was ₹14,56,830. In 22019-20, his Income Tax return income showed ₹32.81 lakh. Bhatia currently owns a non-agricultural land at Bawana with area of around 2690 square feet and current value of the property is ₹3, 50, 00, 000.

He also owns a commercial building at Old Rajendra Nagar with the area of around 3683 square feet and its current value is ₹12, 00, 00, 000. The candidate has not been convicted for any criminal offences and there are no criminal cases pending against saffron party candidate Bhatia, it stated.

AAP's Durgesh Pathak files papers



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP candidate Durgesh Pathak on Monday filed his nomination from the Rajinder Nagar Assembly Constituency which is going to take place on June 23. He was accompanied by the Member of Parliament and Rajya Sabha from Punjab, Raghav Chadha. Pathak filed his nomination at around 1:30 pm at Pusa ITI, in the capital city.

As per the affidavit filed by the AAP candidate, his net worth for the financial year of 2020-2021 was Rs 4,17,980, while in the 2018-2019 it was Rs 3,00,958. The AAP candidate owns the total moveable assets of around Rs 6, 77, 980. He does not own any property, it further stated.

There are three pending cases against the Pathak which includes two defamation cases, and one case at rouse avenue court, it stated. Pathak has not been convicted any criminal

offence, according to the affidavit. Durgesh Pathak is the youngest member of the Aam Aadmi Party's Political Affairs Committee.

He is the National Organisation Building in-charge of the party, and was instrumental in building a strong grassroots organisation in Delhi before the 2015 Assembly election and in Punjab before the 2017 Assembly election. Durgesh was jointly in-charge of Punjab affairs until March, 2017.

In the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections, Durgesh was in charge of the organisation and campaign in 35 constituencies out of 70, and the party won in 34 of them.

After this, he was sent by the party to Punjab to prepare a strong organisational set up in the run up to the Punjab Assembly elections held in February, 2017. In Punjab, the party won a spectacular 24 per cent of the vote share and 20 seats in its debut election in the state.

LG launches eSanjeevani OPD at Hindu Rao Hosp



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Lieutenant-Governor (I-G) VK Saxena on Monday inaugurated the 'eSanjeevani' OPD project — an

App-based National Medical Tele-consultation Service under the aegis of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare at the MCD-run Hindu Rao Hospital in the Capital. With this, the

MCD and Hindu Rao Hospital became the first organisations to provide 24X7 medical services through the 'eSanjeevani' platform. The L-G said: "This initiative will provide specialised healthcare consultation to lakhs of patients in remote areas throughout the country and facilitate communication among healthcare experts for better patient care, which has been the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

Appreciating the project, he added that this platform will benefit patients in terms of medical advice from the comfort of their homes, access to expert medical advice without referral, reduced visit to hos-

pitals and provide the much-desired benefits to chronic patients, the elderly and pensioners. It will not only promote easily accessible and dispersible health education to people at large, but will also help doctors access comprehensive digital data of the patients, quick & timely follow-up and improved patient management.

The L-G said that it was a matter of great satisfaction that the MCD undertook to launch a program that symbolises the congruence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two visionary and flagship schemes of Jan Aarogya Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Digital India.

Driver of SUV hitting bike held after video goes viral

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has registered an First Information Report (FIR) after a video of rashly driven Mahindra Scorpio SUV hitting a bike on a road in the national Capital went viral on social media. The incident took place on Sunday in south Delhi's Arjangarh area when a group of bikers were riding their bikes.

Police said that they have arrested the accused 25 year-old Anuj Chaudhary, a final year law student. "A Scorpio driver hit a biker following an argument around Arjan Garh Metro Station area. FIR has

been registered under appropriate sections at Fatehpur Beri PS and investigation is on," Delhi Police wrote on its Twitter account.

"Based on the registration details, car owner was traced to Anupam Garden area. Investigation revealed that the vehicle was being driven by the son of the owner who was not found at home and neither was the vehicle found at home," said a senior police official. "However, Anuj was arrested by the team of Fatehpur Beri police station and offending vehicle has been seized," the senior police official added.

RERA to review Ajnara's housing project in GNIDA

NOIDA ■ NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) on Monday said it will have a group housing project in Greater Noida (GNIDA West) inspected to re-verify if swimming pools, clubs and solar panels exist on site.

A controversy erupted after a RERA report on real estate developer Ajnara's Le Garden project showed that 100 per cent of work has been completed on its club, swimming pools, among other works. Residents of society located in Greater Noida (West), also known as Noida Extension took to social media to highlight error, claim-

ing no club or pool existed on site, even as some alleged a collusion between RERA and the developer. Taking note of situation, UP RERA chairman Rajive Kumar has ordered an inspection of project to ascertain facts. "A high-level technical team from UP RERA has been assigned for inspection of project and to re-verify existing report.

The re-inspection report issued by them will be uploaded soon," Kumar said. A section of residents and home buyers at Ajnara's Le Garden project have been protesting embattled builder's "unfulfilled promises" and "loot" in name of facilities that are non-existent.

‘Just one-third of trees transplanted in the last three years survived’

Forest Dept gave permission to cut or transplant at least 77 K trees, Govt tells HC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's Forest Department granted permission to cut or transplant at least 77,000 trees, or three trees every hour, for developmental work in the city in the last three years. According to Government data submitted to the Delhi High Court, only one-third of the trees transplanted during the period have survived. Officials allowed agencies to cut or transplant 29,946

trees under Section 9 of the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act (DPTA) and 47,474 trees under Section 29 of the Act in the last three years. The actual number of trees felled could be much more if the number of trees cut illegally is also considered, environment activists said.

They also feared that the project proponents cut more trees than allowed over the years. The data has been submitted in response to orders on a contempt plea filed by RTI activist Neeraj Sharma through advocate Aditya N Prasad against the concretisation of trees in east Delhi's Vikas Marg area. Section 9 of the Act says

anyone desiring to remove a tree should file an application before the tree officer concerned for permission, with ownership documents of the land and the girth measure of trees at a height of 1.85 metres from the ground level.

Section 29 empowers the Government to exempt "any area or any species of trees" from the Act in public interest through a notification. According to the data, authorities in the West forest division granted permission to cut 8,953 trees and transplant 13,486 trees, the maximum among all forest divisions in the national Capital, in the last three years.

Delhi airport to induct 62 EVs to cut 1K tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi airport on Monday said that it will induct 62 electric vehicles (EVs) in the next four months for its airside operations to reduce 1,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions annually, according to the statement released by the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL).

The runway, taxiway and apron that are directly involved in the arrival and departure of aircraft are known as the airside area. The DIAL launched its Green

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI

PRESS NOTICE FOR NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT No. D/EE(Parking)/TC/22-23/02 **Date: 01-06-2022**

Name of work: Construction of Automated Multilevel Parking system including supply, installation, testing, commissioning and operation & maintenance for 188 ECS at Bharat Darshan Park, Punjabi Bagh in West Zone, MCD. Estimated Amount: **Rs. 34,39,78,750/-** (Time of Completion: **12 months**. Tender Cost **Rs.10,000/- (Non refundable)**, Earnest Money: **Rs. 44,39,788/-** H/A: **K-154-3018**, Date & Time of Pre bid meeting: **16-06-2022 at 02:00 PM** in the Office of Superintending Engineer (Parking), Under Sewa Nagar Fly Over, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110003, Last Date of Download/Purchase Tender Document/Bid submission: **06-07-2022 at 03:00 PM**. For tender documents, online tendering time table and the details of the work please refer <https://etenders.gov.in>. All details of revision, clarification, corrigendum/addendum, time extension etc. (if any) in respect of the above tender will be uploaded on the above mentioned website only and no press notice of any kind shall be issued. Bidders should regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated in respect of these tenders.

Sd/-

E.E. (Consultant)

Parking

R.O. No. 2/DPI/DMC/2022-23

INSHORT

SC REFUSES BAIL TO IN-LAWS IN SUICIDE CASE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to grant anticipatory bail to the mother-in-law and sister-in-law of a woman, who had committed suicide after she complained that her husband was having an extramarital affair, saying they should have protected her rather than harassing her.

GOVT TO SET UP OLD-AGE HOMES IN DISTRICTS

New Delhi: The Government is planning to establish old-age homes in every district of the country and has identified 250 districts where it will be tying up with local NGOs of the area, Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar said on Monday.

IISc RESEARCHERS DEVELOP PEPTIDE TO BLOCK COVID

New Delhi: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore have designed a new class of artificial peptides or miniproteins that they say can render viruses like SARS-CoV-2 inactive. As per the study published in the journal Nature Chemical Biology, the miniproteins can not only block virus entry into our cells but also clump virus particles together, reducing their ability to infect.

INDIA LOGS 4,518 NEW COVID INFECTIONS

New Delhi: India logged 4,518 new coronavirus infections, an increase of 1730 cases in 24 hours, taking the tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,31,81,335. Active cases increased to 25,782, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday. The death toll climbed to 5,24,701 with nine fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. The active cases comprise 0.06 per cent of the total infections.

CBI ARRESTS ENGINEER FOR DEMANDING JOB BRIBE

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested Ajay Kumar Tamrakar, a senior divisional mechanical engineer of the West Central Railway posted in Itarsi in Madhya Pradesh, for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 3.5 lakh from a man for employing him as a peon at his bungalow. It is alleged that the complainant worked as a peon at Tamrakar's official residence for over three years since 2017.

RAILWAYS EXTENDS BOOKING LIMIT TO 24 TICKETS

New Delhi: Indian Railways has decided to increase the limit of booking a maximum of 6 tickets in a month to 12 tickets by a user ID that is not Aadhaar linked. The limit of booking a maximum of 12 tickets in a month has been increased to 24 tickets by a user ID which is Aadhaar linked.

DAC nod for purchase of Defence equipment worth ₹76,390 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a big boost to indigenous Defence manufacturing, the Government on Monday gave the nod for procurement of military equipment worth Rs 76,390 crore from domestic industries. These systems include ships, weapon locating radars, aircraft and aero-engines.

The approval for the platforms and weapons was given here by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The DAC is the apex body for scrutinizing and clearing the proposed acquisitions for the three armed forces.

Giving details of the DAC decisions, officials said here for the Indian Navy, procurement of next generation corvettes (NGCs) at an estimated cost of around Rs 36,000 crore was given the go-ahead.

These NGCs will be versatile platforms for variety of roles like surveillance missions, escort operations, deterrence, Surface Action Group (SAG) operations, search and attack and coastal defence.

These NGCs will be constructed based on new in-house design of Indian Navy using latest technology of ship



building and will contribute to further the government's initiative of Security and Growth for all in the Region(SAGAR).

The DAC also approved a proposal for the manufacture of Dornier aircraft and Su-30 MKI aero-engines by the public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The focus is on enhancing indigenisation particularly in indigenising aero-engine material. For the Indian Army, the DAC accorded a fresh approval for the procurement of Rough Terrain Fork Lift Trucks (RTFLT), Bridge Laying Tanks (BLTs), Wheeled Armoured Fighting Vehicles (Wh AFVs) with Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) and Weapon Locating Radars (WLRs) through domestic sources, with an emphasis on indigenous design and development, they said.

Moreover, in an effort to speed up digital transformation in defence, 'Digital Coast Guard' project under 'Buy' (Indian) category was approved by the DAC.

Under this project, a pan-India secure network for digitising of various surface and aviation operations, logistics, finance and human resource processes in the Coast Guard will be established, the ministry said. The latest decision comes after the government banned import of more than 300 items in the last two years. The armed forces are now directed to procure weapons and related systems from Indian industry.

The banned items were identified after due consultations with all the stakeholders including the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of

Defence Production (DDP), Service Headquarters (SHQs) and the private industry.

The focus is on rapid indigenization of light weight tanks, naval utility helicopters, artillery guns, missiles, loitering munitions, missile destroyers and ship-borne cruise missiles. The list also includes light combat aircraft, light transport aircraft, long-range land-attack cruise missiles, basic trainer aircraft, multi-barrel rocket launchers, assault rifles, sniper rifles, specified types of helicopters, and airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) systems.

The ministry recently said the import embargo indicated that the government is confident about the Indian industry capabilities of manufacturing world class and sophisticated weapon systems for the armed forces.

Digital skilling program in emerging and future tech launched by Pradhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday launched a Digital Skilling program in emerging and future technologies, in the presence of Minister of State for Skill Development and Information, Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The digital skilling initiative will focus on skilling, reskilling and upskilling students via internships, apprenticeships, and employment to one crore students in the Emerging Technologies.

This is the first-ever collaboration on a national scale between Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Skill and affiliated NSDCs, Skill India programs (National Educational Alliance for Technology) and AICTE. Over 100+ technology corporate/manufacturing firms have already come on board on this platform to provide free-of-cost emerging technology certifications.

Speaking at the launch, Pradhan said that the world is facing unprecedented changes

and there is need for skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling. "We must make skilling a mass movement. The Government is functioning as a facilitator in creating workforce for the future as it is the right time to work with a collaborative approach between industry, academia and policy makers," Pradhan said.

The Minister highlighted that India has vast potential when it comes to our human capital, especially given the strong demographic dividend. This program is to connect the right candidates with skill trainers and various courses providing expertise on emerging technologies.

It includes artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data, data analytics, cyber security, and cloud computing. This is one proactive step closer to our 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' vision for India and fulfilling the dream of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he added. Chandrasekhar spoke about Digital India's vision to transform lives, create opportunities for the youth and make India a producer of technology products and services.



Finance Minister at the inauguration of the Iconic Week Celebration in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer photo

Puri launches 'Leaders in Climate Change Management' programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday launched the 'Leaders in Climate Change Management' (LCCM) programme aimed at building capacity among urban professionals to lead climate action across sectors and geographies in the country.

In a statement, the Ministry said to facilitate the face-to-face learning programme, the Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Mysuru has also signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the WRI India, becoming the first delivery partner of the LCCM programme.

LCCM envisions capaci-

tating 5,000 professionals, including mid to junior-level government officials and frontline workers, and preparing them to champion climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions towards a coordinated effort to achieve India's climate commitments, according to the statement.

At the event, Puri said the Narendra Modi government has taken many concrete steps in pushing the sustainability agenda forward. At COP26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Modi announced India's aggressive agenda on climate change through the Panch Amrit action plan, which envisages India becoming a net-zero emission country by 2070, the minister pointed out.

"The LCCM programme seeks to not only identify hundreds of climate leaders but also focus on how these leaders can



be oriented in terms of their training and how they will move forward. The very fact that we are thinking about this is a revolutionary step," Puri said.

Presenting the LCCM programme, its structure and aim to upskill urban climate leadership in the country, WRI India CEO OP Agarwal said the key challenge in building capacity for mid-career professionals is using the right kind of pedagogy -- a teaching style that encourages learning

by doing, rather than by just listening to lectures.

Agarwal also said LCCM has fully recognised this and adopted this kind of teaching style. The online learning will be hosted on the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP), the capacity building arm of the NIUA. It will also be hosted and supported by ATI, Mysuru. The programme aims to sign similar MoUs with ATIs across the country over the next few months, the ministry said.

ED attaches assets worth ₹24.39 cr of Sanskar Group for money laundering

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached movable and immovable assets worth Rs 24.39 crore belonging to Sanskar Group of Goa in a money laundering case.

The attached assets are in the form of villas and flats in Goa, flats and office space in Delhi and Faridabad, and fixed deposits in banks, the ED said in a statement.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by Goa Police under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against Manish Sharma, Navin Beri and Arvind Chadha for duping of investors to the tune of Rs 10 crore by promising them Villas in Banjara Hills Project, to be developed by Sanskar Group in Anjuna,

Goa. The ED probe revealed that Manish Sharma entered into 'agreement to sale' and 'sale deed', executed before Sub-Registrar, with the buyers promising to deliver them the villas within stipulated time, it said.

However, when the project was completed about 60-70 per cent, Manish Sharma and Navin Beri in connivance with the Bank Manager of Jammu and Kashmir Bank mortgaged the Banjara Hills project in Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd, Panaji and availed a loan of Rs 20 crore by submitting false documents, it further said.

Thereafter, the loan amount was further diverted to the bank accounts of Manish Sharma, Navin Beri, his partnership firm Lavanya Travels and Arvind Chaddha. This money was further utilized and consumed by them for their own use.



The bank declared the said loan account as non-performing asset (NPA). Investigation with regard to tracing the remaining 'Proceeds of Crime' is in progress, the agency added.

DGCA to investigate uncontrolled chopper landing at Kedarnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has launched an investigation into the uncontrolled hard landing of a helicopter belonging to a private aviation company at the Kedarnath helipad on May 31. The DGCA has also issued an operational advisory asking the chopper pilots to exercise caution whenever there are tailwinds when they are heading for landing.

On May 31, at approximately 1.30 PM, a Bell 407 helicopter belonging to Thumbay

Aviation Pvt Ltd, while landing at Kedarnath helipad had an uncontrolled, very hard landing. The helicopter had made an unstabilized approach to the helipad, and during the touchdown, the helicopter struck the helipad surface hard, bounced and after having lost direction by about 270 degrees, again settled down hard on the ground, officials said.

The regulator issued an advisory after the incident in which it said "pilots are to exercise caution for presence of any tailwinds during approaches, especially at Shri Kedarnath helipad".

Two Norovirus cases confirmed in Kerala, SSO asked to submit report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With two confirmed cases of the Norovirus infection being reported from Kerala, the Union Health Ministry has asked the State Surveillance Office (SSO) to submit a detailed report in the matter.

This month, Kerala reported two confirmed cases of Norovirus among school-going children at Vizhinjam in Thiruvananthapuram.

Norovirus, a viral illness, is the most common cause of acute gastroenteritis globally. Symptoms of Norovirus include acute onset Diarrhoea and vomiting. Emerging evidence suggests that the

Norovirus infection is associated with intestinal inflammation, malnutrition and may cause long-term morbidity, officials said.

An estimated 68.5 crore cases of Norovirus are seen annually, including 20 crore cases amongst children under five years of age.

According to officials, the first documented Norovirus outbreak in Kerala was reported in Alappuzha district in June last year. Around 950 cases of acute Diarrhoeal diseases linked to Norovirus were reported in 2021 from the Alappuzha municipality and nearby panchayats. The outbreak lasted for a month and a half.

Why are Muslim countries silent on rights violations in China: Activists

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A section of activists and experts on Monday questioned the 'silence' of Muslim nations on China's treatment of minorities and alleged violation of human rights there after some of these countries lodged a protest with India over the remarks of two BJP functionaries on Prophet Mohammad.

The row over the alleged derogatory remarks against Prophet Mohammad escalated on Sunday with protests from countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, prompting the BJP to take action against its functionaries

and assert that it respects all religions.

But after the reaction of the Islamic countries, questions are being asked in some quarters on whether these nations will raise similar objections against China, which has been accused by many human rights groups of targeting Muslims and other minorities.

Beijing has been denying these allegations.

Brahma Chellaney, Professor Emeritus of strategic studies at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), said, "Some Muslim states that have been mute on China's assault on Islam, including incarcerating over a million Muslims and

confiscating Korans, have played up the anti-Muslim remarks of two Indians now expelled from the ruling party. "Is it because they perceive India as a soft state?"

Kasturi Shankar, an activist and lawyer, also took to Twitter echoing similar sentiments. "Nations that claim to stand for the sentiments of the world's two billion Muslims do nothing for Muslims in Afghanistan, Syria, China or Burma."

"We can do nothing against ISIS or China or Taliban, so let's pick on a lone woman in a TV debate instead," Shankar said.

Former Rajya Sabha MP and BJP member Balbir Punj

took to Twitter saying, "World knows how China treats its minorities- specifically Muslims & Tibetan Buddhists. China violates all human rights, international conventions while dealing with Islam & Muslims in Xinjiang. None in the world even squeaks about it. Why? Why? (sic)".

He alleged that the Congress, the communists and "jihadis" were celebrating as their "relentless campaign on manufactured intolerance against Modi & India has worked for now".

"We have to work harder to expose the real character of this lot & neutralise them to save plural India," he said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties have demanded that the BJP should immediately arrest those who have defamed India at the international level instead of enacting a "drama of action".

Several leaders of Congress and Left parties, including Rahul Gandhi and P Chidambaram, spoke on the issue by hitting out at the ruling party for its functionaries' remarks against Prophet Mohammad.

Asking why those responsible for putting out offensive comments that led to global

outrage had not been arrested yet, the Congress said it was unacceptable for the nation to apologise for such mistakes. The ruling party at the Centre has suspended Sharma and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal as the row over their remarks against the Prophet escalated with protests from some Muslim countries. With sharp reaction coming from countries like Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, the BJP had issued a statement asserting that it respects all religions and strongly denounces insult of any religious personality.

"Divided internally, India becomes weak externally.

BJP's shameful bigotry has not only isolated us, but also damaged India's standing globally," Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter.

The Opposition party charged the BJP's "anti-social elements" with thrusting the nation into the fire of hatred. "The BJP might show itself making amends by suspending its spokespersons from the party but who are they fooling? For something as serious as defaming the country on a global platform, why are they not making any arrests?" the Congress tweeted on the party handle, using the hashtag "#BJP_Defames_India". "Such anti-social elements of the

BJP should be arrested immediately," the Congress demanded.

The opposition party also said the country will not apologise for the mistakes of the BJP, but the ruling party president should do so. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the BJP commits a mistake and the country has to face the repercussions.

"The prime minister is reminded by Qatar and Kuwait about his 'Raj Dharma'. Nothing can be more shameful than this," he said. Khera said India should not apologise as it is not the country's mistake but that of the BJP.

KLO demands separate State, warns Mamata of bloodbath

DIDI ON VISIT TO NORTH BENGAL FROM TODAY

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The banned militant group Kamptapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) has renewed its demand for a separate Koch-Kamtapur State out of North Bengal districts and threatened bloodbath if Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tries to resist that demand.

In a video message reportedly released a day ahead of Banerjee's visit to North Bengal KLO chief, Jeevan Singha has asked the Chief Minister not to visit the region or prevent the formation of a separate Koch-Kamtapur state because this may lead to dire consequences.

"We appeal to everyone including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to cooperate us in the formation of a new Koch-Kamtapur state --- which is a rightful demand of the people of this region --- We ask Mamata Banerjee not to set foot in this region or oppose the formation of the new state because if they do so it will lead to disastrous consequences," Singha



who has allegedly been running his organisation from some neighbouring country said.

"The Chief Minister or anyone does not have any constitutional to stop us from exercising our own right ... And if they forcibly try to impose their will on us or oppose the statehood demand then there will be bloodbath," the KLO Chief said.

KLO which was allegedly operating from the adjacent Bhutan mountains had been nearly decimated in a military operation by the Bhutanese government more than a decade ago. Though it had lost its support base then the organization has once again spread its tentacles in the area, police

sources say.

Singha's statement comes a day before the Chief Minister's North Bengal visit from Tuesday. Banerjee is likely to hold administrative meetings as well as party organisational conferences during her visit, sources said.

Meanwhile, the KLO got support from unlikely quarters even as adding twist to the complicated situation local BJP parliamentarians like Jalpaiguri MP Jayanta Roy and his Alipurduar counterpart John Burla too extended moral support to its statehood demand.

"We believe in non-violence but insofar as the KLO's stand is concerned we too have been raising this issue for

sometime because the region has been left undeveloped by the powers that be for ages ... it seems that only a separate state is the answer to this perennial lack of development of this region," Roy said.

He however chose to play safe with the local Bengalis that too account for a sizeable part of the local population even as he said that the "name of the new state will always depend upon a consensus of the people of the region." A couple of BJP MLAs of the region too had earlier raised the demand for a separate State.

The BJP's demand for a separate state is seen in connection with its steadily eroding support base in the region. The saffron party which had won 7 out of 8 North Bengal constituencies (consisting 56 Assembly seats) in 2019 parliamentary elections conceded nearly all of them to the TMC in the last year's Assembly polls.

Facing tough challenge from the TMC and a resurrecting Left the saffron party's demand for a separate state is seen as an attempt to reach out to the Rajbangshi-Adivasi-Koch population that constitute the substantial portion of the voters of this region.

Cong stays away from Azamgarh, Rampur bypolls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Still not recovered from the shock of facing the worst ever defeat in the last assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh with just two of its candidates managing to win their seats, the Uttar Pradesh Congress on Monday declared that it would not contest the ongoing bypolls.

In the last parliamentary election also, only Congress president Sonia Gandhi managed to retain her Rae Bareilly seat while all other candidates of the party, including Rahul Gandhi, lost the battle.

"We will not be contesting the Lok Sabha bypolls in Uttar Pradesh on Rampur and Azamgarh seats," disclosed a party's official communiqué, adding that the party had given its poor performance in the state's assembly elections this year so reorganisation was important first in order to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls strongly.

Sources said that the Congress high command tried



to select some leaders who could contest the bypolls but after no one came forward or showed interest, a decision was taken to stay away from the contest rather than face another embarrassment.

Interestingly, since the last assembly elections, the Uttar Pradesh Congress has no president as Ajay Kumar Lallu had to resign owing responsibility for the defeat. The bypolls to Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituencies are scheduled on June 23 and the counting will take place on June 26.

Earlier, Mayawati had declared that Bahujan Samaj Party would not field any candidate in Mohammad Azam Khan's bastion Rampur. She, however, announced candidate for the Azamgarh seat.

LS bypolls: SP, BJP candidates file papers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Asim Raza, a close aide of Samajwadi Party MLA Mohammad Azam Khan was on Monday declared the SP candidate) for the Lok Sabha by-election to Rampur Seat while in Azamgarh the party decided to field former MP Dharmendra Yadav, a cousin of SP president Akhilesh Yadav.

The BJP has fielded Ghanashyam Singh Lodhi in Rampur. He is a former MLC of SP and joined the BJP in January accusing the SP of being anti-Other Backward Classes and anti-Dalit.

Lodhi and Raza will be locked in a straight contest as both the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress are not contesting the seat. In fact, the Congress on Monday said it would not contest either of the two seats in the bypoll.

All the three candidates filed their nomination papers on Monday, the last date for filing papers.

Asim Raza, Rampur city SP president, was given the green signal as the party's nominee in a meeting conducted by Azam Khan on the last day for filing nominations. The lack of clarity on the SP candidates till the last minute had built up suspense on the possible names, including that of Azam Khan's

wife Tazeen Fatma from Rampur.

In Azamgarh, the SP has banked on a trusted candidate in the form of Dharmendra Yadav, a two-time former MP from Budaun (2009 and 2014). He lost in 2019.

Azamgarh constituency is dominated by the Yadav, Muslim and Dalit communities. In the last three decades, most of the winners have been Yadavs, with a Muslim, Akbar Ahmad Dumpy, winning twice, in 1998 and 2008. Mulayam Singh Yadav has himself been an MP from Azamgarh. Akhilesh Yadav won this seat in 2019.

The by-elections in Azamgarh and Rampur were necessitated after Akhilesh Yadav and Mohammad Azam Khan resigned their Lok Sabha seats after being elected to UP assembly in the 2022 election. The SP, which faces a mammoth task of challenging the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, first has to defend these two seats.

In Azamgarh, Dharmendra Yadav will be in a triangular contest against BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav, popularly known as Nirahua, and Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamal of the BSP. Nirahua is a popular Bhojpuri actor who stood second against Akhilesh Yadav in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Notice issued to Hindu Mahasabha secy for demanding ban on Friday prayers

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The administration has issued a notice to Dr Pooja Shakun Pandey, the national secretary of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, who raised the demand for ban on Friday prayers. A notice has been issued to Mahamandaleswar Annapurna Bharti alias Dr. Pooja Shakun Pandey on behalf of Additional Municipal Magistrate II.

It has been said in the notice that the statement given by her to the media and the post uploaded on social media may hurt the sentiments of a particular class. This statement is provocative. In this regard, the ACM has sought a reply within 24 hours. In case of non-receipt of proper reply, action will be taken against them for violation of prohibitory orders.

Apart from this, SSP Kalanidhi Naithani has also

informed that in view of the controversial statement given by Pooja Shakun Pandey, an FIR has been registered against her in the police station Gandhipark under section 153A/153B/295A/298/505 of IPC.

It may be recalled that National Secretary of Hindu Mahasabha Dr. Pooja Shakun Pandey, National Spokesperson Ashok Pandey and other activists have written letters to the President with blood regarding the incident after Friday prayers in Kanpur. In the letter, Pooja Shakun Pandey has demanded a ban on Friday prayers. Using inappropriate language, Pooja Shakun Pandey also put up controversial posters in her office. Pooja Shakun Pandey has attributed the incidents happening in the country from time immemorial to the present day after Friday prayers. Through this

letter, she has demanded appropriate action against those who spread bitterness.

Pooja Shakun Pandey said that the incident in Kanpur has broken our stamina. Be it before independence or after independence. History is witness to this. Keeping in mind the loss being caused to Hindus in the country, the Friday prayers should be stopped immediately. Together, it said that gatherings of more than 10 people in small mosques and 25 in big ones should be banned. ACM K P Singh said that the Hindu Mahasabha has submitted a memorandum to the President, the memorandum will be sent to the President through the District Officer.

For example in the memorandum, they mentioned the massacre by Muslim League leader Sohrawardy on 16 August 1946.

Security forces alert to threat of drones from across border: BSF officer

PTI ■ JAMMU

The threat of drones is present everywhere along the Indo-Pakistan border but security forces are alert to foil any nefarious design from across the border in the region, a senior Border Security Force (BSF) officer said on Monday. He said that the Army and the BSF are fully dominating the Line of Control (LoC) to ensure the protection of the people along the frontier areas.

"The threat of drones. Is prevalent everywhere (along the Indo-Pak border). Nobody can say that there is no such threat in Rajouri or Poonch or any hinterland," the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the BSF Rajouri Poonch sector, D S Sindhu, told reporters at a

function in Rajouri.

"There is a threat of drones in all areas along our borders," he said replying to queries on the issue.

The officer said that the troops are alert along the borderline to protect the people living in border areas.

He said that the troops have been deployed to instill a feeling of security among the border population.

"The Army and the BSF are dominating the Line of Control in a proper manner to thwart any nefarious design of our adversaries", Sindhu said.

He noted that advanced courses are conducted regularly to upgrade the skills of the jawans.

The DIG also inaugurated a skill development program at Sector Headquarters Rajouri.

Maya: Arrest BJP leaders who used derogatory words against prophet

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Monday reacted strongly against a controversial remark on the prophet and said that mere suspension and expulsion of two Bharatiya Janata Party leaders was not sufficient.

She urged the BJP to take legal action against those using offensive language against religion and send them to jail.

Taking to Twitter, Mayawati said, "The use of offensive language for any religion is not appropriate. In this matter, the BJP should also strictly tighten the noose around its people. Only suspending and expelling them will not work; they should be sent to jail under strict laws."

She also said that respect for all religions was necessary for the country.

The BJP on Sunday sus-



ended its spokesperson Nupur Sharma from the primary membership of the party and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal after their alleged controversial remarks on minorities.

While during a TV debate, Sharma's comments aimed at the founder of Islam have drawn the ire of Muslim groups, Jindal also posted objectionable tweets, deleted later, and has been accused of often posting inciting comments.

The Mumbai police registered an FIR against Sharma based on a complaint by Irfan Shaikh, joint secretary of the Mumbai wing of Raza Academy.

It stated that Sharma, in a news debate on the Gyanvapi issue, allegedly made controversial comments about Prophet Muhammad. Besides, Jindal allegedly tweeted against the interests of the country.

The BSP chief also stressed that the Kanpur violence case should be thoroughly probed and demanded that innocent people should not be harassed in the matter.

"It is very important to get to the bottom of the violence that has happened in Kanpur recently. At the same time, innocent people should not be harassed in the police action against this violence, this is also the demand of the BSP," Mayawati said in a tweet.

Dalit minor girl murdered in Unnao; family alleges rape

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational killing in Unnao, the body of a 12-year-old Dalit girl, missing since Sunday night, was recovered on the railway tracks on Monday.

The girl was bludgeoned to death with a brick.

The mother, however, alleged that the girl was also raped and lodged a report against five members of a family who are absconding.

Reports said that the girl residing in Bangarmau area of Unnao was playing outside her home on Sunday night. When she did not return, her mother launched a search for her and also informed Dial 112 about her disappearance.

Finally, after a night-long search, the body of the girl was found lying on a railway tracks, 300 metres away from her home on Monday morning.

Some bricks stained with blood were also found lying



near the body, indicating that she was bludgeoned to death at the same place.

The victim's mother later lodged a report against five members of a family living in the same locality and alleged that they killed her daughter after rape.

Superintendent of Police of Unnao, Shashi Shekhar, said that a case of murder and under SC, ST Act was registered and rape charges would be included if confirmed in the autopsy.

He said that the killing

probably took place over enmity of the family with their neighbours who were absconding. He said that the victim's father had eloped with a widow residing in the same village and since then her in-laws were having enmity with the victim's family and it was possible that to avenge that incident, the family killed the girl. The SP said that further investigations were on in the case.

Meanwhile, in Najibabad, a man hailing from Bijnor killed his sister's lover by slitting his throat and threw the

body into the drain.

The incident from the Kotkadar village of Najibabad came to light on Sunday when a man named Iqbal Singh informed the police that his son's body had been found in the drain. He revealed that a man named Nazim had called him, after which he found the body.

The police reached the spot and recovered the body from the drain.

The autopsy revealed that the victim's throat was slit with a sharp weapon before he was thrown into the drain.

According to Superintendent of Police Dr Dharamvir Singh, during interrogation, accused Nazim said that the deceased was in love with his sister, which he had protested many times. Nazim said he tried to persuade his sister's lover to leave her alone but he was constantly increasing contact with her and he did not like this.

Strengthen rich political tradition of UP, says Prez

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

President Ram Nath Kovind, on Monday, addressed a joint sitting of the Uttar Pradesh legislature, saying that the UP legislature has a glorious history of amicable relations between the ruling party and the opposition.

"There can be differences of ideology but there should not be animosity between the two sides. Sometimes, there have been undignified incidents which are contrary to this rich tradition. You have to make an effort to forget them by considering those as exceptions. You all have to further strengthen the rich political tradition of UP. In a democracy, there can be differences of ideology between the ruling party and the opposition but there should not be any animosity (vaimanasya) between both the sides," Kovind said.

The special sitting of the UP Legislature was part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate 75 years of India's independence. Governor Anandiben Patel, Legislative Council Chairman Kunwar Manvendra Singh, Legislative Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, leader of opposition in assembly Akhilesh Yadav, and members of both Houses were present on this occasion.

President Kovind said that the legislature was a temple of democracy and the lawmakers were the 'bhaagyavidhata' or those who decide the destiny. He said that the people of the state had expectations from the representatives who should fulfil them.

"The ambit of your public service must contain all the citizens, whether they have voted

for you or not. Hence, it is your responsibility to work in the interest of every person," he said. The president also exuded confidence that UP will soon become "Uttam Pradesh".

"With your efforts, Uttar Pradesh will soon become Uttam Pradesh. When the largest state of the country achieves all the parameters of development, then the country's development will automatically get a backing," he said.

Lauding the efforts of the state, President Kovind said,

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CM: UP moving towards becoming India's second-largest economy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday that the state was moving towards becoming India's second largest economy.

He said India had witnessed unprecedented growth in the eight years of the National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Civic amenities have increased across the country while all sections of society, including farmers, youth and women are benefitting from the welfare and development schemes of the government. People's confidence in the government has increased remarkably," the chief minister said while addressing the joint sitting of the state legislature,

"Prime Minister Modi has given five formulas to celebrate India's Amrit Mahotsava. These are: Azadi ki urja ka mahotsava, Swadhinata senaniyon se prerna ka mahotsava, Naye vicharon ka mahotsava, Naye sankalpon ka mahotsava and Atma nirbharta ko prapt karne ka Mahotsava," he pointed out.

The chief minister said the next 25 years to be observed as Amrit Kaal was the time for "us to set new goals and work hard to achieve them in order to make India self-reliant in all fields."

The chief minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India's prestige on the global platform had increased.

Yogi described the personality of President Ram Nath Kovind as "inspiring," pointing



out that despite his humble background; he made it to the highest constitutional post of the country with his honest effort, which was also reflective of the strength of Indian democracy.

Welcoming President Kovind to deliver an address as the country celebrates 75 years of Indian Independence as Amrit Mahotsava, the chief minister said it was an occasion to celebrate the valour of all those freedom fighters who

took part in India's first battle for independence in 1857, which was cradled in UP, and all the great leaders who became part of UP's legislature in the independent India, including among others Madan Mohan Malviya, Moti Lal Nehru, Mahadevi Verma, Acharya Narendra Dev, Ishwari Prasad and former prime ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri, Chaudhary Charan Singh and VP Singh. He added that the state legislature had also been witness to various social, economic and political developments taking place.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Anandiben Patel said that Uttar Pradesh was one state that had given nine prime ministers to the country while UP's legislature boasted of having several luminaries, including among others Govind

Ballabh Pant, Sir Syed Ahmed, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Purushottam Das and Acharya Narendra Dev.

She said: "As the country celebrates Amrit Mahotsava, the gracious presence of President Ram Nath Kovind at the joint sitting of UP's legislature is inspiring. The president will be sharing his rich parliamentary experience as well as broader and inclusive vision with the members. Good parliamentary conduct and seriousness are a must for a thriving democracy. We are proud of our democratic traditions."

Governor Patel added: "Amrit Mahotsav is an opportunity to look at and appreciate the role played by our freedom fighters, martyrs and leaders. It is also an occasion to renew our pledge to make India self-reliant."

Officials asked to ensure supply of drinking water in scorching weather

Yogi directive to the District Magistrates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In view of the extremely hot weather in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed all district magistrates to ensure smooth supply of drinking water across the state.

"Ensure that people do not face any inconvenience in view of the availability of drinking water. The supply of drinking water in the cities should be done as per the prescribed roster," Yogi directed the district magistrates in a statement

issued on Monday.

He said all hand pumps should be kept functional and rural piped drinking water schemes should be operated smoothly.

"The senior officers should visit all areas and check the arrangement for supply of drinking water on the spot," Yogi said.

The chief minister said that help from voluntary organisations should be taken to make certain that drinking water is available in all villages. He said the voluntary organisations should help the government in tiding over this crisis.

"Water and shade should be arranged at public places for animals including cows and dogs," he said.

The chief minister appealed to the people of the state to keep water and grains for the birds in small utensils. He said village panchayats and all urban bodies should make arrangements for water in ponds and in their respective areas so that animals and birds could use them in the scorching heat.

Yogi directed the Forest department personnel to visit the forest area regularly to maintain adequate availability of drinking water for the wild animals in the forests. He said if water was less in any water body, arrangements should be made for additional water supply in it.

"New ponds should also be dug if required," he said.

Stop hate, now

Apart from ousting two office-bearers, the BJP Govt must defuse tensions with the Middle East

The BJP has done the right thing by expelling party official spokesperson Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal, the media head of its Delhi unit, over their controversial remarks about Prophet Muhammad. The Indian Government was also prompt in trashing these leaders as “fringe elements,” something that has been appreciated by Saudi Arabia, the fourth Muslim nation which “expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the statements (by Sharma)”. Earlier on Sunday, Kuwait, Qatar and Iran had summoned the Indian ambassadors to protest against the ex-BJP leaders’ comments. “Allowing such Islamophobic remarks to continue without punishment constitutes a grave danger to the protection of human rights and may lead to further prejudice and marginalisation, which will create a cycle of violence and hate,”



Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. India’s Ambassador to Qatar, Deepak Mittal, was quick to respond, arguing that the remarks from some “fringe elements” did not reflect the Indian Government’s views. One only hopes that the response of senior BJP leaders and other Indians with similar views may soon defuse the situation; we have multifarious and vital interests in the Middle East, which we ill afford to put at risk just because some saffron extremists want to score brownie points in endless and futile debates on TV news channels. Apart from our dependence on oil from these Arab nations, our trade with

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was around \$87 billion in 2020-21. The GCC comprises Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. With the UAE, India also has a free trade agreement. Besides, there are millions of Indians residing in Muslim countries who send billions of dollars in remittances back home. Further, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invested a lot of political capital in the GCC. In 2016, Saudi Arabia conferred the highest civilian honour, the King Abdulaziz Sash. The instant issue may fade in a short time, but the BJP — indeed the entire political class — has to ponder over a few important questions: Shouldn’t there be limits which they voluntarily don’t cross for the sake of decency and decorum? Shouldn’t they stop encouraging and rewarding the leaders who make deplorable, disgraceful remarks? Shouldn’t politics be oriented around reason and facts instead of, as it is now, around sentiments and sanctimony? Saffron leaders are in office, so most of the responsibility to restore some sense and sanity in politics lies with them. There are members in the Union Council who have made reprehensible remarks in the past, but there were no consequences; in fact, the general impression is that they benefited politically because of their unsavoury comments. The BJP’s rivals too are prone to making offensive comments. Akbaruddin Owaisi is a case in point; more than once, he has said things which are not acceptable in any civilised society. It is time the political class acted now, for the sake of the nation. To begin with, they must stop hate speech — right away.

PICTALK



Devotees pay respects on the occasion of the 38th anniversary of Operation Blue Star at Akal Takht Sahib

Historical wrong must be righted

It’s wrong to project the Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple row as an expression of hate; in fact, it’s an attempt at course correction

To dismiss the Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple controversy as a vile expression of hate, Hindu bigotry and a majoritarian excess is too reductionist to serve any constructive purpose. A more in-depth look at this issue — one that factors in Hindu sentiments and examines historical and archeological data — is necessary to come to an equitable solution. Hate is an expedient terminology to brand one’s ideological adversaries as radical and is consistently employed to silence those fighting for Hindu rights.

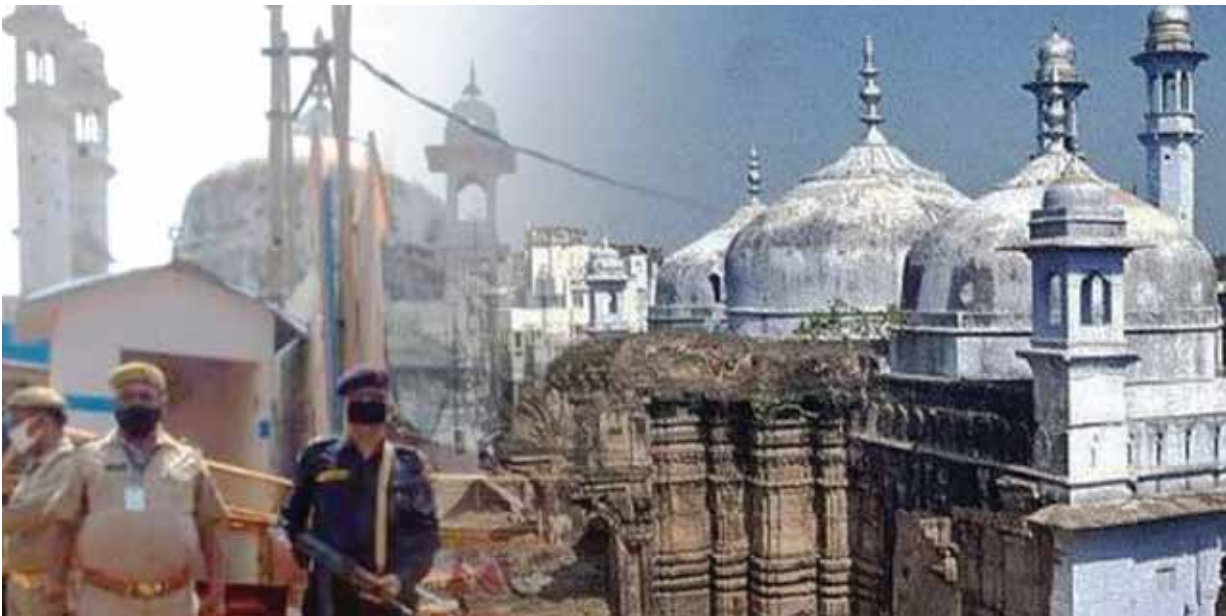
Challenging injustice is not hate. Hate is what was done to the Hindus. The physical destruction of a temple and its deity is a tangible expression of hate that surpasses any vocal vituperation; an act of unparalleled blasphemy far more offensive than any verbal indiscretion which no sane human can or should defend.

That this destruction involved the holiest of holy Hindu shrines adds insult to injury and magnifies the crime. The Kashi Vishwanath temple is the epicentre of Hinduism. Dedicated to Hindu God Shiva, this temple houses one of the 12 *jiyotirlings* and dates back to at least the first century AD. Religious scriptures place its date of existence even earlier.

Over the years, this temple has been destroyed by Islamic invaders and rebuilt several times. The last known destruction was authorised by Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb in 1669, who erected a mosque in its place — the Gyanvapi mosque, named after the ancient wisdom well of the Hindu temple.

The current Kashi Vishwanath temple was built by Rani Ahilyabai Holkar, the queen of Indore in 1777 adjacent to the original site. The destruction of the Kashi Vishwanath temple was a spiritual apocalypse for Hindus; the ultimate desecration designed to crush their inner identity, dehumanise them and make them ripe for religious transformation.

That Aurangzeb demolished the Kashi Vishwanath temple and



built a mosque in its place is not a historical conjecture open to debate or a fantasy of the Hindu right wing as some are prone to claim, but a fact firmly by irrefutable evidence. Aurangzeb stands indicted by his own written order and by the documentation of partisan Islamic chroniclers.

Maasir-i-Alamgiri, an authorised account of Aurangzeb’s rule, states: “It was reported that, according to the Emperor’s command, his officers had demolished the temple of Vishwanath at Kashi” (pp55. English translation by Jadunath Sarkar). A copy of the *firmān*/order is still available at the Asiatic Library in Kolkata. Archaeological artefacts at the mosque site also confirm the demolition. Can we stifle this controversy by invoking the adage that history cannot be rewritten? True, history cannot be rewritten. But this is a digressive argument that fails to address the crux of the controversy. A more appropriate way to frame this dilemma is to ask this question: Can the wrongs of history be corrected?

The answer is in the affirmative and they should, wherever and whenever feasible. By allowing evil to go unchal-

“
BY ALLOWING
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lenged, we not only condone wrong but become inadvertent protagonists of injustice. However, redress cannot be violent or vindictive; it should not target individuals or involve the loss of human lives. Material edifices like statues of tyrants, usurped places of worship and names of cities and towns forcibly changed are fair game.

The ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement has now given us a precedence. If the statues of Christopher Columbus can be toppled in the US for his alleged infractions, and if the monuments commemorating King Leopold II — who exploited the people of Congo — can be dismantled in Belgium, why is it that an edifice that symbolises a far greater evil and one that impacts 1.4 billion Hindus is allowed to stand is the million-dollar question?

Agreed, the present-day Muslims cannot be held accountable for the misdeeds of medieval Muslim invaders. But when Muslims defend these historical atrocities and seek legal help to preserve the status quo, they not only identify themselves with the perpetrator but also with the vile deed itself; in effect knowing-



VIVEK GUMASTE

ly and deliberately accepting responsibility for the crimes of Muslim invaders. It is this polarising activism and domineering mindset that has vitiated the socio-political climate which makes them culpable in current times.

Recourse to the Places of Worship Act, 1991, will not pass muster. That Act is discriminatory against Hindus in its syntax and violates the Constitution’s basic tenet by barring remedy of judicial review. It is a chimera to believe that secularism is tantamount to suppression of rights of the majority as implied by the Act. The sooner we scrap this Act, the better.

Muslims cannot remain in a state of opportunistic denial. They need to acknowledge past wrongs or alternatively disassociate themselves from those atrocities by willingly giving up places of worship that rightfully belong to Hindus. This will engender a sea of goodwill and further Hindu-Muslim amity. The ball is in the Muslim court.

(The author, a US-based academic and political commentator, frequently writes on current affairs in India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GULF LOSES PATIENCE, ERUPTS

Sir — The manner in which the leaders and cadres of the RSS and its offshoots like the BJP, Bajrang Dal, VHP and Hindu Mahasabha have demolished the Babri Masjid, brought in laws to do away with the age-old practices of Muslims, lynching the minorities in the name of cow protection and now blatantly denigrating Prophet Muhammad has at last made the Muslims angry. These include not only the local Muslims but also Muslims across the world, particularly the West Asian nations, rise in clamour to condemn such religious fanaticism.

They have demanded an apology from the Indian Government that has all along been a silent spectator which is tantamount to indirectly encouraging such heinous acts by their cadres. It is unfortunate that this flare-up of the West Asian nations has erupted when our Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu, though from the RSS school but a decent moderate, is on an official visit to Qatar. The Qatar Government was the first to initiate the process against the Indian Government’s response to such diatribes against the Prophet. It has also cancelled a banquet in his honour! It is a tragedy that the BJP Government has tried to escape from its failure to curb this menace by attributing such acts to the fringe elements.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

DON’T TAKE CORONA SURGE LIGHTLY

Sir — New Coronavirus infections in India in a single day were recorded above 4,000 after 84 days, taking the tally of COVID-19 cases to 4,31,68,585 while the active cases rose to 21,777, according to the Union Health Ministry. Within 24 hours, 4041 cases were recorded while the number of deaths climbed to 5,24,651 with 10 fresh fatalities. Mumbai records the highest positivity rate (8.4 per cent) along with 739 new cases. The main reason for COVID’s return is that everybody had thought that the virus has gone forever, but they were unaware that it is still with us.

Rafa’s still going strong



Ace tennis player Rafael Nadal has proved yet again that he is the king of clay court. Winning a grand slam in a lifetime is a dream of many players. In such a scenario, winning 14 French Open and overall 22 grand slams is a phenomenal achievement. Having a spectacular career in a highly demanding physical sport like tennis for over two decades is outstanding. In his career spanning over 20 years, he faced eminent players like Federer and

Djokovic and won several matches against them. However, winning over his injuries was a tough task. Nevertheless, he bounced back and created history. His dedication, fighting spirit, relentless efforts and sportsmanship have brought him to this stage.

Generally, sportsmen are a little afraid of their age. There is a misconception that if they are above 35, their body may not support them as earlier. However, there are many legendary sportsmen who have disproved it. Now, at 36, with this victory in the French Open, Nadal has proved yet again that age is just a number. His journey is inspiring not only for sportspersons, but also for common people. If one can imbibe qualities like determination, fighting spirit and relentless efforts from Nadal, one can reach great heights in any field. Let us hope that Rafael Nadal wins more and more grand slams and reaches greater heights in the years ahead.

Mejari Mallikarjuna | Visakhapatnam

The number of cases has been reduced to almost zero due to less or no testing at all by the Government. Almost all people have stopped the use of mask and other COVID-appropriate behaviour. In order to prevent the situation of lockdown or closure of educational and other institutes, we must follow COVID-appropriate norms. We are still suffering from the after-effects of Coronavirus in almost every field. So there’s an urgent and total need to continue following proper precautions against the virus and save the country from the scary experience it had earlier. The best weapon against the virus is ‘hygiene’; please let’s all maintain it.

Ishita Patidar | Ujjain

THE US, UK AND POOR UKRAINE

Sir — In an important announcement, US President Joe Biden has said that they have started giving Ukraine advanced rocket artillery systems. Within 48 hours of this announcement, the Defence Ministry of Great Britain also announced the delivery

of a long-range missile system. No matter how much modern weapons and fighter planes are given to Ukraine, it will not do the country any good. Yes, it is possible that the war can be prolonged a little more. How much longer can a small country, with its limited military resources, compete with the Russians?

America and the UK are probably making all these announcements because they, along with Russia, handed over all the nuclear weapons of Ukraine to Russia in 1994 after a pact. They falsely assured that these three nations will take Ukraine’s protection guarantee but one of these is busy grabbing it. America and Britain are merely watching the spectacle. If that agreement had not been acted upon, today the Kremlin would never have dared to attack Ukraine. Even now, if Ukraine is to be saved, Nato has to directly intervene.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I am hoping the Khelo India Games will create Olympic medal-lists in the coming decade.



Union Home Minister —Amit Shah



We all better focus on how to put Russia in its place. This will bring peace and save lives.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister —Dmytro Kuleba

It’s painful for people to keep talking about this ‘catfight’ (the rift with Kim Catrall).



Actor —Sarah Jessica Parker



I don’t know what can happen in future, but I’m going to keep fighting.

French Open winner —Rafael Nadal

The Najafgarh drain development will address waterlogging on a long-term basis.



Delhi Lt Governor —VK Saxena

Serious issue

People who were till recently loudly promoting *Kashmir Files* are mum despite targeted killings

The Kashmir of the 1990s is back. The targeted killings in the Valley have once again put a serious question mark on the tall claims of normalcy there. To intimidate daily wagers and Government employees, terrorists are gunning for Kashmiri Pandits and migrant labourers. In the past few weeks, several people including school teacher Rajni Bala, bank manager Vijay Kumar, Rahul Bhatt, labourer Dilkush and a TV actor have been shot dead by terrorists. They want to send the message that they are still in control and they decide who lives or dies in the Valley. This is a dangerous paradigm and the Government must act fast to restore people’s confidence. The Government teachers are already protesting and want to leave at the earliest. A few weeks back, *The Kashmir Files*, a film on the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, brought back the horror that they had to undergo which led to their flight from the Valley. The film was promoted by the BJP rank and file and heated TV debates reopened the wounds of Kashmiri Pandits. Many self-appointed ‘spokespersons’ of Kashmiri Pandits spoke at length about the latter’s plight and misery. They are now conspicuous by their absence.




Were they just promoting the film for ulterior motives or they can’t muster enough courage to ask the Government to take action now. Not a single one of them seems to have sympathised with the people recently killed in the Valley. Ironically, the people and parties that were trolled for not adoring *The Kashmir Files* (as if that were the ultimate test to show solidarity with Kashmiri Pandits) are now out and demanding tough action. Uddhav Thackeray and his party are quite vocal about it, and so is Arvind Kejriwal who was trolled for not making the film tax-free in Delhi. It is high time we understood as a nation that whatever we do or say has consequences. Not saying that *The Kashmir Files* is responsible for the recent spate of killings in the Valley but aggression in the public domain can have repercussions and put people’s lives in danger, be it the Government servants in the Valley or Kashmiri students studying in Mumbai. Law and order is a serious matter better left to the Government to deal with, not a subject of meaningless TV debates or propaganda fiction.

FIRST COLUMN


THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP

One has to experience it to believe what God can do for us



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I am referring to our relationship with God, if we choose to pursue it. Most of us don't, and thus lose out. We prefer to resort to endless thinking when we seek something desperately or wish to avoid something at any cost. And this keeps on happening in our lives repeatedly. Why? Because we have been created small and are always in need of help. I will not go into the details of why this was done in this article but limit myself to state that the creator chose this model for this planet. And God made Himself available to us for help in all matters, which were not against dharma. He also imposed certain conditions for coming forward to help, and God can help beyond our imagination, because He is all powerful, omniscient, etc. We must seek His help actively by giving up our 'ahankar' (ego). Our relationship is not like that of a small child with his parents, i.e., they will help as part of their duties. God is not bound similarly; but He will help if we earnestly seek His help and deserve it too. For this, God has given us free will. Why do majority of us don't seek such help even if it is available to one and all without any discrimination? Because we make wrong use of our free will. I have referred earlier to our habit of endless thinking. We succumb to it because it is done by our minds; this we think is harmless. Sadly, it is not because all acts of mind are also karmas which result in 'phalas' (fruits), though they as are subtle not gross. For example, when we allow our mind to think of the worst, our bodies are adversely affected. What do you think




is the main reason of mental diseases? This answer is our minds. It is no wonder that Lord Krishna has warned us that we are our own enemies in the verse no. 6.5 of the Geeta. Ahankar, which was supposed to goad us to do our duty, is used to avoid doing duty by imagining that we are special and can get away by not doing what we must, i.e., our duty according to time, place and circumstances. Where, then, is the chance of taking shelter in God?

We are not only small intrinsically but our thinking is small too; we have deep desires for big things though. Our faulty natures don't help either. Those are mainly driven by the lower modes of passion and darkness. And one approaches God only when the mode of goodness is in ascendancy. On top of all these is our impatience. We want responses from God sooner than later. We spend more than ten years of our early life in order to learn enough to earn our living, but in case of higher gains from God, we are not patient at all. On the other hand, God restrains Himself in His dealings with us, because if He didn't we will all end up becoming robots. God encourages without being too soft. Don't we know that parents, who make it too easy for their children, only end up spoiling them, because they give a wrong impression about what life is really like. Don't we know that 'tapasya' (hard work) is required to gain anything of real value? God, being omniscient, will not do it. He instills in us the value of proper application. Surely, God is not emotional like we are, because misplaced or excessive emotions can harm rather than benefit us. God is patient like we cannot imagine; He is prepared to wait to give us what is most desirable, i.e., liberation while we come up slowly in our eternal journeys. God is tolerant beyond our imagination, while we keep on making mistakes both intentionally and unintentionally. Lastly, God reveals Himself to us very discreetly in order not to overpower us. What is God's message to us? Take my shelter and I will give you everything desirable, both material and spiritual. One has to experience to believe what God can do for us; no one can come close to God in the matter of His love for us. Is He not prepared to be with us 24x7? Please pursue this most beautiful relationship beginning now, not later.

(The author writes on spiritual matters. The views expressed are personal)

Early heat waves bear human ‘footprints’



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Heat waves are termed the ‘silent disaster’ as heat-related deaths are often undercounted around the world for a number of reasons

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IMPROVEMENTS IN CLIMATE MODELS AND ANALYTICS HAVE ENABLED SCIENTISTS TO IDENTIFY ‘FINGERPRINTS’ OF HUMAN INFLUENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY OBSERVING RECORDS OF RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE AND OTHER FACTORS

large swathe of India continues to simmer in the scorching heat with heat waves sweeping the northern, central, and eastern parts of the country. The onslaught of this heat wave came early in March. The state of India's Environment Figures 2022, released by the Centre for Science and Environment, shows that the country reported 280 heat wave days from March 11 to May 18, 2022—the highest in 10 years.

Heat waves on land and depressions in the sea this year began early in and around India on March 11, 2022. No one, even the officials of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), expected the heat wave to set in from March. This is evident the way the IMD in its calendar has not considered March while considering heat waves data. The IMD dashboard has provided figures on heat waves for the months of April to July only. This is an indicator that heat waves in March 2022 are “not normal.”

If the heat wave is not normal in March, why did it happen? Is it the impact of climate change or the La Nina effect? Or could the unusual heat waves in March 2022 be due to an unexpected climate anomaly that could be linked to global warming? Not just March, even April has broken all records. The IMD analysed that April was the hottest month for northwest and Central India and the third-hottest April the country has seen in the past 122 years (1901 to 2022).

Some experts blame climate change for such severe heat waves. The World Weather Attribution Network (WWAN) said in its recent global study that such unusual, early heat waves which swept India and Pakistan in 2022 were 30 times more likely due to the direct impact of climate change.

Raghu Murtugudde, a climate scientist at the University of Maryland, explains that a north-south pressure pattern, associated with the La Nina phenomenon in the eastern and central Pacific Ocean that happens during winters in India, has persisted longer than expected and interacted with warm waves coming in from a rapidly warming Arctic region, leading to the heat waves. The sea surface temperatures over the east and the central Pacific Ocean become cooler-than-average during La Niña. This affects the trade winds flowing over the ocean surface through changes in wind stress. The trade winds carry this weather disturbance elsewhere and affect large parts of the world. In India, the phenomenon is mostly associated with wet and cold winters. Therefore, the current impact of La Niña on spring and summer in India is completely unexpected. Murtugudde says that the heat waves may continue till at least the monsoon season begins in June.

A heat wave occurs when the temperature crosses 40 degrees Celsius in the plains, 37 degrees Celsius in the coastal areas, and 30 degrees Celsius in the hills, according to the IMD. A heat wave is declared on the day an area records tem-

peratures 4.5-6.4 degrees Celsius above normal. According to the IMD, when temperatures rise more than 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal, it is classified as a 'severe' heat wave. The IMD also uses another criterion to declare a heat wave which is based on absolute recorded temperatures. If the temperature crosses the 45 degree Celsius mark, the IMD declares a heat wave and when it crosses 47 degrees Celsius, a 'severe' heat wave is declared.

The figures furnished by the State of Environment 2022 say that five states of India accounted for 54 per cent of the heat waves this year. They were Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, and Haryana. It further says that Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir—all in the Himalayan regions—have been unusually warm this year. Himachal Pradesh recorded 27 heat wave days, Rajasthan 39, and Madhya Pradesh 38.

D. Sivananda Pai from the Kottayam-based Institute for Climate Change Studies says that anticyclones over western parts of Rajasthan in March and the absence of rain-bearing Western disturbances triggered the early and extreme heat waves. Anticyclones cause hot and dry weather by sinking winds around high-pressure systems in the atmosphere.

Sunita Narain, director-general of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), says that the severity and frequency of extreme weather increase the warming of the world, including India. She says that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its sixth assessment report has reminded us that climate change is rapid, widespread, and irreversible.

In the first installment of the Sixth Assessment Report, the IPCC asserts that human activities have warmed the planet at a rate never seen before in the planet's long history, and the Earth's global surface temperature has warmed by 1.09 degrees Centigrade compared to the pre-industrial period of 1850-1900. Human influence is the main driver of hot weather extremes which have become more frequent and intense since the 1950s.

Improvements in climate models and analytics have enabled scientists to identify “fingerprints” of human influence on climate change by observing records of rainfall, temperature, and other factors. In the past two decades, scientists have published more than 350 scientific papers and assessments analysing the role of anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in individual extreme events.

The IPCC report says that every additional 0.5 degrees Celsius of warming will increase hot weather extremes, along with extreme precipitation and drought. Heat waves in India are likely to “last 25 times longer by 2036-2065” if carbon emissions remain high and push global temperature rise by 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, according to an international climate report published on October 28, 2021, covering the G20 countries.

Impact of heat waves

Heat waves exert enormous impacts on health, agriculture, and availability of water—all often related to each other in complex ways. Even though the number of deaths due to heat waves in India has decreased over the years, research shows that the general physical and mental wellbeing of people does get affected by extreme temperatures. On the other hand, agricultural yields get impacted as well. The CSE, in its report, claims that the wheat crop in the current Rabi season in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh has been impacted by heat waves. Many farmers have reported losses between 20 to 60 per cent in these states. This happened because the heat waves were early this year and the temperatures affected the wheat plants during their growth stage, leading to shriveled grains which fetch lower prices in the market, resulting in losses. To reduce agricultural losses due to heat waves, heat-tolerant varieties of wheat need to be developed.

Similarly, heat-resistant varieties of other Rabi crops also need to be developed. Apart from direct heat, agricultural yields may also get impacted by droughts or drought-like conditions that are often associated with heat waves. This mainly occurs because of the non-availability of water for irrigation during drought conditions. The unlikely impact of the current heat waves would occur in the Himalayan regions of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, and Uttarakhand which are not used to heat waves and not well adapted to extreme temperatures. One major impact in these regions would be on the accelerated melting of glaciers—the main source of water for the people living there—due to extreme temperatures.


Heat waves are termed the “silent disaster” as heat-related deaths are often undercounted around the world for a number of reasons, wrote WWAN in its study. Such events can make the elderly and residents of low-income areas more vulnerable. When extreme events, including heat waves, are set to increase in severity and frequency, the poor, including the slum dwellers, will suffer the most.

Why Sikhs must not forget Operation Blue Star

It was an act of a greater recklessness on part of PM Indira Gandhi than even the declaration of Emergency

Tremors of Operation Blue Star (OBS), the army action executed on the orders of prime minister Indira Gandhi in the first week of June 1984, continue to torment the Sikh community and the national conscience till date. The operation was supposedly ordered to flush out alleged secessionists and outlaws who had taken shelter in Sri Harmandir Sahib, the holiest shrine of Sikhs. In my view Operation Blue Star was a historic blunder regardless of the reason.

Benefits of the operation have proved to be much costlier than the anticipated cost of its avoidance. I believe OBS was an act of a greater recklessness on part of PM Gandhi than even the declaration of Emergency in 1975, since it fractured fraternity, alienated the entire Sikh



JAGMOHAN SINGH RAJU


The author, a retired IAS officer, is a politician. The views expressed are personal.)

community from the establishment, and created a deep divide between Hindus and Sikhs.

In any case, certain things are beyond the realm of cost-benefit considerations. OBS ought not to have been allowed at any cost, circumstances irrespective. Sikhs alone do not prescribe to this viewpoint. Some of the most prominent Hindu leaders are also of the same opinion.

OBS was unique in the history of independent India in more than one way. It was for the first time that a religious shrine became the focus of Army action. In the OBS, tank fire had smashed Sri Akal Takht Sahib and the excessive use of force, according to media reports, left between five to seven thousand men and women dead.

OBS not only caused a large number of deaths during the



operation but also became the root-cause of the massacre of Sikhs in November 1984 riots and the black decade of killings and turmoil in Punjab thereafter. This chain of events demonised Sikhs as separatists (Khalistanis) and left them completely outraged and estranged.

But there was silver lining too. A year after the OBS, I had got selected in the IAS and was allocated to Tamil Nadu. There I had the opportunity to visit Kanchi Kamakoti Muth. The Muth enjoys highest veneration of Hindus as it was founded by

Adi Shankaracharya and he lived here for long.

Spotting a turbaned Sikh, the Head of the Muth, Jagadguru Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati ji, one of the most influential spiritual leaders of his time, called me aside and enquired about the situation in Punjab. Then in a poignant tone he told me that Operation Blue Star should have never taken place and how pained he was over the killing of Sikhs in the operation. Shankaracharya had also asked me to offer prayer at Harmandir Sahib for the departed souls. I had taken a Sankalp in my mind to perform Akand Path at Sri Akal Takht Sahib for the peace of the departed souls. Circumstances, however, did not enable this resolve to be fulfilled. But this year, on the 38th anniversary of

the OBS, with the blessings of Guru Ram Dasji I could organise Akhand Path and Ardas at Sri Akal Takht Sahib.

Operation Blue Star, in my opinion, was a completely avoidable national tragedy. The onus of preventing the operation lay squarely on PM Indira Gandhi. Swayed by electoral considerations, she miserably failed in her national duty. By the admission of her own colleagues like Natwar Singh, OBS was perhaps her biggest mistake, bigger than even the Emergency.

But Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, and later Smt. Indira Gandhi, for decades failed to resolve the basic demands of Punjab including transfer of Chandigarh, Punjab's capital, to Punjab, river water distribution and transferring of Punjabi speaking areas to Punjab.

How do Sikhs address the residual trauma inflicted by Operation Blue Star? Should they forget and move on? In this regard, there is something to learn from other religious communities. Almost 2,000 years after its destruction, this is how the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple is made to remain present in the imagination and imagery of the Jews, generation after generation. I was also told that since centuries, the destruction of their Holy Temple is mourned by the Jews collectively on Tisha B'Av. This day is considered the saddest day on the Jewish calendar when Jews abjure eating of meat or drinking of wine or any other indulgence; they only mourn, fast, and pray.

I am, therefore, of the firm conviction that Sikhs may forgive but must not ever forget the

devastation of the Harmandir Sahib suffered during OBS. It was no accident of history. It occurred because of PM Indira Gandhi's insensitivity, indifference, and lack of empathy. It is our moral duty and national imperative to prevent such human disasters in the future. Learning from the past is the best way of prevention.

It is, therefore, our shared responsibility to keep alive the memory of the past and of all those who suffered. Ardas in Sikhism institutionalises collective community memorisation of Sikh history and maintaining effective remembrance of those who endured sufferings for the sake of the faith. Let Operation Blue Star be part of the Sikh Ardas and let us all pray that no one suffers such violence and agony ever again.

US, S Korea fire missiles to sea, matching North's launches

AP ■ SEOUL

The US and South Korean militaries launched eight ballistic missiles into the sea Monday in a show of force matching a North Korean missile display a day earlier that extended a provocative streak in weapons demonstrations.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the allies' live-fire exercise involved eight Army Tactical Missile System missiles fired into South Korea's eastern waters across 10 minutes.

It said the drill was aimed at demonstrating an ability to respond swiftly and accurately to North Korean attacks.

The South's military on Sunday detected North Korea firing eight short-range missiles over 35 minutes from at least four different locations, including from western and eastern coastal areas and two inland areas north of and near the capital, Pyongyang, in what appeared to be a single-day record for the country's ballistic launches.

It was North Korea's 18th round of missile tests in 2022 alone - a streak that included the



country's first launches of inter-continental ballistic missiles in nearly five years.

South Korean and U.S. Officials also say North Korea is preparing to conduct its first nuclear test since September 2017 as leader Kim Jong Un pushes a brinkmanship aimed at cementing the North's status as a nuclear power and negotiating economic and security concessions from a position of strength.

U.S. And South Korean forces conducted a similar live-fire drill following North

Korea's previous ballistic launches on May 25, which South Korea's military said involved an ICBM flown on medium-range trajectory and two short-range weapons.

Those tests came as Biden wrapped up his trip to South Korea and Japan, where he reaffirmed the U.S. Commitment to defend both allies.

North Korean state media have yet to comment on Sunday's launches. They came after the U.S. Aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan concluded a

three-day naval drill with South Korea in the Philippine Sea on Saturday, apparently their first joint drill involving a carrier since November 2017, as the countries move to upgrade their defense exercises in the face of North Korean threats.

North Korea has long condemned the allies' combined military exercises as invasion rehearsals and often countered with its own missile drills, including short-range launches in 2016 and 2017 that simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean ports and U.S. Military facilities in Japan.

Hours after the North Korean launches, Japan and the United States conducted a joint ballistic missile exercise aimed at showing their "rapid response capability" and "strong determination" to counter threats, Japan's Defense Ministry said.

The United States has vowed to push for additional international sanctions if North Korea conducts a nuclear test, but the prospects for meaningful new punitive measures are dim with the U.N. Security Council's permanent members divided.

Rishi Sunak backs UK PM Boris ahead of no confidence vote

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak, one of the senior-most Cabinet ministers and seen as a contender for the top job, on Monday came out fighting in favour of his boss as it was announced that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will face a vote of confidence over the partygate scandal.

The Indian-origin finance minister has joined the bulk of the Cabinet to very publicly back Johnson in the vote of Conservative Party MPs later on Monday, which could trigger a leadership contest if as many as 180 Tory members of Parliament vote against the Prime Minister.

The frontrunner in the rebellion has emerged as former UK Foreign and Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who has called on the party to vote for change in the secret ballot but it is expected that Johnson may just survive Monday's vote.

"From the vaccine rollout to our response to Russian aggression, the PM has shown the strong leadership our country needs," Sunak said in a tweet, effectively ruling himself out of a leadership challenge, at least for the moment.

"I am backing him today and will continue to back him as we focus on growing the economy, tackling the cost of living and clearing the Covid backlogs," he said.

Sunak's intervention came soon after



UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, also seen as a contender for party leader and UK PM, took to Twitter to say that Johnson had her "100 per cent backing in today's vote" and strongly urged colleagues to support him.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, another senior Indian-origin Cabinet member, has previously similarly called on rebels to back Johnson to focus on other pressing issues, including the cost-of-living crisis and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

But the momentum of discontent has been gradually building up in the background, which saw Johnson's anti-corruption tsar, Tory MP John Penrose, resigning over Johnson's response to the Sue Gray report of serious leadership failures over the COVID law-breaking parties at Downing Street.

"I'm sorry to have to resign as the PM's anti-corruption tsar but, after his reply last week about the ministerial code,

it's pretty clear he has broken it," he tweeted on Monday.

"That's a resigning matter for me, and it should be for the PM too," he said.

The resignation piled further pressure from the rebels, which are seen to be led by Jeremy Hunt - who contested the last leadership battle in 2019 and lost to Johnson.

"The Conservative Party must now decide if it wishes to change its leader. Because of the situation in Ukraine this was not a debate I wanted to have now but under our rules we must do that," said Hunt.

"Anyone who believes our country is stronger, fairer and more prosperous when led by Conservatives should reflect that the consequence of not changing will be to hand the country to others who do not share those values. Today's decision is change or lose. I will be voting for change," he said.

Others believed to be lining up for a leadership race include Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt and Commons Foreign Affairs Committee chair Tom Tugendhat. UK Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi is seen as a kind of compromise candidate should it come to a vote, but has not indicated his intention to contest openly.

While backbench anger has grown since Gray published her official report into lockdown parties within government offices last month, the Cabinet has rallied to the PM's side.

Bangla fire: Police start collecting DNA samples to identify victims

PTI ■ DHAKA

The police on Monday started collecting DNA samples to identify victims of the devastating fire at a private container depot in southeastern Bangladesh, even as authorities struggled to determine the cause of the blaze that killed at least 49 people.

A massive fire broke out at the chemical container depot near the country's main Chittagong Seaport on Saturday night. The number of fatalities is likely to go up as some of the injured are in critical condition and at least three firefighters remain missing.

A forensic team led by Chittagong's Criminal Investigation Department Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Jahangir Alam set up a booth in front of the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Monday to cross-match DNA samples of unidentified victims of the fire, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

Alam said samples were being collected from parents, siblings, or any two of the children of the unidentified victims.

Long queues of relatives of the victims formed in front of the booth to identify their loved ones in the early morning.

Of the 49 dead consisting mostly of workers of the private depot and firefighters, 13 have been identified so far. Over 450 people were also injured in the incident.

The tragedy raised concern over the safety standard in the country's industrial sector.

An explosives inspector in the port city said the authorities of BM Container Depot did not have proper authorisation to store chemical agents in the facility, Bdnews24.Com news por-



tal reported.

The inspector, Tofazzal Hossain, said he was not aware of any such authorisation.

"So far I know, they (BM Container Depot) don't have it. This is the first time we (Directorate of Explosives) are hearing about it," he said.

The firefighters from Chattogram and its surrounding districts had struggled to douse the fire as multiple explosions rocked the area and kept exacerbating the fire.

Tofazzal said hydrogen peroxide, the chemical agent that many are assuming stoked the fire, may not be behind the explosion at all.

"Hydrogen peroxide is an accelerant agent, it can help spread the fire more, but it never causes it," he said.

Since the fire was yet to be contained, the inspection team led by Tofazzal could not get close to the area still on fire.

"We could not get to the bottom of it. But I'm certain there were other chemical agents or materials which explode as they come into contact with fire or any other materials."

Gunmen at Nigeria church shot from both inside, outside

PTI ■ ABUJA

As attackers opened fire on worshippers inside a Catholic church in southwestern Nigeria, other gunmen waited outside to kill those who tried to flee, church officials and witnesses said Monday.

At least 50 people including children were killed in the attack, according to a state lawmaker from the area.

Worshippers had just arrived for Pentecost Sunday Mass when gunfire erupted at the St. Francis Catholic Church



in Ondo state, said Bishop Jude Arogundade of the Ondo Catholic Diocese.

Steven Omotayo, who lives near the church, rushed to the scene upon hearing the gun-

shots.

"I saw a lot of dead bodies - both young and old, even children," he said. "The people came in and started shooting from the gate."

He said the church has three entrances and the main entrance was said to have been locked, making it difficult for many to escape.

"They were just shooting. If they see anyone trying to escape or stand up, they will just shoot the person," he said. "Everybody standing was bombarded with bullets."

Iraq: British man gets 15 years over smuggling artifacts

AP ■ BAGHDAD

A British citizen was sentenced Monday by an Iraqi court to 15 years in prison on charges of smuggling artifacts out of the country, in a case that has attracted international attention.

The verdict handed down to retired geologist Jim Fitton, shocked the court in Baghdad, including his defense attorney. He and his family have argued that Fitton, 66, had no criminal intent.

"I thought the worst case scenario would be one year, with suspension," Fitton's lawyer Thair Soud, visibly shocked, told The Associated Press. A German national tried with Fitton was found not to have criminal intent in the case and will be released.

But Judge Jabir Abd Jabir found that by picking up the items, found to be artefacts dating older than 200 years according to a technical government investigation, and intending to transport them

out of the country, Fitton had criminal intent to smuggle them.

The judge did not consider Soud's arguments that laid out Fitton's ignorance of Iraqi laws and the value of the items he pitched up. Fitton and the German national, Volker Waldman, were arrested in Baghdad airport on March 20 after airport security discovered the items in their luggage. They had been part of a tourism expedition across the country's ancient sites.

Indian businessman held with foreign currency worth over ₹40 million at Colombo airport

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A 45-year-old Indian businessman has been arrested from the international airport here for attempting to smuggle foreign currency worth over Rs 40 million out of Sri Lanka, according to a media report on Monday.

The man, who has not been identified, was arrested on Sunday by security officials at the Bandaranaika International Airport (BIA), Daily Mirror Lanka reported.

He came to Sri Lanka for business.

Following a search of his suitcase, the security officials found 117,000 Canadian dollars and 19,000 Euros worth over Rs 40 million, the report added.

Security officials checked the passenger's baggage after he behaved in a suspicious manner. The officials observed that the passenger was visiting a toilet at the airport departure passenger terminal several times in a short period of time, the Daily News Lanka reported.

He was to board an Indigo flight bound for Chennai.

कार्यालय नगर निगम हल्द्वानी				
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फ़ोन: 519 / 4040 / 2021-22		दिनांक: 04 / 06 / 2022		
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कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)

:: ऑन लाईन निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना ::

जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन बिलासपुर की ओर कार्यपालन अभियंता एवं सदस्य सचिव, जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन द्वारा एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नांकित कार्य हेतु प्रपत्र "अ" (प्रतिशत दर) ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

कार्य का नाम :- बिलासपुर जिले के अंतर्गत जल जीवन मिशन में स्वीकृत रेड्रोफिटिंग/एकल ग्राम/समूह ग्राम योजना जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत नल जल प्रदाय योजना अन्तर्गत सम्पूर्ण कार्य (सलन शोडयूल अनुसार)

निविदा क्र. दिनांक	सिस्टम क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	घरोहर राशि
52/01.06.2022	100846	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम रामपुर गोपालपुर	133.68	101000.00
53/01.06.2022	100849	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम बांका कोरौरी	148.70	128500.00
54/01.06.2022	101372	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम खैरा (नं), सरखदेवरी	210.53	150000.00
55/01.06.2022	101373	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम अमरीअकबरी, भोजपुरी	210.16	150000.00
56/01.06.2022	101375	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम निगनिया बिटकुली (U)	157.79	119000.00
57/01.06.2022	101453	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम लमरा एवं फरहदा	251.16	150000.00
58/01.06.2022	101456	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम झल्ला एवं कोटिया	210.07	150000.00
59/01.06.2022	101461	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम मटगांव, एवं सेवरी	164.42	124000.00
60/01.06.2022	101462	विकासखण्ड बिला के ग्राम सरवानी, मगरउछला	200.45	150000.00

अन्य विवरण एवं विस्तृत निविदा छग शासन के ई-प्रोक्जोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर दिनांक 06.06.2022 सुबह 10.30 बजे से उपलब्ध है तथा दिनांक 26.06.2022 समय 17.30 तक बीड डाले जा सकते हैं एवं अन्य विवरण कार्यालयीन समय पर लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) में देखे जा सकते हैं।

हस्ता / कार्यापालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)
R.O. No:- 91897/6
R.O. Date:- 06/06/2022

Voters in Kazakhstan approve Constitutional changes

AP ■ MOSCOW

Voters in the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan have given overwhelming approval to proposed constitutional changes widely seen as an attempt to repudiate the legacy of former strongman Nursultan Nazarbayev, who led the ex-Soviet republic for three decades.

Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission said Monday that 77% of voters supported the constitutional amendments in Sunday's referendum, according to preliminary results, while just under 19% voted against them and about 2.6% of ballots were found invalid. The turnout was 68%.



The vote was called by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who has steadily strengthened his

grip on power after violent demonstrations in January left more than 230 people dead. The protests were sparked by a steep rise in fuel prices, but they also reflected wide public discontent with a stagnant economy and authoritarian government.

Sunday's referendum included specific questions on modifications like prohibiting the death penalty and banning some officials from joining political parties. But it was broadly about support for Tokayev's overall course.

Tokayev moved methodically to sideline Nazarbayev, who had led Kazakhstan as its communist boss and then president after 1991 Soviet collapse. Nazarbayev stepped

down in 2019, but had continued to hold powerful positions as head of the ruling party and the country's national security council until January's unrest.

Tokayev replaced him as security council head during the unrest, in which many demonstrators chanted "old man out," referring to the 81-year-old former president. Later in January, Tokayev also took helm of the ruling party.

In March, Tokayev vowed political reforms, including reducing the power of the presidency and strengthening parliament. He also called for reducing government involvement in the economy, and trying to bridge the gap between rich and poor.

PM Lee promotes Finance Minister to be Singapore's deputy PM from June 13

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Monday appointed finance minister Lawrence Wong as the Deputy Prime Minister from June 13, paving the way for the next generation leader from his party to lead the country.

The announcement comes two months after Lawrence, 49, was endorsed by his peers as the leader of the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) fourth-generation team to succeed the 70-year-old Lee.

The Cabinet reshuffle positions him as a next-generation leader and a Prime Ministerial candidate to lead the city-state, focused on global businesses.

"I look forward to walking this journey with all of you, and working with everyone - to steer Singapore through the many chal-

lenges we are facing today, and to chart our new way forward together for a better tomorrow," Lawrence said in a tweet. "I will do my best and give every ounce of my strength to serve Singapore and Singaporeans. In turn, I seek your support, as I take on my latest appointment as DPM, and take another step forward in embracing my new responsibilities. (Ministry of Communications and Information)," he said.

Lawrence will continue as the Minister for Finance, and assume responsibility for the Strategy Group within the Prime Minister's Office, taking over this role from the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Heng Swee Keat who had stepped aside as leader of the 4G team last April, citing his age as the reason.

The Strategy Group oversees key priorities and issues facing Singapore over the medium to long

terms, such as population and climate change.

Lawrence will be the Acting Prime Minister in the absence of premier Lee.Heng, 61, will remain as the Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies, overseeing the Future Economy Council as well as assisting Prime Minister Lee in overseeing the National Research Foundation and Productivity Fund Administration Board.

"The next generation leadership is taking shape. I ask everyone to give your full support to this important transition, to steer Singapore safely out of the pandemic and into a brighter future," Lee said in a Facebook post on Monday.

"We took another important step towards leadership renewal today, with the appointment of Lawrence Wong as DPM.

Israeli coalition could crumble over settler laws vote

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israel's ruling coalition is gearing up for a major test, with a vote expected Monday on the legal status of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank. The fragile union could collapse if the vote fails to pass.

Emergency regulations in place for decades have created a separate legal system for Jewish settlers in the West Bank, applying parts of Israeli law to them - even though they live in occupied territory and not within sovereign Israel land.

These regulations expire at the end of the month and if they are not renewed, that legal system, which Israel has cultivated for its settlers in the West Bank since it occupied the territory in 1967, will be thrown into question. It could also change the legal status of the 500,000 settlers living there.

Proponents of extending the law say they are merely seeking to maintain a status quo and preserve the government's shelf life. Opponents say extending the regulations would deepen an unfair system that pits Israelis and Palestinians in the same occupied territory under separate legal systems, which rights groups have equated to apartheid.

The coalition, made up of eight ideologically distinct parties, came together last year and pledged to sidestep divisive issues that could threaten its survival.

Now, one of those very issues - Palestinian statehood and Israel's occupation of the West Bank - risks toppling it.

One of the coalition's members, the nationalist New Hope, has threatened to bolt if the coalition cannot pass the measure. Legislators and party leaders were scrambling to rally votes and even parties that support Palestinian independence and criticize Israel's settlement enterprise were expected to vote in favor - just to save the coalition.

"It's not simple or easy for us either but we understand there is an overarching goal and that overarching goal is the survival of this government," Yair Golan of the dovish Meretz party, told Israeli Army Radio.

UK boosts Ukraine support with high-tech missile system

AP ■ KYIV

The British government said Monday that the multiple-launch rocket systems it is offering to Ukraine will bring "a significant boost in capability" for the country's efforts to resist Russia's invasion.

"If the international community continues its support, I believe Ukraine can win" its war against Russia, British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said in a statement.

The statement came after comments Sunday by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who warned the West against sending longer-range rocket systems to Ukraine.

The British government described the M270 weapon system as a "cutting edge" military asset which can strike targets up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) away "with pinpoint accuracy." The United Kingdom pledged last week to send the weapons. It gave no details about delivery dates.

The U.S. Last week

announced plans to deliver USD 700 million of security assistance for Ukraine, including four precision-guided, medium-range rocket systems, as well as helicopters, Javelin anti-tank systems, radars, tactical vehicles and more.

Washington and London hope the deliveries will help Ukraine turn the tide of the war in its eastern Donbas region which Russia appears minded to capture entirely.

They are unlikely to have an immediate impact, however. The Pentagon said last week that it will take at least three weeks to get the U.S. Weapons onto the battlefield. Russia-backed separatists have fought the Ukrainian government since 2014 in the Donbas.

The U.S. Has stopped short of offering Ukraine longer-range weapons that could fire deep into Russia and could inflame tensions with Moscow.

Russia's own use of missiles in Ukraine, meanwhile, continued to pummel targets, with the Russian military claiming

Monday it had struck a Ukrainian factory that was repairing armor.

Russian warplanes fired long-range missiles to destroy a plant on the edge of the town of Lozova in the northeastern Kharkiv region that was repairing armored vehicles, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said.

Russian aircraft hit 73 areas of concentration of Ukrainian troops and equipment, while the Russian artillery struck 431 military targets, Konashenkov said. His claims couldn't be independently verified.

Putin vowed to strike deeper into the heart of Ukraine if the West sends Kyiv longer-range missile systems. In a show of force, Russian missiles struck Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, on Sunday.

Ukraine's General Staff said Russian forces fired five X-22 cruise missiles from the Caspian Sea toward Kyiv, and one was destroyed by air



defenses. Four other missiles hit "infrastructure facilities," but Ukraine said there were no casualties.

Before Sunday's early morning attack, Kyiv hadn't faced any such Russian airstrikes since the April 28 visit of U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres. Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday visited command posts and the frontline positions of Ukrainian troops in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which make up the Donbas.

Ukraine's struggle on the 103rd day of war was heartfelt for veterans of D-Day who gathered in northern France on Monday.

American D-Day veteran Charles Shay, 97, was at Omaha Beach in Normandy morning to mark the 78th anniversary of June 6, 1944 landings and pay tribute to those who fell that day.

Asked about his feelings regarding the war being waged on the European continent, Shay told The Associated Press

it "is a very sad situation."

"In 1944 I landed on these beaches and we thought we'd bring peace to the world. But it's not possible," he added with regret.

A Ukrainian regional governor said Monday that the situation in a key eastern town has worsened for defending troops.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Monday that fierce fighting was continuing in the city of Sievierodonetsk, which is at the epicenter of the Russian offensive.

He described the combat situation as "quite dynamic," adding that the Ukrainian forces had lost some of the gains they made over the week-end but are holding their positions in the city's industrial zone.

The Russians have continued intensive bombardment of Sievierodonetsk and nearby Lysychansk, Haidai said.

Russian forces have been focusing in the capture of Sievierodonetsk and

Lysychansk.

West of those cities, in the towns of Sloviansk and Bakhmut, cars and military vehicles have been speeding into town from the direction of the front line. Dozens of military doctors and paramedic ambulances worked Sunday to evacuate civilians and Ukrainian servicemen, many of whom had been hurt by artillery shelling.

Western military intelligence reports say Ukrainian counterattacks in Sievierodonetsk are probably halting the operational momentum Russian forces previously gained by concentrating their combat units and firepower in the area.

On Monday, Serbia confirmed that a planned visit by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the Balkan country won't take place after reports that Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro refused to allow his plane to fly over its airspace to reach Serbia.

Ukraine says east under relentless Russian attacks

AP ■ KYIV

A regional governor in Ukraine says that the situation in a key eastern town has worsened.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Monday that fierce fighting was continuing in the city of Sievierodonetsk in the epicenter of the Russian offensive.

He described the combat situation as "quite dynamic."

"Our defenders managed to conduct counteroffensive and free nearly half of the city, but the situation has worsened again now," Haidai told the AP.

"Our guys are defending the positions in the industrial zone on the outskirts of the city."

"The shelling of Sievierodonetsk has intensified, (the Russians) are destroying everything in line with their scorched earth tactics," he alleged.

Haidai said that the Russians have continued intensive bombardment also of nearby Lysychansk.

The Russians "have an enormous amount of equip-

ment and personnel, they have pulled up a lot of reserves," he said.

He added that they had shelled a humanitarian center in Lysychansk and destroyed a bakery, and that 98 people had left the town over the past 24 hours.

Haidai said that a key highway between Bakhmut and Lysychansk has been under constant shelling even though it remains in Ukrainian hands.

Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had strong words about the war in Ukraine at a ceremony Monday commemorating the 78th anniversary of D-Day.

Speaking in the American Cemetery of Colleville-sur-Mer, overlooking Omaha Beach, Milley said that "Kyiv may be 2,000 kilometers away from here, they too, right now, today, are experiencing the same horrors as the French citizens experienced in World War II."

He spoke in the presence of more than 20 World War II veterans and several thousand people who came to pay tribute to those who fell that day.



"The world has come together in support of the defense of Ukraine against a determined invader. The fight in Ukraine is about honoring these veterans of World War II," he said.

"It's about maintaining the so called global rules-based international order that was established by the dead who are buried here at this cemetery."

Gen. Milley recalled the principle underlined in that order that "strong countries cannot just invade small countries. Each country is sovereign and each country has the right to territorial integrity."

The Russian military says

it has struck a Ukrainian factory that was being used to repair armor.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Monday that Russian warplanes fired long-range missiles to destroy a plant on the edge of the town of Lozova in the northeastern Kharkiv region that was fixing armored vehicles.

Konashenkov said that the Russian aircraft hit 73 areas of concentration of Ukrainian troops and equipment, while the Russian artillery struck 431 military targets. His claims couldn't be independently verified.

AP ■ BELGRADE

Serbia on Monday confirmed that a planned visit by Russia's Foreign Minister to the Balkan country will not take place.

The announcement followed reports that Serbia's neighbours, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro had refused to allow Sergey Lavrov's plane to fly through their airspace to reach Serbia.

President Aleksandar Vucic said Monday that Russia's ambassador to Serbia had met with him and informed him of the reasons why Lavrov could not come.

Vucic offered no details, but the pro-Russian Vecernje Novosti daily carried photos of what it said were official documents rejecting the overflights.

Late on Sunday, Moscow also accused the West of closing off lines of communication by forcing Lavrov to cancel Monday's planned visit.

Serbia's neighbors closed their airspace to Lavrov's plane, ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Italian television in comments reported by



Russian news agencies.

"This is another closed channel of communication," Zakharova said.

Serbia has maintained friendly relations with Russia despite the war in Ukraine, refusing to join sanctions against Moscow.

Serbia also is fully dependent on Russian gas. Vucic recently talked to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone to arrange a new deal on gas supplies for the next three years.

Analyst Slobodan Stupar described Lavrov's attempted visit to Belgrade as a "show" that would have been used by Moscow to further vilify the West. "I believe the Russians invited themselves" to Serbia, Stupar told The Associated Press. "They are terribly isolated. ... They can now say that Europe and the world are not democratic and won't allow a simple flyover."

Analysts in Belgrade have pointed out that Lavrov's visit would further erode Serbia's

standing in the West after Belgrade rejected imposing sanctions on Moscow.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is expected in the region late this week.

Stupar said that Vucic has placed himself "in between" Russia and the West, by attempting to maintain ties with Moscow while Serbia is seeking membership in the European Union at the same time. "That is the worst possible position one can imagine," Stupar said.

Russian FM warns West over long-range rockets



AP ■ MOSCOW

The Russian Foreign Minister has warned the West that if it provides Ukraine with long-range rockets, Moscow will respond by taking over larger areas of Ukraine.

Speaking during an online news conference Monday, Sergey Lavrov said that "the longer the range of weapons you supply, the farther away the line from where neo-Nazis could threaten the Russian Federation will be pushed."

The U.S. And Britain have announced they will provide Ukraine with multiple rocket-launchers capable of striking targets up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) away. The systems are capable of firing longer range rockets that can hit areas of up to 300 kilometers (186 miles) away, but U.S. Said it wouldn't supply the rockets.

Asked how Moscow would respond if the U.S. And its allies change their mind and provide Ukraine with long-range rockets, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in televised comments Sunday that Moscow will "draw appropriate conclusions and use our strike means, which we have plenty of, in order to hit the facilities that we haven't struck yet."

Crowds honour WWII veterans at Normandy D-Day celebrations

AP ■ COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER (FRANCE)

When D-Day veterans set foot on the Normandy beaches and other World War II sites, they express a mix of joy and sadness. Joy at seeing the gratitude and friendliness of the French toward those who landed on June 6, 1944. Sadness as they think of their fallen comrades and of another battle now being waged in Europe: the war in Ukraine.

As a bright sun was rising over the wide band of sand of Omaha Beach on Monday, 78 years on, U.S. D-Day veteran Charles Shay expressed thoughts for his comrades who fell that day. "I have never forgotten them and I know that their spirits are here," he told The Associated Press.

The 98-year-old Penobscot Native American from Indian Island, Maine, took part in a sage-burning ceremony near the beach in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer.

Shay, who now lives in Normandy, was a 19-year-old U.S. Army medic when he landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.

He said he was sad to see war in Europe once again, so many years later.

"Ukraine is a very sad situation. I feel sorry for the people there and I don't know why this war had to come, but I think the human beings like to, I think they like to fight. I don't know," he said.

"In 1944 I landed on these beaches and we thought we'd bring peace to the world. But it's not possible."



This year, Shay handed over the remembrance task to another Native American, from the Crow tribe, Julia Kelly, a Gulf War veteran, who performed the sage ritual. "Never forget, never forget," she said. "In this time, in any time, war is not good."

Shay's message to young generations would be "to be ever vigilant."

"Of course I have to say that they should protect their freedom that they have now," he said.

For the past two years, D-Day ceremonies were reduced to a minimum amid COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

This year, crowds of French and international visitors - including veterans in their 90s - are back in Normandy to pay tribute to the nearly 160,000 troops from Britain, the U.S., Canada and elsewhere who landed there to bring freedom.

Several thousand people were expected Monday at a ceremony later at the American Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach in the French town of Colleville-

sur-Mer. Amid the dozens of U.S. Veterans expected to attend was Ray Wallace, 97, a former paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division.

On D-Day, his plane was hit and caught fire, forcing him to jump earlier than expected.

He landed 20 miles (32 kilometers) away from the town of Sainte-Mere-Eglise, the first French village to be liberated from Nazi occupation.

"We all got a little scared then. And then whenever the guy dropped us out, we were away from where the rest of the group was. That was scary," Wallace told The Associated Press.

Less than a month later, he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He was ultimately liberated after 10 months and returned to the U.S.

Still, Wallace thinks he was lucky. "I remember the good friends that I lost there. So it's a little emotional," he said, with sadness in his voice. "I guess you can say I'm proud of what I did but I didn't do that much."

AP ■ BEIJING

China defended its military pilots on Monday, saying they acted properly and were protecting its sovereignty, following recent complaints by Canada and Australia that Chinese planes engaged in risky maneuvers with their aircraft over the Pacific.

Defense Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said China "swiftly took reasonable, forceful and professional measures in response to Canada's provocative acts and unfriendly and unprofessional operations."

Last week, the Canadian military accused Chinese planes of not following international safety norms on several occasions and putting a Canadian crew at risk.

A June 1 statement said the Chinese planes tried to divert a Canadian long-range patrol aircraft from its path, and that the crew had to change direction quickly to avoid a potential collision.

"Such interactions ... Are of concern and of increasing frequency," the statement said.

The Canadian plane was deployed from April 26 to May 26 to join other countries in watching for fuel transfers between ships at sea that could be helping North Korea evade UN sanctions over its missile and nuclear tests.

Chinese ships are suspected of taking part in the transfers. The US and Japan have also participated in the surveillance.

Wu said in a statement that Canada has stepped up close reconnaissance of China under the pretext of implementing

China rejects Canadian, Australian charges in air encounters

UN sanctions. He said Canada would bear responsibility for any serious consequences from what he called its risky and provocative acts.

A 2001 collision between a US surveillance plane and a

Chinese air force jet resulted in the death of the Chinese pilot and the 10-day detention of the US air crew by China.

In a separate incident, newly elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, on

a visit to Indonesia on Monday, called the May 26 actions of a Chinese fighter jet a dangerous act of aggression against an Australian air force plane conducting aerial surveillance in the South China Sea.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our Client Mr. Parveen Gupta, That Mrs. Sheela Bhandi is the owner of property bearing No. F-29 (Plot No. 3, Block F-2) admeasuring 200 sq. yds. Situated at village Choudhri in the abadi of Krishna Nagar, Haryana. Now Delhi. "the said property", by virtue of Sale Deed dated 31/03/2022, Registration No. 2736, executed by Mrs. Rita Rani who purchased the said property by virtue of sale deed dated 10/12/2011. Registration No. 23350, executed by Mr. Arvind Kumar Lall Gula, who was the legal heir of late Mr. Jivan Singh Gula. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property, to our client Mr. Parveen Gupta and his nominee. If anybody has any objections upon the ownership of above owner (attorney holder over the said property, its Sale/ Mortgage/lienation, and any kind of objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
206, 2nd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moh Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-41112527-28 kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

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CHANGE OF NAME
I Babu Ram S/o Late Gurshai R/o A-92, Sector-93B, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. Now I have Changed my name to Babu Ram Gautam & in future also shall be addressed as Babu Ram Gautam Only.

Babu Ram Gautam

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ishwar Singh/ Veena/ LBGR00005164039	Plot No.33, Plot Freinds Colony Pundri Khewat No. 1430 Jamabandi 2015-16 Village Pundari, Kaithal, Haryana/ June 03, 2022	October 16, 2021 Rs. 21,54,443/-	Delhi/ NCR & Haryana
2.	Ramesh Kumar Roy/ Babita Roy/ LBGH200005159753	Fiat No D2/902, 9th Floor, Sector 10 Shree Vardhman Gardenia, Sector 10 Sonapat, Haryana/ June 03, 2022	December 13, 2021 Rs. 37,11,721/-	Delhi/ NCR & Haryana
3.	Suman Goyal/ Manoj Kumar/ LBDE100005122683	Fiat No C1/802, 8th Floor, Tower C1, Sector 10 Shree Vardhman Gardenia, Sonapat, Haryana/ June 03, 2022	August 30, 2021 Rs. 45,93,104/-	Delhi/ NCR & Haryana
4.	Jasvinder Singh/ Rinshi/ LBDE100005154438	Fiat No-C2/1104, 11th Floor, Tower-C2, Sector 10 Vardhman Gardenia, Sonapat, Haryana/ June 03, 2022	October 16, 2021 Rs. 39,66,418/-	Delhi/ NCR & Haryana

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

Date : June 07, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

RBI's monetary policy meet: Here's some of expectations

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Though the RBI's raising policy rates in the ongoing monetary policy committee meeting is a "no-brainer", as its Governor Shaktikanta Das said in a recent interview, investors, however, await the actual degree of percentage hike before taking fresh positions and future course of action in the financial markets. Besides policy rates, investors also eye other macro-economic forward-looking guidance from the central bank. The three-day

meeting started on Monday. In early May, the RBI, in a surprise off-cycle meeting, hiked the repo rate, the rate at which the central bank lends short-term funds to banks by 40 basis points (bps) to 4.40 per cent, amidst rising inflation concerns in the economy.

In the same off-cycle meeting, the cash reserve ratio was hiked by 50 basis points to 4.5 per cent essentially to squeeze out some liquidity from the system.

India's retail inflation accelerated to 7.79 per cent in April, remaining above the tolerance limit of the central bank for a fourth month in a row. It is highly likely that the retail inflation will remain above 6 per cent for another few months.

Besides, wholesale inflation in the country rose to 15.08 per cent in April 2022 from 14.55 percent in March, which has been in double digit for over a year now. Below are some of the expectations by analysts, market observers, and real estate players on the possible outcome of the ongoing monetary policy meeting:

Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities MPC's off-cycle policy meeting in May clearly pivoted its focus on inflation over growth as a policy priority. The MPC is likely to increase the benchmark repo rate in its ongoing monetary policy review as inflation shows no signs of abatement.



The RBI is likely to follow a nuanced and calibrated approach to rate hikes once it reaches its pre-Covid neutral accommodation (5.15 per cent vs current 4.40 per cent). We expect a 40 basis points rate hike in the upcoming policy meet and see the RBI raising policy rates to 5.15 per cent by calendar year end.

Any further rate hikes will be contingent on the inflation-growth dynamics and would be data dependent.

Hence, equity markets and debt markets have for the most part discounted this rate hike and market reaction would depend more on the statement of the RBI Governor hinting about the future course of action.

Ashish Chaturmohta, Director, Research Group at JM Financial Services India is currently facing the heat of

"imported inflation" owing to rising crude prices, supply chain disruption and global liquidity absorption.

Hence, to control the same, the government has played its role by reducing petrol and diesel prices, bringing in restrictions for exports in order to keep the domestic market stable etc, and on the other hand, the RBI has been very proactive in their actions, which was clearly visible from their 40 base points surprise rate hike.

It's been the first time in the last several years that the RBI and the Government are both working in a synchronised way. We believe the rate hike would be 30-40 basis points along with a stable outlook on the GDP.

Mohit Batra, Founder and CEO of MarketsMojo The RBI will try to tackle two issues in

its upcoming monetary policy - tackle inflation and ensure that the rupee does not depreciate too much against the dollar. The last time when the RBI revised its inflation target, crude was at \$100 per barrel, and now it's trading at \$120 per barrel, suggesting a risk of inflation flaring up is high.

Keeping these facts like rupee depreciation and high inflation rate, I expect RBI to hike the interest rate by 50 basis points.

Satish Kumar, Research Analyst at Choice Broking We are estimating a repo rate hike of 40 basis points by the central bank in the coming monetary policy to contain the inflation which rose to 8-year high of 7.8 per cent in April.

Upside risks to inflation remain elevated given the prevailing high crude oil and commodity prices amidst supply side concerns. Pushpendar Singh, MD of JMS Group

The outcome of the MPC meeting is pretty obvious, most probably leading to an inevitable hike in the repo rate in lieu of a concerted effort to lower the inflation rates, which perhaps is becoming a huge aberrant in the growth parameters of the economy.

I do not expect to see a massive increase in the repo rate but definitely, a slight rise will be announced to curb the dwindles and shift the radar of growth in the right direction.

Aman Sharma, Director at Spaze Group There are great

chances of a repo rate hike yet again in a bid to control the inflationary rates that grow unabated despite direct attempts to stop it. It has to be accepted with a pinch of salt by the industries across the segments which will face teething troubles due to the probable hike after the RBI's MPC meeting.

A surge in the repo rate is almost certain, I do not think there will be a sharp resurgence but somewhat a marginal increase to let the inflationary challenges deflate and the numbers drop.

Mohit Nigam, Head, PMS, Hem Securities The repo rate is anticipated to be raised by another 40-50 basis points by the MPC.

This decision is influenced by rising price levels as a result of ongoing geopolitical tensions and supply-chain pressures, which are driving inflation higher. The primary goal of the RBI would be to keep inflation under control and minimise its second-round impacts.

Inflationary pressures on food and fuel remain high, and supply-chain disruptions continue to put upward pressure on input costs.

The biggest issue is that if rates are raised further, urban demand, which was formerly a major concern, may dwindle. Agricultural output will be supported by favourable weather conditions, thus rural demand may not be affected as much.

Reserve Bank comes out with provisioning norms for large NBFCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday came out with a set of norms for provisioning for standard assets by large Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in view of the increasing role played by such entities in the financial system.

In October last year, RBI had issued a framework for scale-based regulation for NBFCs. Regulatory structure for NBFCs comprise four layers based on their size, activity, and perceived riskiness.

In a circular on Monday, the central bank specified rates of provision for outstanding loans extended by 'NBFC-Upper Layer'. In case of individual housing loans and loans to Small and Micro

Enterprises (SMEs), the rate of provision has been specified at 0.25 per cent and for housing loans extended at teaser rates, it has been fixed at 2 per cent. The latter will decrease to 0.4 per cent after 1 year from the date on which the rates are raised. For Commercial Real Estate - Residential Housing (CRE -

RH) sector, the rate of provision is 0.75 per cent, and for CRE, other than residential housing, it will be 1 per cent. Further, RBI said the rate of provision for restructure loans will as per the stipulation in the applicable prudential norms.

The rate of provision for medium enterprises has been fixed at 0.4 per cent. It also said the current credit exposures arising on account of the permitted derivative transactions shall attract provisioning requirement as applicable to the loan assets in the 'standard' category, of the concerned counterparties.

The upper layer comprises those NBFCs which are specifically identified by RBI as warranting enhanced regulatory requirement based on a set of parameters and scoring methodology.

The top ten eligible NBFCs in terms of their asset size shall always reside in upper layer, irrespective of any other factor. As per scale-based regulation for NBFCs, the four layers are Base Layer, Middle Layer, Upper Layer, and Top Layer.

A timeline of billionaire Elon Musk's bid to control Twitter

AP ■ DETROIT

Elon Musk threatened Monday to call off his \$44 billion acquisition of Twitter, accusing the company of refusing to give him information about spam bot accounts.

Here's a look at some of what's transpired between the billionaire Tesla CEO and the social media platform.

March 26: Musk, who has 80 million Twitter followers and is active on the site, said that he is giving "serious thought" to building an alternative to Twitter, questioning free speech on the platform and whether Twitter is undermining democracy.

April 4: A regulatory filing reveals that Musk has rapidly become the largest shareholder of Twitter after acquiring a 9% stake, or 73.5 million shares, worth about \$3 billion.

April 5: Musk is offered a seat on Twitter's board. CEO Parag Agrawal said in a tweet that "it became clear to us that he would bring great value to our Board." April 11: Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal announces Musk will not be joining the board after all. April 14: Twitter



reveals in a securities filing that Musk has offered to buy the company outright for about \$44 billion.

April 15: Twitter's board unanimously adopts a "poison pill" defense in response to Musk's proposed offer, attempting to thwart a hostile takeover.

April 21: Musk lines up \$46.5 billion in financing to buy Twitter. Twitter board is under pressure to negotiate.

April 25: Musk reaches a deal to buy Twitter for \$44 billion and take the company private. The outspoken billionaire has said he wanted to own and privatize Twitter because he thinks it's not living up to its potential as a platform for free speech.

April 29: Musk sells rough-

ly \$8.5 billion worth of shares in Tesla to help fund the purchase of Twitter, according to regulatory filings.

May 5: Musk strengthens his offer to buy Twitter with commitments of more than \$7 billion from a diverse group of investors including Silicon Valley heavy hitters like Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison.

May 10: In a hint at how he would change Twitter, Musk says he'd reverse Twitter's ban of former President Donald Trump following the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, calling the ban "morally bad decision" and "foolish in the extreme."

May 13: Musk said that his plan to buy Twitter is "temporarily on hold." Musk said that he needs to pinpoint the number of spam and fake accounts on the social media platform. Shares of Twitter tumble, while shares of Tesla rebound sharply.

June 6: Musk threatens to end his \$44 billion agreement to buy Twitter, accusing the company of refusing to give him information about its spam bot accounts.

Automobile retail sales in slow lane in May: FADA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail sales of passenger vehicles grew last month but the sales of two-wheeler and commercial vehicles remained low compared to the pre-COVID month of May 2019, according to automobile dealers' body FADA.

On Monday, FADA said that overall auto retails stood at 16,46,773 units in May, down from 18,22,900 units in May 2019. "May 2022 retails when compared to May 2019 reveal that sales are still not on growth trajectory as overall retails were down by 10

per cent. While PV and tractors continued its positive run... Two-wheeler, three-wheeler and CV sales are yet to show any signs of healthy run-rate," Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President Vinkesh Gulati said in a statement. While Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) comparison with May 2021 shows exceptionally healthy growth rate across all categories, it is important to

note that both May 2021 and May 2020 were affected by nationwide lockdown due to the COVID pandemic, he stated. According to him, a better comparison will be with May 2019 which was a normal pre-COVID month.

Last month, the Passenger Vehicle (PV) retail sales stood at 2,63,152 units. This was 11 per cent higher compared to 2,36,215 units sold in May 2019. The retails in COVID-hit May 2021 and May 2020 stood at 86,479 units and 31,951 units, respectively.

"The PV segment which has already surpassed May 2019 numbers is witnessing huge demand. Dealers are not able to fulfil same due to supply side issues," he said, adding that this has led to an increase in waiting period ranging from three months to two years. "Healthy booking and single digit cancellation shows that demand may stay put even when normal supply resumes in months to come," Gulati noted.



Sensex slips 94 pts; Nifty falls to 16,569 level

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Markets continued to fall on Monday, with the Sensex declining 94 points as investors remained cautious amid unabated selling by foreign funds and elevated crude oil prices ahead of the RBI's policy decision later this week.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 93.91 points or 0.17 per cent to end at 55,675.32. During the day, it tanked 473.49 points or 0.84 per cent to 55,295.74. The broader NSE Nifty fell 14.75 points or 0.09 per cent to finish at 16,569.55. "Indian markets opened in negative following mixed Asian

market cues. During the afternoon session, markets trimmed their losses and traded in neutral to marginally in green. Markets continued to trade indecisively ahead of the RBI's monetary policy meet this week," said Narendra Solanki-Head- Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers. From Sensex pack, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Dr Reddy's, Nestle, Larsen & Toubro, HUL and Axis Bank were biggest laggards. In contrast, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, M&M and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among major gainers.

Rupee closes flat at 77.66 against American dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee closed unchanged at 77.66 against the US dollar in muted trade on Monday as participants largely stayed on the sidelines ahead of the RBI's policy decision later this week.

While domestic unit gained initially amid a weak American currency in the overseas market, elevated crude oil prices, unabated foreign capital outflows and subdued domestic equities capped appreciation bias, forex dealers said. At interbank forex market, local unit opened slightly

strong at 77.65 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 77.55 and a low of 77.67. It finally settled at 77.66, the same level as Friday's closing rate.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 93.91 points or 0.17 per cent lower at 55,675.32, while the broader NSE Nifty slipped 14.75 points or 0.09 per cent to 16,569.55. The dollar index, which measures greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.20 per cent to 101.93. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.60 % to USD 120.44 per barrel.

Sebi restructures mutual fund advisory committee



New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi has restructured its advisory committee on mutual funds. The 25-member advisory committee will be chaired by former Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Usha Thorat, according to the latest update with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). Earlier, the panel had 24 members. PTI

High commodity prices continue to weigh on trade deficit, estimate for FY23 at \$90bn: Acuite

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The expectation of expansion of current account deficit is not just driven by elevated global commodity prices, but is also linked to unlocking of economy reviving pent-up demand and improved vaccination cover aiding an organic recovery in economy, ratings and research firm Acuite Ratings & Research said in a report.

Nevertheless, there is considerable uncertainty in projecting trade and current account deficit due to high volatility in commodity prices, which in current environment is taking cues from unpre-

dictable geopolitical events. "Given, the relentless rise in commodity prices particularly crude oil which has again risen to \$120 per barrel, we project current account deficit (CAD) to widen to more than \$90 billion (in FY23) from an estimated \$47 billion in FY22," the report said.

India's merchandise trade deficit widened to a record high level of \$23.3 billion in May 2022 from a deficit of \$20.1 billion in April, the report said citing Ministry of Commerce and Industry's preliminary data. On the other hand, imports hiked to \$60.6 billion in May from \$60.3 billion in previous month, given rising crude oil bill.

90 barred pilots to undergo re-training after DGCA slaps fine: Spicejet

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Low-cost airline SpiceJet said that 90 barred pilots will undergo re-training after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a Rs 10 lakh fine on the carrier.

The domestic aviation regulator had recently fined the carrier for training pilots on faulty simulators. The DGCA had barred 90 SpiceJet pilots from operating the Boeing 737 Max aircraft, and those pilots were subjected to retraining on 737 Max simulators. In a statement, DGCA Director General Arun Kumar said: "For the moment, we have barred these

canopy around its mining areas, the chairman said that the public sector unit planted over 30.4 lakh saplings during FY22, expanding its green cover to 1,468.5 hectares. The chairman said that 27 eco parks and mine tourism projects have been developed as on date.

Satellite surveillance indicates that 76 major open-cast projects have reclaimed 62.5 per cent of excavated area limiting active mining area to 37.5 per cent. For every hectare of land degraded due to mining, CIL created green cover of around 2 hectares of land. Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

IFAD partners with Uttarakhand to double rural incomes, build climate resilient state

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI/ROME

The UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of India have signed a US \$ 105 million financing agreement for a project for Uttarakhand that aims to double rural incomes, reaching over half a million families across state, a statement from IFAD said on Monday.

It will be done by supporting smallholder farmers, agricultural labourers, and micro and small agribusinesses to start and expand competitive businesses and focus on food production that is climate-resilient.

The Rural Enterprise Acceleration Project (REAP) project builds on successful Integrated Livelihoods Support Programme (ILSP), which closed in 2021. ILSP helped over 6,50,000 rural people across state to find sustainable livelihood opportunities, by organising producer groups into self-reliant cooperatives known as livelihood collectives.

Because these livelihood collectives work on scale, they are better positioned to ensure a robust value chain, as well as to access information, credit, technology, and markets. "Nearly 60 per cent of households reported that their incomes increased by half or even doubled because of ILSP interventions.

BUSINESS BREIFS



To commemorate World Environment Day BRPL & Delhi Police partnered to launch a mega tree plantation drive to plant 10,000 saplings in South and West Delhi. Anu Asthana, President of Police Families Welfare Society (PFWS) and wife of Delhi Police Commissioner, launched drive at an event at Mother Teresa Crescent. BRPL was represented by Deepak Shankar, Head CSR.

STPI CELEBRATES 31ST FOUNDATION DAY

New Delhi: Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India working with the objective of encouraging, promoting, boosting Software Exports, and nurturing the startup ecosystem in the country celebrated its 31st Foundation Day on the 6th June 2022. Speaking in the inaugural address Arvind Kumar, Director General of STPI congratulated all employees and said, "STPI has won the trust of all stakeholders including government & industry in STPI and this trust infuses transparency in the organization."

K R MANGALAM VARSITY INKS PACT WITH MUGILANN

GURUGRAM: KR Mangalam has collaborated with Mugilann for Imparting Training, joint indigenous development of innovative Unmanned Aerial Systems of Various types for wide range of applications for Commercial & Defence Sector. Both the organizations have identified strong mutual interest to leverage respective capabilities and imparting training to undertake design, development, manufacturing of wide range of UAVs and other related technologies. This also is in pursuance to the Honorable Prime minister's vision of "AatmaNirbhar Bharat" and making India the world's drone hub by 2030.

CREATORIAL ANNOUNCES USER-FRIENDLY APP

New Delhi: Creatorial on Monday announced the first-ever user-friendly app which simplifies social media posts using Artificial Intelligence. The app by the digital marketing agency offers a one-stop solution to the netizens for content and creative ideation. Individuals and brands can create and post their expressions on social media with only a few taps without requiring any prior experience.

Wales end 64-yr WC duck



AP ■ CARDIFF

Gareth Bale led Wales to their first World Cup since 1958 as Ukraine's dreams of lifting the spirits of a war-torn country were cruelly denied by a 1-0 defeat in Cardiff on Sunday.

Bale's free-kick, which was turned into his own net by Ukrainian captain Andriy Yarmolenko, separated the sides despite the visitors dominating the game in sodden conditions at the Cardiff City Stadium.

Ukraine made a nation proud in beating Scotland 3-1 on Wednesday in their first competitive clash since Russia's invasion.

Oleksandr Petrakov's men

deserved much more from another exceptionally composed performance under the strain of carrying the hopes of a people devastated by Russian aggression.

The Ukrainian national anthem was applauded by all sides of the stadium before the game and, just as on their trip to Scotland in midweek, the visitors were inspired rather than inhibited by the pressure put upon them.

However, they were made to pay an exceptionally heavy price for not taking their chances and one moment of misfortune.

Oleksandr Zinchenko did find the net after just three minutes, but the Manchester City man was deemed to have

Bale's free-kick, which was turned into his own net by Ukrainian captain Andriy Yarmolenko, separated the sides despite the visitors dominating the game in sodden conditions at the Cardiff City Stadium

taken his free-kick that caught Wayne Hennessey off guard too quickly.

Hennessey then had to be alert to prevent Roman Yaremchuk opening the scoring before Viktor Tsygankov sliced a glorious chance wide.

Wales had barely threatened the Ukrainian goal, but in Bale have a star capable of changing the course of matches in an instant.

The 32-year-old reserved his best for international duty in recent years and will now get the chance to add a World Cup to a glorious career.

His free-kick on 34 minutes was headed off target until Yarmolenko tried to head it to safety and only succeeded in

deflecting the ball past the helpless Georgiy Bushchan.

Ukraine refused to be crushed by that misfortune and were unlucky not to be given a penalty before half-time when Yarmolenko was clipped by Joe Allen inside the box.

The pattern continued into the second half as Rob Page's men were pinned back inside their own half.

But the home side did have big chances of their own to double their advantage on the counter-attack when Aaron Ramsey steered wide, Brennan Johnson hit the post and Bale shot meekly into the arms of Bushchan.

At the other end, chances continued to come and go as Tsygankov's effort was saved by Hennessey before Yaremchuk put the rebound wide.

A last-ditch challenge from Ben Davies then prevented Yarmolenko the shot at redemption.

Ukraine's day was summed up five minutes from time when Hennessey produced an incredible save to prevent substitute Artem Dovbyk's header finding the top corner.

But Wales are now unbeaten in 19 home games stretching back nearly four years for a reason as they were roared home by the majority of the 33,000 crowd.

The last time Wales were at a World Cup they were eliminated by a goal for Brazil by 17-year-old Pele in the quarter-finals.

This generation of Welsh players achieved the seemingly impossible by getting to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 in their first major tournament for 58 years.

Now they have written themselves into the history books once more when they get the chance to face England, USA and Iran in Qatar come November.



Cristiano's double takes Portugal past Switzerland

AP ■ PARIS

Cristiano Ronaldo marshalled Portugal past Switzerland in the Nations League on Sunday as Gavi made history becoming Spain's youngest ever scorer.

Ronaldo scored two goals in four first half minutes and had a third ruled offside by VAR as Portugal crushed Switzerland 4-0 in Lisbon.

The Manchester United striker had set up William Carvalho for the opener with Joao Cancelo completing the rout to fire Portugal to the top of League A, Group 2, on goal difference from the Czech Republic.

In Prague, Jakub Pesek put the hosts in front before Gavi levelled with a low curling left-footer at the record age of 17 years and 304 days just before halftime.

Jan Kuchta had the Czechs back in control with a delicate

chip but Athletic Bilbao defender Inigo Martinez headed home in the final minute to salvage a 2-2 draw.

"It is wonderful to be able to say that we are disappointed to lose points against Spain," said Czech captain Tomas Soucek.

"We showed heart and great teamwork. If somebody told us that we would have four points before these two games, we would have taken it. We have started well and look forward to the next games."

"We lacked fluency so the game was really tough" shrugged Spain coach Luis Enrique.

Martinez conceded it wasn't Spain's "finest" match.

"We came away with a point, but the aim was to win. When you don't win, when you have great difficulties, you come away disappointed."

Spain reached the final of last year's Nations League, beating European champions Italy in the semis before losing to France, and they enjoyed a relatively smooth qualification for the World Cup.

But they are now on the back foot in this competition and after their opening 1-1 stalemate with Portugal on Thursday are placed third in the group, two points adrift.

Elsewhere, Northern Ireland extended their winless run in the competition to 12 with a drab goalless draw in Cyprus.

And Georgia are in command at the top of League C Group 4 after dishing out a 5-2 drubbing to Bulgaria while Manchester City's new headline signing Erling Haaland produced the goals in Norway's 2-1 win in Sweden.

The Norwegians top League B, Group 4 after two wins from Serbia, 4-1 winners over Slovenia.

Neymar nets from spot as Brazil win

AP ■ TOKYO

Neymar scored a 77th-minute penalty as Brazil broke down a stubborn Japan 1-0 in Tokyo on Monday to keep their momentum building ahead of the World Cup in Qatar.

The South American heavyweights arrived in Tokyo fresh off a 5-1 thrashing of South Korea in Seoul last week, but Japan proved a tougher nut to crack in front of a full house at the Olympic stadium.

The home side kept Brazil in check until Wataru Endo tripped substitute Richarlison in the box, and Neymar stepped up to send goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda the wrong way from the spot.

Neymar's goal took him to 74 for his country, just three short of the legendary Pele's all-time record of goals for Brazil.

Lucas Paqueta gave Japan a taste of what they were up against when he hit the post as early as the second minute, following a cheeky back-heel flick from Neymar.

The home side steadied the ship and began to create chances of their own, with platinum blond winger Junya Ito causing problems down Brazil's left flank.

Japan's goalkeeper kept out Raphinha before pulling off another good save from a booming Neymar shot, as Brazil turned the screw midway through the first half.

Brazil continued pressing



for an opener after the break, with Eder Militao just failing to prod home the ball with Japan's defence exposed.

Brazil manager Tite brought on Gabriel Jesus and Gabriel Martinelli midway through the second half in a bid to freshen up his attack.

Richarlison also entered the fray soon after, and the Everton forward quickly made an impact when Endo brought him down for a penalty.

Neymar scored from the spot to add to the brace he claimed against South Korea last week.

Messi scores 5 in Estonia friendly

AP ■ PAMPLONA

Lionel Messi scored all the goals in Argentina's 5-0 friendly win over Estonia in Pamplona, Spain on Sunday.

Messi joins a select club comprising only Juan Andres Marvezzy and Manuel Moreno to score five in a game for Argentina.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or scored from the spot in the eighth minute, then added four more in the space of half an hour (45, 47, 71 & 76 minutes).



His quintet extended his record tally of goals for his country to 86.

Lionel Scaloni's side are unbeaten in 33 matches, the last loss a 2-0 defeat to Brazil in the semi-finals of the 2019 Copa America.

Salah's Egypt beat Keita's Guinea

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

It was billed as the Mohamed Salah versus Naby Keita show, but Mostafa Mohamed took centre stage with a late winner as Egypt beat Guinea 1-0 on Sunday in 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying.

Liverpool teammates and national team captains, Salah and Keita were creative but failed to score in a Group D first round match that offered little excitement for the Cairo crowd.

Substitute Mohamed, who plays for Turkish giants Galatasaray, ended the deadlock on 87 minutes from time with a shot that Mouctar Diakhaby deflected past goalkeeper Ibrahima Kone.

New Egypt coach Ehab Gabal promised a "different playing style" after the twin disappointments of losing to Senegal both in the Cup of Nations final last February and in a World Cup play-off one month later.

But he made a forgettable debut and more will be expected of the Pharaohs when they play Ethiopia on Thursday before Salah takes a well deserved break.

In the same group, Malawi edged Ethiopia 2-1 in a clash of 2021 Cup of Nations qualifiers, with all the goals in Lilongwe coming from penalties.

Frank 'Gabadinho'



Liverpool teammates and national team captains, Salah and Keita were creative but failed to score in a Group D first round match that offered little excitement for the Cairo crowd

Mhango fired spot kicks into the right corner and the middle of the net to give the Flames a two-goal half-time advantage.

But Ethiopia created a tense finish by halving the deficit midway through the second half when Abubeker Nassir converted the third penalty of the match.

Egypt are favoured to win the group as they chase a record-extending eighth title, with Guinea and Malawi fighting to come second, so the stakes will be high when they meet on Thursday in Conakry.

Morocco, Nigeria, Tanzania book last 3 spots in U-17 Women's WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Morocco, Nigeria and Tanzania claimed the final three spots to complete the line-up for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 to be held later this year.

This marks a significant milestone as India is all set to host its first-ever FIFA women's tournament from October 11 to October 30.

The three nations from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) will have their names in the pot for the official draw scheduled to take place on June 24.

Hosts India, China, Japan, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Spain and France will also be introduced to their opponents in the ceremony, which will take place in Zurich.

This is a watershed moment for Tanzania and Morocco as both the nations will make their debuts at the global youth tournament. Nigeria, on the other hand, are a tournament regular, having qualified for all but one of the last six U-17 finals.

Tanzania, the first East African country to reach the finals, sealed their place in the tournament with a convincing 5-1 aggregate victory over Cameroon.

Swiatek extends lead at top

AP ■ PARIS

Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her lead at the top of the WTA rankings released on Monday after her French Open triumph in Paris over American Coco Gauff, who moves closer to the Top 10.

The 21-year-old Polish star took the world number one ranking after Australian Ashleigh Barty retired early in April.

And after claiming her 35th successive victory in Roland Garros, she now has over 4,300 points advance on new world number two Anett Kontaveit of Estonia.

Kontaveit climbed three spots despite her first round exit in Paris, benefiting from French Open title-holder Barbora Krejickova's early upset.

Gauff moves up 10 places to 13th. American Jessica Pegula, loser in the quarter-finals to Swiatek, moves up three places into the Top 10.



Nadal up to 4th in ATP rankings

AP ■ PARIS

French Open winner Rafael Nadal and beaten finalist Casper Ruud climbed one and two places to fourth and sixth respectively in the ATP rankings released Monday.

Nadal routed Norway's Ruud 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 on Sunday

for his 14th French Open crown and record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic, beaten by Nadal in the Roland Garros quarter-finals, remains top of the rankings ahead of Daniil Medvedev, with Alexander Zverev in third.

Indians eye good show in Indonesia Super Series

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Lakshay Sen and HS Prannoy, the heroes of India's historic Thomas Cup triumph, have been drawn to clash in the pre-quarterfinals of the Indonesia Open where Saina Nehwal may run into nemesis Carolina Marin in the second round of the Super Series 500 event, starting Tuesday.

The Indian shuttlers will look to hit top gear in the build up to the Commonwealth Games, starting July 28.

The men's shuttlers touched a new high with their Thomas Cup exploits where India defeated 14-time champions Indonesia to win their first ever title.

World number nine Lakshay, seeded seventh, will take on Denmark's Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in a tricky opening round clash. The top-ranked Indian has a 0-2 head-to-head record against Kristian.



Sen last faced him in the Denmark Open in 2020 when he lost his pre-quarterfinal to

the home favourite. The 20-year-old would be keen to better his record against Kristian.

In absence of Thomas Cup hero Kidambi Srikanth, the main draw has four Indians with the other two being Parupalli Kashyap and Sameer Verma.

Prannoy will also run into a Danish man in Rasmus Gemke, the same opponent the Indian defeated in the must-win third singles in the Thomas Cup semifinals.

Drawn in the top-half, 37th seed Kashyap will face Tzu Wei Wang and if he overcomes the first round hurdle then he is expected to lock horns with world No 1 and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen.

Saina Nehwal and Sindhu will lead the Indian challenge in the women's singles main draw.

After making a semifinal exit in the Thailand Open, double Olympic medallist Sindhu will look to go all the way. She will begin with a clash against Line Christophersen of Denmark.

Saina, who missed the Uber Cup after missing the trials, will open her campaign against Denmark's Line Hoejmark Kjaersfeldt, who is ranked 33rd.

In the men's doubles, Manu Attri and B Sumesh Reddy will take on local lads Pramudya Kusumawardana and Yeremia Erich Yoche Yacob Rambitan.

There are two Indian pairs in the women's doubles section.

Seeded 22nd, Ashwini Ponappa and N Sikki Reddy find themselves in the top-half and open their campaign against Jacqueline Lima and Samia Lima of Brazil.

The Indian duo faces a potential tough second round clash against top-seed Chinese duo of Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan.

Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker is the second Indian pair in the main draw, up against second seed Lee So Hee and Shin Seung Chan of South Korea, in its tournament-opener.

PARKAR'S TON FLOORS UTTARAKHAND

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Debutant Suved Parkar hit a stroke-filled 104 to guide Mumbai to a strong 304 for three on the first day of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final against Uttarakhand here on Monday.

Armaan Jaffer (60) and Sarfaraz Khan (69 not out) also slammed half-centuries as the 41-time Ranji Trophy winners dominated the day and the trio justified skipper Prithvi Shaw's decision to bat first.

Parkar, who got a life, anchored the innings. The 21-year right-handed batter, who has played for India U-19, struck eight boundaries and two sixes in his 218-ball knock.

On the day, he also joined the likes of his skipper and coach Amol Mazumdar to score a hundred on Ranji debut.

Along with Jaffer, Parkar rallied the Mumbai innings with a 112-run third-wicket stand after his team was in a spot of bother at 64/2, having lost both openers Shaw (21) and Yashashvi Jaiswal (35) cheaply.

Parkar, who impressed with his footwork, then found an able ally in an in-form Sarfaraz, who was at his aggressive best, as the duo compounded the bowling team's woes by adding 128 runs for the fourth wicket.

After the fall of two quick wickets, Parkar and Jaffer played with caution in the initial stage. But, after they got in to their groove, they upped the ante.

The duo played shots on all sides and made the opposition bowlers toil hard. Jaffer, who hit seven boundaries and two sixes in his 133-ball knock, lofted leg-spinner Dikshanshu Negi to complete his fifty.

Parkar nudged pacer Akash Madhwal for a single to reach his maiden half-century.

Mumbai lost only one wicket in the extended second session of play, which started late due to a wet outfield.

Once Jaffer departed, Parkar took the onus on himself to score and with Sarfaraz ensured that Mumbai did not lose a single wicket in the final session.

Parkar reached the three-figure mark with a boundary off Madhwal towards the square-leg region.

Sarfaraz's knock was laced with eight



Ranji Trophy quarters
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boundaries and one six.

Mumbai lost Shaw (20) early. Shaw scored a boundary on the first ball — a cover drive off Deepak Dhapola (3/53) — and then hammered two more fours in the opening over.

Shaw, who was looking in his elements, was however undone by Dhapola's inswinger in the seventh over, knocking off the off-stump as Mumbai lost its first wicket for 36.

Jaiswal (35) became Dhapola's second victim and fell just before lunch. Jaiswal hammered six boundaries before being caught by Swapnil Singh at second slip.

UP RESTRICT KARNATAKA TO 213/7

Shivam Mavi and Saurabh Kumar shared seven wickets between them as Uttar Pradesh reduced hosts Karnataka to 213 for seven on the opening day of their quarter-final match in Alur.

Kolkata Knight Riders pacer Mavi caused maximum damage and broke the back of Karnataka's batting, grabbing the two big wickets of Mayank Agarwal (10) and Karun Nair (29) en route to his fine spell of 11-4-40-3.

Electing to field after the start was delayed due to wet outfield, Uttar Pradesh got off to a perfect start as Mavi dismissed

Agarwal cheaply to prolong the Indian Test opener's lean patch.

Agarwal, who had a lacklustre IPL campaign while captaining Punjab Kings and is out of the Indian team for the England Test next month, made a cautious start and took four balls for his 10 before edging one to wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel in the 13th over.

After Agarwal's departure, Ravikumar Samarth (57) tried to consolidate and along with Karun Nair showed fine intent but left-arm spinner Saurabh Kumar cut short his innings not long after he completed his fifty.

Mavi then returned to haunt again as

Gharami announces arrival with hundred

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Young Sudip Gharami finally did justice to his talent with maiden first class hundred that steered Bengal to a commanding 310 for one against Jharkhand on the first day of Ranji Trophy quarter-final, here Monday.

Jharkhand's pedestrian effort with the ball also helped Bengal's cause as Gharami, who had a highest score of 27 in his four previous appearances, showed fine temperament and impressive technique en route his unbeaten 106-run knock that came off 204 balls with 13 fours and a six.

The stylish Anushtup Majumdar (85 batting, 139 balls) also played attractive shots as they added 178 runs for the unbroken second-wicket stand.

While Gharami was methodical in his stroke-play, Majumdar's batted with utter disdain for rival bowlers as his innings could be called a highlight package of "pull-shots".

The Jharkhand attack was also hamstrung when Rahul Shukla sustained an injury while fielding just before the second new ball was taken.

Bengal were inflicting the similar kind of ignominy that Jharkhand had inflicted on Nagaland when they made a mockery of a contest in the pre quarter-finals by scoring 880 runs.

Skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran (65) and Abhishek Raman (41 ret'd hurt) laid the foundation by blunting the new ball attack and then on a good batting surface, it was all about punishing the loose deliveries.

Punjab fold for 219 on Day 1

PTI ■ ALUR

Fast bowlers Anubhav Agarwal and Puneet Datey scalped three wickets apiece to help Madhya Pradesh bundle out Punjab for 219 on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal match, here on Monday.

Opting to bat, Punjab, who banked on their young core to deliver against Madhya Pradesh, found themselves in a spot of bother from the onset at the Alur Cricket Stadium.

Punjab did not have the ideal start, losing Shubman Gill (9) cheaply to Datey.

Punjab skipper Abhishek Sharma (47) and Anmolpreet Singh (47) put on 81 runs for the second wicket to steady the ship.

But Datey struck again removing the well-set Sharma in the 24th over, after

which things started to go awry for the 1992 Ranji Trophy winners.

Wickets kept tumbling like a pack of cards, as from 98 for 2, Punjab slumped to 166 for 6.

With their back against the wall, Sanvir Singh and wicketkeeper-batter Anmol Malhotra played patient knocks of 41 and 27 respectively to save Punjab from humiliation.

But their resistance was short-lived as Madhya Pradesh bowlers continued to make inroads.

Agarwal accounted for the wickets of Mandeep Singh and Sanvir. Datey and Agarwal returned with figures of 3/48 and 3/36 respectively.

Off-spinner Saransh Jain (2/45) also chipped in with two wickets.

In reply, Madhya Pradesh were five for no loss.

he grabbed Nair (29) before Saurabh inflicted a double blow in the form of Manish Pandey and Srinivas Sharath in successive deliveries.

Towards the fag end of the day,

Saurabh dismissed Krishnappa Gowtham to derail Karnataka further.

At close, Shreyas Gopal was unbeaten on 26 from 47 balls but found company from Vijaykumar Vyashak (12 not out).

UAE's ILT20 from Jan 6 to Feb 12, 2023

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Emirates Cricket Board will conduct the inaugural International League T20 from January 6 to February 12, 2023, with three IPL franchises owning outfits in the six-team league.

Out of the six franchises, five are Indian companies including Reliance Industries which owns Mumbai Indians, Shah Rukh Khan's Knight Riders Group, Delhi Capitals co-owners GMR, Adani Sportslines and Capri Global apart from Lancer Capitals, a company belonging to Manchester United owners Glazer family.

Emirates Cricket Board chairman Sheikh Nahayan Mabararak Al Nahayan said: "Emirates Cricket Board is delighted to welcome Reliance Industries, Kolkata Knight Riders, Capri Global, GMR, Lancer Capital, Adani Sportslines, broadcaster ZEE and all other stakeholders to the newly established T20 League of UAE."

"Such illustrious, experienced names and entities as partners bodes well for the UAE T20 League. Through the commitment of these partners they have demonstrated confidence in the Emirates Cricket Board as we take the game into the future," the ECB chairman added.

SABLE FINISHES 5TH IN DIAMOND LEAGUE

PTI ■ RABAT

India's Avinash Sable finished a creditable fifth at the prestigious Diamond League Meet here and in the process shattered his own 3000m steeplechase national record for the eighth time.

The 27-year-old army man from a humble family in the Beed district of Maharashtra clocked 8:12.48 in a high-quality field late Sunday night, shaving off more than three seconds from his own previous national record of 8:16.21, which he set during the Indian Grand Prix in Thiruvananthapuram in March.

Sable finished ahead of Tokyo Olympics Bronze medalist Benjamin Kigen of Kenya who ended in eighth position with 8:17.32.

Local hero and Tokyo Olympics Gold medalist Soufiane El Bakkali won the race with a meet record of 7:58.28.

Ethiopia's Tokyo Olympics Silver winner Lamecha Girma was second, clocking 7:59.24, while his compatriot Hailemariam Tegegn took the third position with a personal best of 8:06.29.

The 2016 Rio Olympics champion Consensus Kipruto of Kenya was fourth with a timing of 8:12.47, a one-hundredth of a second ahead of Sable.



Sable is known for breaking his own 3000m steeplechase national record multiple times. He first broke it in 2018 when he clocked 8:29.80 at the National Inter State championships to erase the then 37-year-old mark of 8:30.88 mark of Gopal Saini.

Last month, Sable smashed the 30-year-old men's 5000m national record at a meet in the USA, clocking 13 minutes and 25.65 seconds, bettering Bahadur Prasad's long-standing record of 13:29.70s set in Birmingham in 1992.

Pretorius wants to inculcate Dhoni's calmness & self-belief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Preparing for the upcoming T20 series against India, South African all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius on Monday said he would like to inculcate the legendary MS Dhoni's calmness and self-belief.

The South African made his IPL debut for Chennai Super Kings this year after joining the franchise for a base price of Rs 50 lakh.

Pretorius played just six matches, scoring 44 runs and claiming six wickets with best bowling figures of 2 for 30.

The limited opportunities notwithstanding, Pretorius said playing alongside Dhoni has been his biggest gain.

"Playing my first IPL was a great experience. It was one of my bucket list items and that too to get the opportunity to play for CSK, one of the most successful franchises. I enjoyed every moment of it. You get a lot of responsibility as a player."

"I really enjoyed playing under Dhoni as well and batting with him, seeing the brand value he has in India just shows how big he is and what he has done for the sport in this country. It was awesome being a part of that," the 33-year-old said.

"The biggest thing that I



have learnt from him is how calm he is at the crease, the way he takes the pressure off himself and tries to put it on to the bowler.

"He made me realise that at the death it's actually the bowlers who are under pressure. It was a fresh mindset and also he doesn't get too excited and is always optimistic."

"He believes he can do anything and I am going to try to bring his calmness and self-belief into my game," Pretorius added.

Asked about the series against India, Pretorius said it is a great opportunity for some

South African players to cement their places in the national team ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia. It would also be great to know (the strengths and weakness) of the Indian team going into the World Cup.

"A strong performance in this series is key for players keeping the T20 World Cup in mind. India is a strong T20 side and if we do well in this series, we can consider ourselves as strong contender," he said. "Performances in this series is going to go far to secure a spot in the World Cup."



Anand claims another win over world champion Carlsen

PTI ■ STAVANGER

Indian ace Viswanathan Anand returned to winning ways, upstaging world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen in the fifth round of the Classical section early on Monday in the Norway Chess tournament to climb to the top spot.

After defeating the Norwegian superstar in the Blitz event that preceded the Classical section, Anand claimed the victory in a thrilling Armageddon (sudden death game) after the regular match ended in a 40-move draw.

In the Armageddon, the 52-year-old Anand recreated magic of old when he stunned Carlsen to post a win in 50 moves.

With 10 points in his kitty, the Indian GM leads the field with four more rounds to go in

the prestigious tournament which features some of the best players in the sport.

Carlsen lies in second spot with 9.5 points despite the loss to his long-time rival.

AICF SUPPORTS ANAND

The All India Chess Federation on Monday said it supports the candidature of Viswanathan Anand for the post of FIDE deputy president, clarifying its stand after anonymous emails claimed that former AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chaudhary was the right candidate for the job.

Anand will be contesting for the post as part of incumbent FIDE (the sport's global body) president Arkady Dvorkovich's team.

Recently-appointed AICF interim secretary Vipnesh Bhardwaj said has always supported Anand's candidature.

5 players to watch out for in India-SA T20I series

DRITI ATRI ■ NEW DELHI

After the end of the 2022 season of the Indian Premier League, international cricket is set to return to India, and in the first series, the Men in Blue will take on South Africa in a five-match T20I series. For the home assignment, India will be without the services of skipper Rohit Sharma, premier batter Virat Kohli and star pacer Jasprit Bumrah. In the trio's absence, KL Rahul will lead the side, and the 18-member squad that has already been announced features the likes of players who have fared well in the IPL. The South African team also has 10 players who took part in the IPL 2022 and excelled well.

Here's a look at five players who did well in the IPL and will feature in the upcoming series as well, which starts on Thursday (June 9) in Delhi.



KL RAHUL

In the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul will lead the Indian team. The right-handed batter was the captain of the Indian team that was up against SA in the three-match ODI series

earlier this year as well. KL is coming into the ODI series on the back of an outstanding run with the Lucknow Super Giants. The 30-year-old finished the 2022 season as the second highest run getter in the tournament and scored 616 runs in 15 matches for the Lucknow-based side. He would be eager to continue the purple patch.

HARDIK PANDYA

Hardik last played for India in the ICC Men's T20 World League stage match



against Namibia last year and now, after almost seven months, he will again don the India colours. The 28-year-old all-rounder is back to full fitness and ready to roll. He starred for Gujarat Titans with his all-round show in the recently concluded IPL and led them to a title triumph in their maiden attempt itself. In the absence of Virat Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik can get a chance to bat at number four in the upcoming series. The former Mumbai Indians player scored 487 runs and took eight wickets in 15 IPL 2022 matches.

UMRAN MALIK

The boy from Jammu City has been selected to play for India for the first time in his career. The 22-year-old fast-bowler impressed with his raw pace in the 15th edition of the IPL and bowled in excess of 150kpmh. Besides bowling



fast, the youngster also showcased his wicket-taking abilities and dismissed 22 batters in 14 matches to finish as the fourth highest wicket-taker in the tournament this year. He is likely to make his debut for the Men in Blue because of his fast bowling speed.

KAGISO RABADA

The South African pace merchant is one of the best all-format bowlers of current times. The 27-year-old was part of the Punjab Kings set up



this year and finished the season as the third highest wicket-taker. In 13 matches, he got

rid of as many as 23 batters. He will lead the South African attack in the five-match series. The in-form right-arm pacer will have Anrich Nortje, Lungi Ngidi, Marco Jansen, and Dwaine Pretorius in his support.

DAVID MILLER

David Miller has struggled to make an impact for any team he has played for in recent years, but the 2022 IPL has proven to be a career-defining moment for the 32-year-old South African batsman. The left-hander was part of the Gujarat Titans set-up and, as a number five batter, he surprised everyone with his show. The veteran of 95 T20I matches featured in 16 games for the Ahmedabad-based side and remained unbeaten on nine occasions to score 481 runs at an average of 68.71. Miller won the first qualifier against Rajasthan Royals sin-



gle-handedly and then remained unbeaten in the summit clash to take his side home. He is going to be the Proteas X-factor in the upcoming series.