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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
PRACHANDA'S VISIT

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PUTIN RALLIES TROOPS
WITH 2ND UKRAINE VISIT

MONEY 10
NPA OF SELF-HELP GROUPS
DOWN TO 1.8%: MINISTER

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY APRIL 19, 2023; PAGES 12-13

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**LIVERPOOL
BEAT LEEDS 6-1
IN PL MATCH**
11 SPORT

CAPSULE

AFTER SON'S 'MISSING' CLAIM, MUKUL IN DELHI

Kolkata: Hours after his family claimed that he was "untraceable" since late Monday evening, senior TMC leader Mukul Roy said he has travelled to New Delhi for "some personal work", fuelling speculation over his next political move. Roy's family claimed that he is not in the "right frame of mind" and everyone should refrain from indulging in politics over an unwell person. Roy told reporters that he reached the national capital but had "no specific agenda".

MAHA SUNSTROKE DEATH TOLL INCREASES TO 14

Mumbai: The death toll due to sunstroke at the Maharashtra Bhushan award event in Navi Mumbai rose to 14 after the death of a 34-year-old woman while seven patients are undergoing treatment, a civic official said on Tuesday. The deceased included ten women and four men.

STAY PUT: NEW ADVISORY TO INDIANS IN SUDAN

New Delhi/Bengaluru: With situation worsening in strife torn Sudan capital Khartoum, the Indian embassy issued a fresh advisory on Tuesday urging Indians there not to venture out and ration their supplies adding looting outside are reported.

Personal laws won't affect same-sex marriage call: SC

Centre's vehement submission: Court can't touch subjects on Parliament turf

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday made it clear that it will not go into personal laws governing marriages while deciding the pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriages and said the very notion of a man and a woman, as referred to in the Special Marriage Act, is not "an absolute based on genitals".

The day's proceedings on the sensitive issue started with Centre's vehement submission that its "preliminary objection" be heard and decided first that the court cannot go into the question which essentially is on Parliament's turf.

Irked over the submission, a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said "we are in-



Media personnel at the Supreme Court during a hearing of pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriages, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (Inset) In this January 7, 2023, file photo, LGBTQ members take part in a pride parade, in Nagpur. PTI

charge" and the nature and tenability of the preliminary objection will depend on the canvas the petitioners open up.

Termining the issue involved in the pleas as "complex", the bench asked the lawyers appearing in the matter to advance arguments on the Special Marriage Act, a religion neutral statute.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954, is a law that provides a legal framework for the mar-

riage of people belonging to different religions or castes. It governs a civil marriage where the State sanctions the marriage rather than the religion.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, referred to the ramifications for various personal laws if the top court were to validate same-sex marriages and gave illustrations from the Special Marriage Act saying even it has terms like "man and

a woman".

The bench said it is not the question of "genitals" and the very notion of the special law having "man and woman" is not restricted to the genitals.

"It is not the question of what your genitals are. It is far more complex, that's the point. So, even when the Special Marriage Act says man and woman, the very notion of a man and a woman is not an absolute based on genitals," said the bench, which also comprised Justices SK Kaul, SR Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha.

At the outset, Mehta raised the issue of preliminary objection and said the subject which the apex court is dealing with is virtually the creation of a socio-legal relationship of marriage which would be the domain of the competent legislature.

He said when the subject is in the concurrent list, the petitions would not be maintainable in the absence of the States as parties to the matter being adjudicated.

Continued on Page 2

Indian students banned from 5 Oz varsities over fake applications

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

At least five Australian universities have placed bans or restrictions on students from some Indian States, amid a surge in fraudulent applications from South Asia seeking to work — not study — in this country, according to a media report.

Australia is on track for its biggest-ever annual intake of Indian students, topping 2019's high watermark of 75,000.

But the current surge has prompted concerns from lawmakers and the education sector about the integrity of Australia's immigration system and the long-term impact on the nation's lucrative international education market. The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reported on Tuesday.

"The volume of students arriving has come back a lot stronger than anyone was expecting," said Jon Chew from global education firm Navitas.

"We knew there would be a lot of pent-up demand, but there has also been a surge in non-genuine students," Chew was quoted as saying.

With many applications deemed by universities not to meet Australian visa requirements that they are a "genuine temporary entrant" coming solely for education, universities are putting restrictions in place to pre-empt their "risk rating" being downgraded, the report said.

An investigation by The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald newspapers has obtained emails from within Victoria University, Edith Cowan University, the University of Wollongong, Torrens University, and agents working for Southern Cross University that show the crackdown on applications from Indian students.

Continued on Page 2

Mafia men wanted in India held in US gurdwara shooting

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A multi-agency investigation has led to the arrest of 17 people — including mafia members "wanted in India" — mostly members of the local Sikh community, in connection with 11 shootings, including one at a gurdwara in Sacramento, and have seized assault weapons in a series of raids carried out over 20 places, authorities have announced.

Law enforcement officials in Northern California on Monday said members of these groups were allegedly involved in a mass shooting at a Stockton Sikh temple where five men were shot outside the Gurdwara on August 27, 2022, and a shooting at a Sacramento Sikh temple on March 23, 2023, where two men were shot.

The 17 felony arrests, primarily members of the local Sikh community, were made during a large-scale operation with agents executing search warrants at 20 locations in Northern California on Sunday, according to an announcement made by California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Yuba City Police Chief Brian Baker, and Sutter County District Attorney Jennifer Dupre.

Police seized 42 guns, such as AR-47s, handguns, and at least one machine gun, Dupre said.

At a news conference, Dupre said, two of the people arrested are mafia members who are "wanted on a number of murders" in India.

The arrested members, said California Attorney General, are part of rival criminal syndicates alleged to be responsible for numerous violent crimes and shootings, including five attempted murders, in Sutter, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Yolo, and



Combo of images shows firearms seized by police after the arrest of as many as 17 people in California in connection with a series of shootings in gurdwaras in Stockton, Sacramento and other locations. PTI

Merced counties.

Throughout the investigation, known as Operation Broken Sword, 41 firearms were confiscated from suspects. A press release said that law enforcement was able to prevent two additional shootings from occurring.

"Today, California is safer thanks to collaboration, determination, and swift action by DOJ agents and our law enforcement partners in Sutter County," said California Attorney General Rob Bonta.

He said there is more to be done to prevent gun violence.

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Was gravity of crime overlooked in Bilkis convicts' remission, asks SC

SC warns of contempt of court for not sharing file notings; Centre, Guj mull seeking review

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday questioned the Gujarat Government over the remission granted to the 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case, saying the gravity of the offence should have been considered and asked whether there is any application of mind.

The apex court's displeasure came after the Centre and Gujarat Government's reluctance to share the file notings of the remission and Government's move to seek review of the earlier orders seeking file notings.

The court also warned that Governments will face contempt of court.

Asking for reasons for the premature release of the convicts, a bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna also questioned the paroles granted to them during their incarceration period. "It



(remission) is a kind of grace which should be proportional to crime. Look at the records, one of them was granted parole for 1,000 days that is three years, the other 1,200 days and the third for 1,500 days. What policy have you (Gujarat Government) been following? It is not a simple case of Section 302 (murder) but a case of murders compounded by gangrape. Like you cannot compare apples with oranges, similarly massacre cannot be compared with single murder."

Hearing a plea challenging the release of the convicts, the court said although there was consultation with the Centre for grant of remission, the State is required to apply its mind, looking at the gravity of

the offence.

The Centre and the Gujarat Government also told the court they may file a plea seeking a review of its March 27 order asking them to be ready with original files on the grant of remission.

Senior advocate AM Singhi, appearing for one of the PIL petitioners, said the records show that when the convicts were released on bail, they had issued threats to witnesses and were involved in other crimes.

Advocate Shobha Gupta, appearing for Bilkis, said no new records have been filed in the petition and it is just the challenge to the remission granted to the convicts.

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Atiq's letter meant for CM, CJI being dispatched: Lawyer

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ/NEW DELHI

In latest development in UP, it reports have surfaced that gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad had written a letter two weeks before his murder, with instructions to send it to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and the Chief Justice of India in case of his death. The letter is being dispatched to the CM and the CJ, Atiq's lawyer said on Tuesday.

"That letter in a sealed envelope is neither with me nor sent by me. It is kept somewhere else and being sent by some other person. I don't know the contents of the letter," gangster-politician's lawyer Vijay Mishra said.

Meanwhile, a senior Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) official on Tuesday said police will seek remand of the three assailants who shot dead Atiq and his brother Ashraf, and added all the questions regarding the killing will be answered.

In a related development, the Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on April 24 a plea seeking an independent



Daya Shankar Mishra, the lawyer of slain mafia don-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad, speaks to the media in Prayagraj on Tuesday. PTI

probe into the killing of Atiq and his brother Ashraf in Prayagraj.

Continued on Page 2

NHRC notice to UP Police over Atiq's murder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Uttar Pradesh Police over the killing of gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf by three assailants posing as journalists when they were being escorted by police in Prayagraj, officials said on Tuesday.



Apple CEO Tim Cook welcomes people at the opening of India's first Apple retail store at BKC in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

Joining BJP report a canard, I am with NCP till death: Ajit

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Scotching speculation that he along with his loyal MLAs in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is set to join the BJP, Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Ajit Pawar on Tuesday said he would work for his party NCP till he is alive.

"There is no truth in reports about any rift in the NCP and my joining hands with the BJP. We (party MLAs) are all with the NCP. I will work for the NCP till I live," said Ajit.

He dismissed reports that he had taken the signatures of 40 of 53 MLAs of NCP amid a buzz about his rumoured alliance with the BJP.

Ajit said such unfounded reports hurt party workers and create confusion among them.

Responding to a query, Pawar said no signatures of (NCP) MLAs were taken. "We



NCP leader Ajit Pawar addresses the media at Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

are working as a family and will continue to do that," he added.

Rumours about Ajit Pawar's next political move started doing rounds last week when he suddenly cancelled his scheduled meetings and also made comments which were seen as being soft on the BJP and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's camp.

Continued on Page 2

Karti's assets attached in INX Media case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached four properties (three movable and one immovable property located at Coorg district, Karnataka) valued at ₹11.04 crore belonging to Congress MP and son of former Union Minister P Chidambaram, and others in the INX Media Pvt Ltd case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

PMLA proceedings were initiated against Karti Chidambaram, Advantage Strategic Consulting Pvt Ltd (ASCP), and others by the ED by recording an enforcement case information report (ECIR) (equivalent to FIR in police parlance) on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI for commission of offences punishable under various sections of the IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act.

"During the investigation conducted by the ED, it is revealed that illegal gratification (proceeds of crime) was



received directly and indirectly from M/s INX Media Pvt Ltd, to which accused P Chidambaram had granted FIPB approval, through several shell companies controlled / beneficially owned / used by another accused Karti P Chidambaram," the ED said.

Illegal gratification was received in the company of the accused in the name of providing consultancy by the entities under INX Media.

The total proceeds of crime laundered over a period of time is ₹65.88 crore, the agency said. "The money was routed to overseas accounts and investment was made in various overseas properties and shares of companies through various shell companies directly or indirectly controlled by Karti P Chidambaram and through his confidants," it said.

Mafia can't spread terror in UP: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A couple of days after the killing of gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf by three gunmen, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said, "No mafia can spread terror in Uttar Pradesh and every district is now safe having its own identity."

Those who were "trouble for UP earlier, today are in trouble themselves", he made the remarks without taking any name or mentioning any incident. Attacking the previous Governments over the riots in the State, the Chief Minister said, "More than 700 riots took place in UP between



2012 and 2017 (during Samajwadi Party regime). Over 364 riots took place in UP between 2007 and 2012 (during the BSP rule). However, from 2017 to 2023, not a single riot took place in the State. Curfew was not imposed even once, nor was there any need for it."

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Father-son convicted of 2020 Delhi rioting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi father has convicted a father-son duo for rioting and arson during the 2020 North-East Delhi riots, saying the prosecution proved the charges against them beyond reasonable doubts.

Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala was hearing a case against Mithhan Singh and his son Jonny Kumar, who were accused of being present in a riotous mob that torched several properties in lane number four of Khajuri Khas on February 25, 2020.

"I find that it is proved beyond doubt against both the accused that they were part of the mob which burnt the property (of complainant Shabana

Khatoun). "Thus, they are held guilty of the offences under sections 147 (rioting) 148 (rioting, armed with a deadly weapon) 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc) read with section 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object) of the Indian Penal Code and convicted accordingly," the judge said in an order passed on Monday.

The only witnesses who identified both accused as members of the mob were prosecution witnesses Mohd Tahir and Constable Rohtash, the judge said.

Continued on Page 2

Gang-rapists out on bail set victim's house on fire in UP

2 infants, including one born out of rape of 11-yr-old girl, critical

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two infants were in a critical condition on Tuesday after a group of men set fire to the home of a minor Dalit girl, whom two of them had allegedly raped last year.

The injured babies include the rape victim's six-month-old child - born after the 11-year-old was impregnated in the sexual assault - and her two-month-old sister, police said.

The two rape accused, recently released on bail, allegedly barged into the fam-

ily's thatched shed Monday evening with five others, after the victim refused to withdraw the case. They beat up her mother and then set the shed on fire. According to chief medical superintendent Sushil Srivastava, the rape victim's infant son suffered 35 per cent burns and her sister 45 per cent burns in the incident.

"As their condition worsened, both the kids were sent to Kanpur for better treatment," he said.

Santosh Singh, Circle Officer, Purva said the rape victim's father was attacked with an axe by her grandfather and uncle, who had sided with the accused, and four other people on April 13 according to a complaint filed by her mother.

The father is admitted at the district hospital with seri-

ous injuries, he said. Police said the Dalit girl was gang-raped on February 13, 2022. She gave birth to a son in September that year. The victim's mother also alleged that their house was set on fire to eliminate her daughter's infant son.

Meanwhile, a teenager and his mother consumed acid following a petty dispute and died at a hospital. Reports said that Avnish Kumar of Daraura village of Kamalganj police station area, is a farmer.

On Monday evening, Kumar's wife Malti Devi (30), scolded his son Prem (15) over some petty issue. Upset over that, Prem consumed acid kept in the house. Malti Devi also consumed acid and the mother-son duo were shifted to the District Hospital where both died within a few hours.

Delhi Govt OK's reforms for 'ease of doing business'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has approved extensive reforms aimed at increasing the 'ease of doing business' and reducing compliance burden for everyone in the national capital.

The far ranging set of 70 reforms spanning 16 departments aim to digitise and expedite approvals for various government-related services and reduce the burden of compliance for businesses and individuals alike, the government said in a statement.

The reforms cover various departments, including Revenue, Labour, DPCC, IT, Power, Excise, Drug Control, Health, Fire Service, Food and Civil Supplies, Administrative Reforms, Transport, and Weights and Measures.

Additionally, inter-departmental reforms have also been identified under this plan, it said.

As many as 22 reforms were approved by Kejriwal for the Revenue Department which include digitising and publishing online land transaction deeds, making searchable metadata for land deeds available in public domain, digitising and publishing online land transaction deeds and record of rights (ROR) for 20 years among others.

Creating an online system for registration of partnership firms, implementing an independent grievance mechanism for filing complaints related to property registration at Sub Registrar Office, publishing an online dashboard in public domain for all approvals and registration has also been ensured.

Likewise, for the Labour department, 10 reforms were approved. These include online filing of single integrated return under all the labour laws, eliminating the provision which poses restrictions on women to work in night shift to ensure 24x7 work for females, a single form to be developed for registration of trade licences and shops and establishment, auto renewal of factory licence, publishing an online dashboard in public domain for all approvals and registration.

IN-BRIEF

90 FILMS SHORTLISTED FOR WHO FILM FESTIVAL

NEW DELHI: Nearly 800 film makers from 106 countries have submitted short films for the 4th edition of the WHO Health for All Film Festival. Themes range from the trauma of war to living with Covid-19. Some 90 films have been chosen for the shortlist, for review by a jury of international artists and development leaders, before the announcement of the winners in June 2023.

OUR MITTI FOUNDATION ADOPTS NOIDA SCHOOL

NEW DELHI: In a move that will go a long way in empowering young impressionable minds, Our Mitti Foundation has adopted Radha Ballabh Public School in Noida in association with multinational IT firm Stefanini under its 'Adopt a School' programme wherein Information Technology Lab and Play School for the students most of whom are from under privileged category is being built. The event was inaugurated by David Gawenda, COO, Stefanini in presence of Our Mitti Foundation's Chairman and socialpreneur, Pramod Kumar Suman recently. Under the innovative program, the MMC will also give priority to these children for employment.

ED arrests former sepoy for fake raid, extortion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said it has arrested its former sepoy for conducting a fake raid at a shop in Kolkata impersonating as the investigating officer and issuing "forged" summons to an accused to extort money.

"The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Kolkata on 16.04.2023 has arrested Sukumar Kamaliya, Head constable, SSB (who was earlier posted in the ED as Sepoy on deputation from 2019-2022)," the agency said in a statement on Tuesday.

He was "found to be involved in conducting an

unauthorized search operation" (by way of impersonation) in Kolkata and also issuing forged / fraudulent summons to one of the persons under investigation.

In one case, Sukumar Kamaliya in un-authorized manner, obtained information about the investigation being conducted against a person during his posting and after his repatriation, as a part of extortion plan, issued a fraudulent summons to the said person in order to extort money from him. In the other matter, he conducted an unauthorized search operation in a coffee shop in South Kolkata and threatened the owner of the coffee shop to extort ₹10 lakh.

J&K admin fully prepared, on toes to welcome G-20 delegates in Ladakh

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With less than 10 days to go for the Youth-20 meeting in Leh, the Union Territory administration in Ladakh is fully geared up to welcome the delegates from G-20 countries.

As of now China is expected to skip the meeting while it is yet not confirmed whether Turkey, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, three members belonging to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), would be attending the meet.

A high level meeting to finalise the arrangements was convened in Leh on Monday.

It is for the first time Leh is hosting any international event especially after becoming the Union Territory in August 2019.

16-year-old kills man for sodomy bid, arrested

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 16-year-old boy allegedly killed a man after he tried to have unnatural sex with the minor in north Delhi's Kotwali area, police said on Tuesday.

Both the boy and the man, identified as Shambhu who was around 45-year-old, lived together, they said, adding the minor has been apprehended.

Police said the deceased's body was found on Saturday lying on the footpath of back side of the Red Fort.

An eyewitness, Shajid Khan, who is a friend of the deceased, identified him as Shambhu, a senior police officer said.

The statement of the eyewitness was recorded and a case under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC was registered at Kotwali police station, the officer said.

During investigation, police apprehended the juvenile, a resident of Bihar, on the identification of the eyewitness. The boy confessed his crime and disclosed that he left home two years ago and wanted to go to Mumbai to work in the film industry.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

Was gravity of crime overlooked...

From Page 1

The bench told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Centre and the Gujarat Government, "Here a pregnant woman, who was gang-raped and several members of her family were killed. Crimes are generally committed against society and the community. Unequals cannot be treated equally."

"The real question is whether the Government applied its mind and what material formed the basis of its decision to grant remission in the facts and circumstances of the case," the bench said, adding, "Today it is this lady (Bilkis) but tomorrow it can be anyone. It may be you or me. If you do not show your reasons for grant of remission, then we will draw our own conclusions."

The bench told Raju that non-production of original files will be construed as contempt and asked him why the State Government was shying away from producing the files. Justice Joseph said the court is actually concerned with the exercise of power by the State in the present case and referred to a 2006 two-judge verdict of the apex court in the case of *Epuru Sudhakar versus Government of Andhra Pradesh*, in which the remission order was set aside as the ground was that the convict was "a good Congress worker"

Former Guv of Assam Lt-Gen Ajai Singh dead



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former Governor of Assam Lt General (retired) Ajai Singh died on Monday. Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa offered condolences. A veteran of the 1965 and 1971 wars, Lt General Singh was born on November 20, 1934.

He belonged to a respected family of Kunadi, Rajasthan. An alumni of Mayo College, Ajmer and National Defence Academy (NDA) (JSW), he was commissioned in 17 Horse (The Poona Horse), after having received the Sword of Honour of the 17th Regular Course, Indian Military Academy (IMA), army officials said here on Tuesday.

An exceptionally bright officer, he attended the Tank Commanders Course in Czechoslovakia, Defence Services Staff Course, Wellington, Higher Command Course at College of Combat at Mhow and Royal College of Defence Studies in London (UK) in 1983.

Lt General Ajai Singh played a stellar role with Poona Horse in both 65 and 71 wars and was awarded 'Mentioned in Despatches'. He commanded 17 Horse, 14 (I) Armoured Brigade, 31 Armoured Division and 4 Corps

Joining BJP...

From Page 1

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday added grit to the rumour mill claiming Sharad Pawar recently told Uddhav Thackeray that his party will never join hands with the BJP even if anyone takes an individual decision to do so.

Ajit Pawar slammed Raut without taking the latter's name on Tuesday and said spokespersons of other parties are behaving like spokespersons of NCP. The NCP leader said he would raise this issue whenever there is a party meeting.

"No one knows who has given them this right. You speak about the party of which you are a spokesperson. You speak about your party's mouthpiece. We are very capa-

ble of making our stand clear. "There is no reason to take our brief. They can put forth respective (party's) views. Our party's spokespersons, leaders at the state, as well as the national level, are capable of explaining the party's stand," he added.

When Maharashtra was under President's rule after the results of the 2019 Assembly polls were out and Shiv Sena (undivided) severed ties with ally BJP, Ajit Pawar secretly joined hands with Devendra Fadnavis and a government was formed with Fadnavis as the chief minister and the NCP leader as his deputy. However, that government lasted for just 80 hours after Ajit Pawar resigned.

After the Shiv Sena joined hands with the NCP and Congress to form a coalition government in November 2019, Ajit Pawar took oath as the deputy chief minister and handled the finance portfolio.

Atiq's...

From Page 1

Atiq (60) and Ashraf were shot dead at point-blank range by three men posing as journalists on Saturday night while police personnel were escorting the two brothers to a hospital in Prayagraj for a check-up.

"Atiq had said that if there was any mishap or if he was murdered, the letter in the sealed envelope should be sent to the chief justice of India and Uttar Pradesh chief minister," Mishra told PTI.

The brothers, both jailed in Prayagraj, were in handcuffs when they were killed in full view of camera crews. They were brought to Prayagraj from Gujarat and Bareilly prisons for interrogation in connection with the killing of Umesh Pal and his two police security guards in February this year.

Atiq had moved the Supreme Court for protection, claiming that he and his family have been falsely implicated in the Umesh Pal murder case and he might be killed in a fake encounter by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

₹407.39 cr projects okayed to clean Hindon under NMCG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an attempt to clean River Hindon, which is a tributary of River Yamuna, four projects worth ₹407.39 crore have been given green signal for pollution abatement in the Shrami district in Uttar Pradesh under the National Mission Clean Ganga (NMCG).

"These projects are part of the comprehensive Hindon Rejuvenation Plan. Hindon river is identified as a priority polluted river stretch. The projects which were sanctioned are to prevent the flow of polluted water into Krishna River. Krishna is one of the major tributaries of Hindon which discharges pollution from Shrami district into River Hindon," said an official from the Mission.

The four projects in Shrami district include construction of 5 Million Litres per Day (MLD) Sewage Treatment Plant (Nirmal Jal Kendra), 5 KLD Septage Co-treatment Facility, and other works in Babri and Bantikhera villages, 5 MLD STP, 5 KLD Septage Co-treatment Facility, and other works in Banat town, 40 MLD STP, 20 KLD Septage Co-treatment Facility, Interception and Diversion and other works in Shrami town and 10 MLD STP, 10 KLD Septage Co-treatment Facility and other works in Thanabawan town.

Overall, eight projects worth around ₹638 crore were approved at the 48th meeting of the Executive Committee of the NMCG.

As part of preparations for the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, in 2025, one project for development of 7 ghats namely Dashashmedh Ghat, Quila Ghat, Naukayan Ghat, Gyan Ganga Ashram Ghat, Saraswati Ghat, Maheva Ghat and Rasulabad Ghat in Prayagraj was also approved in the meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The following original documents with respect to the property bearing the address E-94 (Basement), Malcha Marg, New Delhi-110021, registered with Sub Registrar VII, have been lost:
(1) Sale Deed dated 12.01.2012, bearing No. 618, Addl. Book No. 1, Vol. no. 4265, PP no. 34 to 52 favoring Harmala Kaur Gupta.
All persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing documents. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address with 7 (Seven) days from this present.
Dr. J.P.S Bakshi
Mrs. Gurinder Kaur Bakshi
Add: E-94, Basement, Malcha Marg, New Delhi-110021 Ph. 7067000901
Place: New Delhi Date: 19.04.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to bring to the notice of the General Public that our client Aditya Birla Finance Limited intends to take on mortgage Property Bearing No. B-35, Land measuring 230 Sq. Yds., situated at the abadi of Kirti Kunj Extension, Part-2, Lower Nagar in the area of Village Khurji Khas, Moga Shahdara, Delhi-110092 ("Premises") owned by Mr. Vijay Arora.
Any person or persons having any share, right, title, estate, interest, claim or demand against or to upon or in the Premises or any part thereof whether by way of FSI, TDR, sale, assignment, lease, guarantee, tenancy, license, mortgage, covenant, device, tenancy, lien, transfer, lis-pendens, maintenance, possession, occupation, care-taker basis, sub-lease, sub-tenancy, trust, partition, acquisition, reversion, inheritance, easement, attachment, possession, reversionary rights or otherwise rights of any nature whatsoever or order/ decree/judgment of any Court, option agreement or any kind of agreement or otherwise whatsoever and whatsoever are hereby required to intimate the same in writing along with supporting documentary proof based on which such claim is being raised to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of Publication hereof, failing which any such right, title, interest, claim or demand, if any shall be considered as waived and/or abandoned.
K.P. Menon & Co.
Advocates & Solicitors
A-316, 3rd Floor, R.C. Complex, Malcha Khan, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi - 110055

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2, CHANDIGARH
6. OA/834/2022
ICICI BANK LIMITED
Vs
ASHISH VOHRA
ITEM No. 6
Dated : 19.12.2022
Present : Mr. Sukhwinder Singh, proxy counsel for Mr. Rahul Garg, counsel for the applicant bank.
Mr. H.K.P. Sinha, Legal officer, present in person for defendant No.3
None for the other defendants
The service report filed by the applicant bank vide diary No.19652, dated 19.12.2022 is on record along with registered post receipt and track record which shows summons could not be served. Therefore, the applicant bank counsel has requested to issue notice through publication against remaining defendant No.1 & 2.
In terms of power conferred by virtue of Rule 23 of Debts Recovery (Procedure) Rules, 1993, request of the applicant bank is allowed. Let the notices be issued and published in two leading newspapers, one in English and one in Vernacular, having wide circulation in the area, where the defendants are residing/situated. The applicant bank is directed to file proof of service.
Legal office present for defendant No.3 and filed NCLT order vide diary No.19619 dated 19.12.2022, hence defendant No.3 is directed to file an appropriate application before the next date of hearing.
Let the case be listed before Registrar on 19.04.2023 for further proceeding.
RO-2/ Registrar I/C DRT-2, Chandigarh

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Kanchan Malhotra W/o Sushil Malhotra R/o 5051 2nd Floor Gali No:2 Sant Nagar New Delhi have changed my name from Deepti Sachdeva to Kanchan Malhotra for all purposes.
PD(014)C
I, Achla W/o Shri Vinod Madaan, R/o B-89, Second Floor, Type-B, Block -VII, Kendriya Vihar, Sector -82, Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P. have changed my name to Achla Madaan for all future purpose.
PD(016)A

Indian students...

From Page 1

Those universities that have restricted access to some Indian states are concerned Home Affairs will reduce their ability to fast-track student visas because of the number of applicants who are actually seeking to work - not study - in Australia.

Perth's Edith Cowan University in February placed an outright ban on applicants from the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, then in March, Victoria University increased restrictions on student applications from eight Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

These restrictions came just days after Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited India, in part to celebrate Australia's education links and announce a new agreement with Australia's universities and colleges that would, he said, herald "the most comprehensive and ambitious arrangement agreed to by India with any country".

Crucially, the agreement included a "mutual recognition of qualifications between Australia and India", which will make travelling to either country for university study easier.

The University of Wollongong in March also ratcheted up conditions on its "genuine temporary entrant" test on students from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nigeria and "other countries deemed a risk (of students not being a genuine temporary entrant) by the Department of Home Affairs".

Personal...

From Page 1

The bench observed it first wants to have a view of the canvas which the petitioners' side would open up.

On being pointed out the difficulties and ramifications of the Hindu Marriage Act and personal laws of various religious groups if the top court were to hold same-sex marriages valid, the bench said,

"Then we can keep the personal laws out of the equation and all of you (lawyers) can address us on the Special Marriage Act (a religion neutral marriage law)."

Mehta referred to the laws on transgenders and said there are several rights such as the right to choose partners, privacy right, right to choose sexual orientation, and any discrimination is criminally prosecutable.

"However, the conferment of socio-legal status of marriage cannot be done through judicial deci-

Father-son convicted...

From Page 1

The court posted the matter for filing affidavits on April 19, following which the proceedings on sentencing will commence.

ASJ Pramachala noted the statements of several public witnesses and said it is safe to conclude that an unlawful assembly was formed with the common intention of attacking the properties of a particular community and that the riotous mob engaged in incidents of vandalism and arson.

Regarding the identification of the duo as part of the mob, the judge said none of the public witnesses or residents of the lane, including the complainants, supported the prosecution's case and refused to identify the accused persons as members of the mob.

He said Tahir's testimony was "reliable" to show both accused were out in the lane and that they had joined the riotous mob raising slogans, while Constable Rohtash was the beat officer of the area and saw the duo as part of the mob that torched Khatoon's property. The judge said the testimony of the police official could not be discarded because of the absence of the daily diary (DD) entry or a formal report on the incident.

Based on the evidence of the two witnesses, there was "no doubt that both accused persons were part of the mob" that indulged in the incident of arson at Khatoon's property, the judge said. The Khajuri Khas police station had registered an FIR against the duo on the basis of Khatoon's statement. Later, six other complaints were also clubbed with the case.

Mafia men...

From Page 1

"There will be more take-downs. There will be more guns removed from dangerous individuals," he said.

"No family should ever have to worry about drive-by shootings or other forms of gun violence in the neighbourhoods where their children live and play. As a result of this joint law enforcement effort, we're taking guns off the street and putting suspected gang members and their associates behind bars," he said.

"An investigation of this magnitude requires a tremendous amount of time and effort, and especially a lot of person-

nel," said Sutter County District Attorney General Dupre.

Yuba City, a city of nearly 70,000 people along the Feather River just north of Sacramento, has a large Sikh community. Locals often refer to the area as "mini Punjab". Each November, tens of thousands of people travel to the city for Nagar Kirtan, one of the largest Sikh gatherings in the US.

Sikhs also have a large presence throughout California's Central Valley. The Sacramento County Assistant Sheriff said seven of the shootings occurred in Sacramento County within the past year.

Heatwave scorches parts of city; IMD predicts rain today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Heatwave conditions persisted for the third consecutive day in parts of Delhi on Tuesday, with some weather stations recording the maximum temperature at least five degrees Celsius above normal. However, cloudy weather and light rain may provide some relief from the heat on Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The IMD said a western disturbance active over the western Himalayan region is predicted to bring light rain in the northwestern plains.

Delhi's primary weather station, the Safdarjung Observatory, registered a maximum temperature of 40.4 degrees Celsius, four notches higher than normal. This is the fourth consecutive day that the maximum temperature settled above 40 degrees Celsius here. Pusa and Pitampura experienced heatwave conditions with maximum temperatures settling at 41.6 degrees to 41.9 degrees Celsius, respectively. The threshold for a heatwave is met when the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40 degrees



Youngsters cool themselves in the Yamuna in New Delhi on Tuesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Celsius in the plains, 37 degrees Celsius in coastal areas, and 30 degrees Celsius in hilly regions, and the departure from normal is at least 4.5 degrees Celsius. Earlier this month, the MeT office predicted above-normal maximum temperatures for most parts of the country from April to June, except parts of

the northwest and the peninsular regions. Above-normal heatwave days are expected in most parts of central, east, and northwest India during this period. In 2022, Delhi recorded its second hottest April since 1951 with a monthly average maximum temperature of 40.2 degrees Celsius.

The city saw nine heatwave days in April last year, including four in first 10 days, which was maximum in month since 2010. It had recorded a high of 43.5 degrees Celsius on April 28 and April 29 last year. This was the highest maximum temperature in the month of April in Delhi in 12 years.

Delhi's summer action plan still in making even as mercury soars

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Most parts of India are expected to see above-normal temperatures and more heatwave days this summer season but the national Capital is yet to implement a heat action plan (HAP), four years after the Centre recommended it do so.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Tuesday said that the Government is "holding discussions with experts, and a heatwave action plan will be prepared if something concrete emerges". HAPs are the primary policy response to economically damaging and life-threatening heatwaves. They prescribe a number of activities, disaster responses and post-heatwave response measures to decrease their impact. Greenpeace India has written to Chief Minister



Gopal Rai

Arvind Kejriwal, urging him to publish a HAP by May 7 after consultations with all stakeholders. The environmental NGO said heatwaves adversely impact thousands of outdoor or construction workers, the elderly and newborns. "HAPs have proven effective in several regions across India, making the lack of action from the Delhi Government concerning. With a population of over 18 million, including 11 million peo-

ple in the informal sector and many migrants from climate-sensitive areas, it is imperative that the Delhi Government takes immediate action to release the HAP and protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of heatwaves," Avinash Chanchal, campaign manager, Greenpeace India said.

Studies show India is one of the most exposed and vulnerable countries to heat. Between 1951 and 2016, three-day concurrent hot day and hot night events have increased significantly and are projected to increase up to four times by 2050 under the intermediate and high emission pathways of the Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 4.5 and 8.5.

RCPs capture assumptions about economic, social and physical changes to the environment that will influence cli-

mate change within a set of scenarios. The conditions of each scenario are used to model possible future climate evolution. Heatwaves are also projected to come earlier, stay longer and become more frequent, with urban heat island effects exacerbating heat impacts. The increased heat is already leading to more heat-related deaths, heat stress, unbearable working conditions, and a wider spread of vector-borne diseases.

By 2050, as many as 24 urban centres are projected to breach average summertime highs of at least 35 degrees Celsius, disproportionately impacting the economically weaker sections. The International Labour Organisation estimates that 5.3 per cent of working hours, or an equivalent of 34 million jobs, would be lost due to heat stress by 2030.

Govt orders DERC to hold special audit of discoms

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the directions of the Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, the Delhi Government on Tuesday issued an order to the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) to conduct a special audit of Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) with respect to electricity subsidy released by the state government from 2016-17 to 2021-22, through CAG empanelled external auditor.



Delhi LG

note to the chief minister, has criticised the government for not conducting the audit of Rs 13,549 crore given to the discoms over the past six years. The LG has reiterated his stand that power subsidy should be provided to the poor, pointing that amounts being given to discoms be audited to ensure non-pilferage.

The LG in his note has underlined that audit by the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) empanelled auditors cannot and should not be considered as substitute to CAG audit.

Repeating his consent and commitment to power subsidy for the poor, Saxena has iterated that such subsidies are pub-

lic funds collected as revenue from the people of Delhi and it is the prime responsibility of the government to ensure that benefits reach the targeted population rather than getting pilfered for the gain of vested interests.

Allowing the proposal of the government to conduct audit through auditors empanelled with CAG, the LG has underlined that audit of huge amounts of public money should be conducted by the CAG. The AAP government had been perfunctorily asking the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) to conduct the audit since 2015, though it could have invoked Section 108 of the Electricity Act, 2003 and given binding directions to the DERC for the same, said the LG note.

However, the DERC did not conduct any audit, upon which the Power department through the Chief Secretary moved a file for asking the DERC to compulsorily carry out audit invoking the Act in December, 2022, which was turned down by the then Dy. Chief Minister and Power Minister Manish Sisodia on January 27, 2023, officials said.

Atishi slams LG for taking credit for audit of discoms

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Power Minister Atishi on Tuesday slammed the Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena for taking credit for a special audit of power distribution companies (DISCOMs) from 2016-17 to 2021-22 regarding electricity subsidy in the national Capital.

The power minister claimed that the special audit DISCOMs had been ordered by the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and being the power minister, her office issued an order to this effect.

Atishi informed that on March 27, the Kejriwal government had sent the file regarding the audit order to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) but he kept sitting on it for three weeks. "Finally, after getting

the file approved from Lt Governor on Tuesday, the Delhi government issued a notification for conducting the audit, however, the LG is mischievously taking credit for it. The Delhi government is confident that the special audit will reveal any irregularities and help improve the distribution of electricity subsidies in Delhi," she said.

The purpose of this audit is to ensure that the residents of Delhi receive electricity subsidies in a transparent and fair manner. In a statement, the Delhi government said that the Power Minister's office has issued a special order, directing the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission to conduct a thorough audit of all electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) operating in the city.

City reports 13K Covid cases in 19 days

Jump of over 433% in active cases in Delhi in 3 weeks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

From 932 cases on March 30 to 4,976 on April 17, active coronavirus cases in Delhi have registered a jump of more than 433 per cent in nearly three weeks. Delhi has reported more than 13,200 cases of COVID-19 in the past 19 days.

According to Delhi Government's health department data, the active case tally on Monday stood at 4,976, a jump of nearly 433 per cent since March 30 when the corresponding figure was 932. The active case count was, in fact, higher on Sunday at 5,297.

Though Delhi has seen a spike in coronavirus cases in the recent past, hospitalisation remains low. Experts have maintained that there is no need to panic and people should follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and get booster shots of vaccines. LNJP Hospital's Medical Director Suresh Kumar had cautioned on April 13 that coronavirus



cases in the national capital will peak in the next couple of weeks. In the March 30-April 17 period, more than 30 fatalities have been recorded, including five deaths on April 15. Delhi on Monday logged 1,017 COVID-19 cases, while the positivity rate jumped to 32.25 per cent, the highest in 15 months, according to data shared by the health department.

The capital had recorded a positivity rate of 30.6 per cent on January 14 last year. Delhi's COVID-19 tally climbed to 20,244 on Monday. Four new fatalities pushed the death toll to 26,567, the health department's bulletin stated. Delhi's daily Covid case count

breached the 1,000-mark again on April 12, first time in over seven months. Since then, the figures have been reported in four-digit only. The spurt in the number of fresh Covid infections came amid a sharp rise in H3N2 influenza cases in the country. The Delhi government is keeping an eye on the spurt in Covid cases in the national capital and is "prepared to face any eventuality", Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said recently.

Mock drills were conducted at various hospitals in Delhi on April 11 to check COVID-19 preparedness, following guidelines from the Centre. Medical experts say the new XBB.1.16 variant of the virus could be driving the surge. They also said this rise in the number of cases could be the result of more people getting themselves tested for Covid as a precaution when they actually get infected with the influenza virus and develop fever and related symptoms.

'Art integrated learning will empower kids'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Atishi on Tuesday shared a report on 4,000 students in the government schools who have received training in different fine arts including music, dance, theatre, and media arts in classroom pedagogy through an initiative launched three years ago. Launching the report, Atishi said that Art Integrated Learning will empower children to identify their artistic skills and express themselves with confidence.

Started as a joint pilot project by the state government and the Nalandaway Foundation, a city-based NGO, the Delhi Arts Curriculum initiative allowed students from underserved communities to choose from five art forms, including music, dance, and theatre, among others. The Delhi government has partnered with Nalanda-way Foundation on the 'Delhi Arts Curriculum' - a key pilot project initiated across nine of its government schools.

The Union Education Ministry has also running a similar programme called 'Jadui Pitara'. Early this year Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched Jadui Pitara in form of puzzles, puppetry, posters, flash cards, worksheets and attractive storybooks. Envisaged as a child-centric, innovative, toy-based learning was introduced to strengthen

conceptual understanding amongst the learners aged 3-8 years, the "Jadui Pitara" has been designed on the motto of "learning through play", as envisaged in the new National Education Policy (NEP).

Delhi Arts Curriculum is a crucial initiative aimed at changing the way art education is imparted amongst students. Keeping in mind the unique cultural heritage and diversity of Delhi, this curriculum has been developed over the years by a team of experts and teachers. It focuses on students from the ages of 3 to 13. The curriculum integrates 5 art forms in classrooms to help improve learning outcomes; namely visual arts, music, dance, theatre and media arts.

During the pilot phase, children from Nursery to Class 5 were encouraged to express themselves, through art exposure and exhibitions. Utilising the medium of music, dance and visual arts, the students were provided a platform where they started learning various subjects through these art forms.

Music poetry was used to teach Hindi and English to the students of classes 3 to 5. Furthermore, students of classes up to 8th engaged in learning through Music Theatre. During this project, grade 8 students from each school developed their own music theatre production - involving scriptwriting, costume design, music composing, dance and art direction.

BJP fields Shikha, Soni for Mayor, Dy Mayor's election

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Tuesday fielded Shikha Rai and Soni Pandey for the election of the mayor and the deputy mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), despite not having adequate numbers in the House. Accompanied by Delhi BJP leaders, Rai and Pandey filed their papers for the polls to the posts of mayor and deputy mayor respectively on Tuesday, the last day of filing nominations.

Rai is the councillor from the Greater Kailash-1 ward, while Pandey represents north-east Delhi's Sonia Vihar ward in the civic body. Earlier, a top Delhi BJP leader had claimed that the saffron party was not



Photo by Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

likely to contest the polls as there was a "clear mandate" in the favour of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The AAP has renominated incumbent mayor Shelly Oberoi and deputy mayor Aaley Mohammad Iqbal for the posts. BJP leaders hoped that the councillors in the MCD will elect Rai. "The BJP is determined to run a

good, clean and strong municipal corporation and we hope that all corporators will elect the experienced senior councillor of the party," Delhi BJP general secretary Harsh Malhotra said.

Rai said she will seek votes from the councillors on the basis of her vision for the MCD. A former vice-president of the Delhi BJP, she gained prominence after joining other leaders of the saffron party in hoisting the tricolour at Srinagar's Lal Chowk in 2011. A lawyer by profession, Rai is an experienced councillor of the civic body where she held the posts of leader of the House in 2017-18 and chairman of the standing committee in 2018-19.

25.5 km-long-sewer line for 11 illegal colonies approved

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has approved a proposal to lay a 25.5 km long sewer line in 11 unauthorized colonies of Sangam Vihar, Ambedkar Nagar and Deoli assembly. This will give relief to at least three lakh people from the sewer problem. The cost of this project is Rs 26.66 crore. This project was earlier given to a company, but due to a delay in the work, the Kejriwal government cancelled the work of the company.

Due to the non-availability of a sewerage system in the area, the sewage generated from here is currently released into the local ponds, septic tanks, or rain drains, which fall



into the Yamuna River from the existing drain. This increases the pollution level of the river.

Delhi Water Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj said that in such a situation, to reduce these water-polluting elements, the Delhi government has decided to connect every house in the area with sewage. Sewerage coming out of here will be sent through sewer lines to the nearest Sewage Treatment Plant for treatment,

after which the treated water will flow into Yamuna." Bhardwaj said that the work of this project costing Rs 26.66 crore was entrusted to a company named KK Sapna in the year 2018. But the work was delayed by about 5 years by the company. In such a situation, the Kejriwal government has cancelled the work of the company.

Now the government has decided to appoint a new agency to complete the work at the earliest. About 56 percent work of the project has been done by the agency. Now the rest of the work will be given to the new agency at risk and cost, that is, its recovery will be done from the previous agency's bill only.

Govt to install 70K streetlights

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Kejriwal Government has decided to install 70,000 streetlights across the city under the Mukhyamantri Street Light Yojana. This will be in addition to the 2.1 lakh streetlights that the Delhi government had earlier aimed to install in the city. Approving the project, Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj on Tuesday directed the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to complete the project within the estimated timeline. He said that the initiative had been taken after seeing the tremendous participation of the residents of Delhi under the Mukhyamantri Street Light Yojana, and therefore it was

decided to install an additional 1,000 street lights in all the constituencies of Delhi.

Under the scheme, the aim was to install 2.1 lakh street lights in different parts of Delhi and the responsibility of installing these street lights was given to three different companies. LED lights of 10, 20 and 40 Watt were to be installed under this scheme. Currently, under the scheme, most street lights have been installed to eliminate the dark spots that the state government had planned to illuminate. In some of the areas, the work of installing these street lights is in the final stages.

"We have decided to install an additional 1,000 street lights in each assembly constituency. That is, 70,000 additional street

lights will be installed in 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi and these will help in quickly eliminating all the dark spots in Delhi," he said. The street lights that are being installed under this scheme are automatic, and will switch on when it gets dark outside. As these lights will have a sensor in them, they will also switch off on their own in the mornings and therefore ensure better utility of electricity.

Bhardwaj said that the implementation of the scheme will be carried out by three companies and they would be in-charge for installing the lights and maintenance. He added that as part of this scheme, 20/40 Watt LED lights will be installed with timers and sensors.

Dog mauls boy in Rangpuri



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In yet another incident of canine attack, a 14-year-old boy was injured in a stray dog attack in southwest Delhi's Rangpuri area. The incident took place on Monday morning when the boy, a resident of Rangpuri, had gone out to answer nature's call.

The teenager who suffered injuries across the body, is currently undergoing treatment at Safdarjung Hospital.

"Around 7:30 am on Monday, the boy was attacked by 8-10 dogs near his house. He was bitten all over his body and was treated by a local doctor. Now, he is being sent to Safdarjung Hospital for further treatment," said Deputy Commissioner of Police, Southwest, Manoj C.

No PCR call or medico-legal case (MLC) was received in this regard, the police said. Amid growing concerns over street dog menace across the country, the Centre has notified the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, defining the guidelines for the management and elimination of stray troubles. "Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes for the sterilisation and immunisation of stray dogs are to be carried out by

the respective local bodies/municipalities/municipal corporations and panchayats," said the government in a statement. It also said that the cruelty involved in carrying out the ABC programme must be addressed.

The ABC programme, which addresses animal welfare issues, can be carried out by local bodies through the effective implementation of these Rules, according to the statement. The proposed rules also said that the municipal corporation needs to implement the ABC and Anti Rabies Program jointly. "The Rules also provide guidelines on how to deal with human and stray dog conflicts without relocating the dogs in an area," the guidelines said.

Gear up for heatwave, Centre tells States

Give water, reschedule work hours for labourers

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reschedule working hours for labourers/workers, ensure adequate drinking water facilities at work places, and make provision for emergency ice packs—these are among a slew of measures that the Centre has suggested to the States to help beat the heat stress being faced by those working outdoors as life-threatening heat waves sweep various parts of the country.

In a letter to Chief Secretaries/Administrators of all States/UTs, Union Labour Secretary, Arti Ahuja cited the recent warning issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) for climate change induced hot weather season during current



Girls use scarves to shield themselves from the hot summer sun in New Delhi on Tuesday. Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

year which indicates above normal maximum temperatures over most parts of North East India, East and Central India and some part of Northwest India. The death of over thirteen people from an apparent heat stroke while attending a government award function in an open space in Navi Mumbai last Sunday also spurred the Labour Ministry to take note of the seriousness of the weather situation.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that working hours lost due to heat stress will increase to 5.8 per cent of working hours by 2030, or an equivalent of 34 million jobs.

Given that many pockets of India are under severe heat waves, there are reasons for the Government to worry as due to economic necessity, the labourers from industries like construction and mining have no choice but to indulge in outdoor work irrespective of record-breaking temperature.

The Union Labour Secretary in her letter also impressed upon the need to issue instructions to the managements of mines, asking them to undertake immediate steps to make provision for rest areas, adequate quantity of cool water and electrolyte supplements near the workplace.

“Allowing work at slow pace in case the worker feels unwell, allowing rest times and flexible schedules to let workers do the hardest work during the coolest parts of the day with, assigning a two-person crew to perform work during extremely hot temperatures, ensuring proper ventilation in underground mines and making the workers aware of dangers from excessive heat

and humidity and remedial measures are some of the other measures suggested,” she said.

Ahuja also impressed upon the need to pay special attention to construction workers, and brick kiln workers and to carry out adequate information dissemination at the labour chowks.

Government estimates indicate the loss of 25,983 lives between 1990 and 2020 due to heat waves, though number could be on the higher side, say Aditya Valiathan Pillai and Tamanna Dalal from Centre for Policy Research after analyzing the Health Action Plans prepared by the Government over the years.

The health impacts of heat waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke which is a potential fatal condition, according to doctors.

NIA to probe stir, attack on Indian mission in UK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) will probe the case of protests and attempt to vandalise the Indian High Commission in London last month.

The NIA will take over the case from the special cell of the Delhi Police which had registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act as it involves unlawful activities carried out by certain people holding Indian nationality abroad, officials said.

The NIA is mandated to probe any terror case that takes place in foreign land following amendments to the law governing the anti-terror probe organisation in 2019, they said.

Pro-Khalistani protestors tried to vandalise the Indian High Commission in London and pulled down the national flag while holding protests outside the High Commission complex on March 19. The incident happened a day after the Punjab Police launched a crackdown against suspected radical preacher Amritpal Singh in Punjab.

The Counter-Terrorism and Counter Radicalisation unit of the Union Home Ministry handed over the case to the NIA and the decision was taken after Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla held a meeting with representatives of the British government last week.

In the London incident, the tricolour flying atop the Indian High Commission was grabbed at by a group of protesters waving separatist Khalistani flags and chanting pro-Khalistani slogans, leading to an arrest.

The London Metropolitan Police said two members of



security staff sustained minor injuries which did not require hospital treatment.

India had summoned the British deputy high commissioner based in New Delhi and demanded an explanation over the complete “absence of security”.

The Ministry of External Affairs had said India finds “unacceptable” the indifference of the UK government to the security of Indian diplomatic premises and personnel.

Union Home Secretary Bhalla flagged the issue with a UK delegation which was led by Permanent Secretary, Home Office, Sir Matthew Rycroft and “specifically” conveyed New Delhi’s concerns on the misuse of UK’s asylum status by pro-Khalistani elements to abet terrorist activities and requested better cooperation, increased monitoring of extremists and take proactive action.

Bhalla also underscored India’s concerns over the breach of security at the Indian High Commission before the visiting British delegation.

Def Min OK’s industry-friendly reform in AHSP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for bringing in industry-friendly reform related to Authority Holding Sealed Particulars (AHSP). The AHSP is the authority which is responsible for generating, maintaining, updating or declaring obsolete the entire history and technical information of defence products.

So far, Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) was the AHSP for majority of defence items designed, developed and manufactured by various DPSUs and Private Industries, defence ministry officials said here on Tuesday.

Under the existing procedure, certain bottlenecks were experienced by the industry to bring timely improvements in their products and technologies in line with changing times. Therefore, the Ministry has decided now to liberalise the



AHSP procedures and make it industry-friendly. The Indian defence companies, which have developed products, systems, subsystems, components on their own indigenous capabilities (except critical stores), will now be allowed to own and account for their final designs and specification as AHSP.

In case of any change in the sealed particulars, a simplified mechanism representing all the concerned stakeholders, including the industry, will take a decision. The DGQA will notify the detailed procedure in this regard within two months.

Balakot showed IAF’s effectiveness in ‘no war, no peace’ scenario: Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining the critical importance of India’s airpower in modern day warfare and various challenges, IAF Chief V R Chaudhari on Tuesday said air power has become an option of choice due to “inherent flexibility” and “unmatched” precision strike capability.

He highlighted the importance of India’s air power considering the nature of its adversaries and said the Balakot operations of 2019 demonstrated its effectiveness even in a ‘no war, no peace’ scenario and under a “nuclear overhang”. The Chief of Air Staff said air power has become an option of choice due to “inherent flexibility” and “unmatched” precision strike capability.

“Operations like Balakot have also demonstrated that given the political will, aerospace power can be effectively used in a no war, no peace scenario, under a nuclear overhang without escalating into a full blown conflict,” he said.

“This is very important given the nature of our adversaries. The response options available to the leadership have suddenly increased and increasingly, air power has become an option of choice due to inherent flexibility and unmatched precision strike capability,” he said. Chaudhari was speaking at a seminar on ‘Aerospace Power: Pivot to Future Battlespace Operations’, organized in memory of the first and only Marshal

of IAF Arjan Singh. India’s war planes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed.

“India’s security concerns necessitate that it puts in place adequate military power that has the ability to achieve deterrence, ensure information dominance, coerce when needed and provide multiple response options,” Chaudhari said. “Attributes of aerospace power enable the leadership to formulate an appropriate strategy with due cognizance given to desired end state, conflict termination criteria and escalation matrix,” he said.

SC Collegium lists 6 judges for Punjab & Haryana HC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, has recommended the names of six additional judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court (HC) for appointment as permanent judges. The additional judges are Justices Vikas Bahl, Vikas Suri, Sandeep Moudgil, Vinod Sharma (Bardwai), Pankaj Jain and Jasjit Singh Bedi. The Collegium took the decisions in its meeting on April 17.

The Collegium, which also includes Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and KM Joseph, said that since the current two-year term of one of the additional judges is due to expire on May 24, the recommendation may be processed expeditiously by the Centre. On December 19 last year, the Collegium of the HC of Punjab and Haryana unanimously recommended that the additional judges be appointed as permanent judges of that HC.

Domestic travel saw annual growth of 51.7%: DGCA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data showed that passengers carried by domestic airlines during January - March 2023 were 375.04 lakhs as against 247.23 lakhs during the corresponding period of previous year thereby registering annual growth of 51.70 per cent and monthly growth of 21.41 per cent. March, which is considered as a lean month as far as tour and travel industry is concerned, the traffic data of the DGCA showed that 106.19 lakh domestic air passengers travelled in last month this year, a growth of 21.41 per cent as compared to 128.93 lakh in 2022.

Interestingly, more than the number seen in peak travel months of October (1.14 crore), November (1.17 crore) and December (1.27 crore) in 2022. “The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines for the month of March 2023 has been 0.28%. During March 2023, a total of 347 passenger related complaints had



been received by the scheduled domestic airlines. The number of complaints per 10,000 passengers carried for the month of March 2023 has been around 0.27,” the data showed.

The major reasons for complaints are flight problems and baggage, the report states, adding that the airlines received a total of 347 complaints, of which 343 (approx.99 per cent) have been addressed.

Further, according to the aviation regulator, a total of 38.6 per cent of complaints were about flight-related problems, while 22.2 per cent were related to baggage problems. The refund-related problems were just 11.5 per cent. “Refund and Staff behaviour related complaints have seen significant improvement in the last three months. In January, there were 23.7 per cent of complaints related to refunds have come down to 11.5.

Embassy urges Indians not to venture out for ration supplies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

With situation worsening in strife torn Sudan capital Khartoum, the Indian embassy issued a fresh advisory on Tuesday urging Indians living there not to venture out and ration their supplies adding instances of looting have taken place. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) here has set up a control room to provide information and assistance. Nearly 200 people including an Indian have died and 1,200 injured.

In Bengaluru, senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Tuesday urged the Centre to initiate steps to bring back 31 people belonging to Hakkii-Pikki tribe of the state, stranded in Sudan. In the third advisory issued since clashes broke out between the Sudan army and the para-military on Saturday last, the Indian embassy said “We have come across many instances of looting. All Indian nationals are advised please not to venture out. Please ration your supplies.” It also cautioned the sit-



uation may continue for a few more days. “Please try to take help from your neighbours. Please stay at home and remain safe,” the embassy said.

Meanwhile, the MEA said late Monday in view of the current situation in Sudan, a Control Room has been set up. Coordinates of the Control Room are Phone: 1800 11 8797 (Toll free), +91-11-23012113, +91-11-23014104, +91-11-23017905. Mobile: +91 9968291988

Embassy situationroom[at]mea[dot]gov[dot]in The first advisory by the Indian embassy in Khartoum was issued on Saturday while the second on Monday asking all Indian nationals there to remain indoors. According to the official data, the number of

Indians in Sudan is around 4,000 including 1,200 who have settled down in the country decades ago. Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah demanded that the Centre initiate steps to bring back 31 people belonging to Hakkii-Pikki tribe of the state, stranded in war-torn Sudan. Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority Commissioner Manoj Rajan said, “We have got a message that a group of 31 people hailing from Karnataka are stranded in Sudan. We have informed the Ministry of External Affairs about it.”

The officer said his department has asked group to follow instructions of Indian embassy in Sudan. “As of now, stranded people should stay wherever they are and not venture out.

Congress seeks white paper on Pulwama terror attack

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday demanded that the Centre should come out with a white paper on the Pulwama attack providing answers to questions such as what were the “intelligence failures” and why troops were denied aircraft.

At a Press conference at Congress headquarters, Col (ret) Rohit Chaudhry and Wing Commander (ret) Anuma Acharya, both associated with the grand old party, posed a series of questions to the government on the attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed. Chaudhry and Acharya said defence fraternity and the entire nation share concerns of Satyapal Malik and Gen.(ret) Shankar Roychowdhury who to has raised doubts over Pulwama happenings.

There has been no reaction from the Government since former J&K Governor Malik’s interview to a news portal was released, while the BJP has said that there were serious questions about his credibility and cited various statements made by him in recent years. BJP has cited Malik’s past remarks, including the one that mocked former Congress chief Rahul



Shaktisinh Gohil

Gandhi as a “political juvenile”, and slammed him as “disgraced” governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress spokesperson Shaktisinh Gohil said party did not make any political statement over an incident like Pulwama in 2019 but had to raise this issue as concerns have been expressed by former army chief Gen (ret) Shankar Roychowdhury in an interview.

They posed questions to the prime minister on the basis of the assertions by the former army chief. “Why were 2,500 CRPF soldiers not allowed to travel by air despite their request? Why were intelligence inputs between January 2, 2019 and February 13, 2019 warning of a terrorist attack ignored? How did the militants procure around 300 kg of explosives? How could this huge quantity

remain undetected despite heavy security presence in South Kashmir, especially the Pulwama - Anantnag - Avantipora belt,” Chaudhry said. “Four years after the attack, how far has the inquiry progressed? Why is there a delay in completing the inquiry and letting the nation know its findings?” they asked.

The two army veterans said that in previous terror attacks, such as the Mumbai attacks in 2011 and the Pathankot attack in 2016, inquiries were held and findings made public. This was essential to establish the truth, fix responsibility, and strengthen India’s national security. In Pulwama too, these serious questions must be addressed, they said. “Therefore, we demand that the government of India publish a white paper on the Pulwama attacks, describing -- how the attacks took place, what were the “intelligence failures”, why troops were denied aircraft, what security lapses occurred and the role of CRPF, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, National Security Advisor and the Prime Minister’s Office,” the veterans said.

SC to hear plea for probe in Atiq’s killing on Apr 24

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on April 24 a plea seeking an independent probe into the killing of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf in Uttar Pradesh’s Prayagraj.

The duo were shot dead at point-blank range by three men posing as journalists in the middle of a media interaction on Saturday night while police personnel were escorting them to a medical college in Prayagraj for a checkup. A bench headed by Chief Justice

DY Chandrachud took note of the submissions of advocate Vishal Tiwari who mentioned the matter seeking urgent hearing. The plea has also sought an inquiry into the 183 encounters that have taken place in Uttar Pradesh since 2017. The plea sought the setting up of an independent expert committee to probe the killing of Atiq and Ashraf.

“Issue guidelines/directions to safeguard the rule of law by constituting an independent expert committee under the chairmanship of a former Supreme Court justice to inquire into the 183 encounters which had occurred since 2017

as stated by Uttar Pradesh Special Director General of Police (Law and Order) and also to inquire into the police custody murder of Atiq and Ashraf,” it said. Referring to Atiq’s killing, the plea said that “such actions by police are a severe threat to democracy and rule of law and lead to a police state”. “In a democratic society, the police cannot be allowed to become a mode of delivering final justice or to become a punishing authority. The power of punishment is only vested in the judiciary,” the plea stated. It said extrajudicial killings or fake police encounters have no place in the law.

Poor diet key reason for type 2 diabetes globally: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If you love eating too many refined wheat and rice products, when compared whole grains, then you are risking yourself to type 2 diabetes, as has also been found by a team of researchers after they analysed data through 2018.

Type 2 diabetes is characterized by the resistance of the body’s cells to insulin. Of the 184 countries included in the Nature Medicine study, all saw an increase in type 2 diabetes cases between 1990 and 2018, representing a growing burden on individuals, families, and healthcare systems. “Our study suggests poor carbohydrate quality is a leading driver of diet-attributable type 2 diabetes



globally,” said senior author Dr Dariush Mozaffarian, a professor of nutrition at Tufts University and professor of medicine at Tufts School of Medicine in Boston, in a statement. They also noted that people are eating far too much red and processed meats, such

as bacon, sausage, salami and the like, the study said. Those three factors — eating too few whole grains and too many processed grains and meats — were the primary drivers of over 14 million new cases of type 2 diabetes in 2018. In fact, the study estimated 7 out of 10

cases of type 2 diabetes worldwide in 2018 were linked to poor food choices. “These new findings reveal critical areas for national and global focus to improve nutrition and reduce devastating burdens of diabetes,” said Mozaffarian, who is also the editor in chief of the Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter.

Mozaffarian and his team developed a research model of dietary intake between 1990 and 2018 and applied it to 184 countries. Compared with 1990, there were 8.6 million more cases of type 2 diabetes due to poor diet in 2018, the study found. People in Poland and Russia, where diets tend to focus on potatoes and red and processed meat, and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe as well as

Central Asia, had the highest percentage of new type 2 diabetes cases linked to diet. Colombia, Mexico and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean also had high numbers of new cases, which researchers said could be due to a reliance on sugary drinks and processed meat, as well as a low intake of whole grains.

“Our modeling approach does not prove causation, and our findings should be considered as estimates of risk,” the authors wrote. The analysis revealed that poor diet is causing a larger proportion of total type 2 diabetes incidence in men versus women, in younger versus older adults, and in urban versus rural residents at the global level.

STALIN'S PROPOSAL TO END ADMIN WOES DUE TO STATE GOVT-GUV STRIFE
Kerala mulls resolution to cap time for Guv's nod to Bills: CM

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Joint action against Governors' moves that curtail State governments' functioning and threaten federal principles is imperative, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Tuesday.
Vijayan said his government will consider with "utmost seriousness" Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin's proposal for States to pass Assembly resolutions seeking time frame for Governor to clear State Bills.



Nadu Assembly adopted a resolution in this regard, Vijayan said going by the experience of many States, the Justice M N Venkatchaliah Commission to review the working of the Constitution and the Justice M P Poonchi Commission on Union-State Relations has recommended mentioning a time limit, within which the Governor has to take a decision on giving assent to bills, in Article 200.
"In this matter, we are ready to extend wholehearted cooperation to you and will consider the proposal in your letter with utmost seriousness," the Kerala Chief Minister said in the letter, offering full support to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister for future actions.
In his April 11 letter to Vijayan, Stalin explained the

been kept pending by the Governor for an unduly long time, some for more than a year. This despite the fact that the ministers and officials have personally visited and given the clarifications sought by the Governor," he said.
The Kerala Chief Minister said putting a halt, that too for an inordinately long time, to the legislative measures passed by the State Assemblies which represent the will of the electorate tantamounts to nothing short of negation of democratic rights of the people.
Vijayan alleged that the time-tested convention of parliamentary democracy that the Governor has to act in accordance with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers is being violated through the act of holding back assent to the bills passed by the legislature.
He said the Constitutional discretion of the Governor operates in narrow confines of the Articles, where there is explicit mention of the word discretion and in extreme situation of invoking Article 356, which was expected to remain a dead letter, as agreed to by the eminent Constitution maker Dr B R Ambedkar in Constituent Assembly Debates.

No funds in dept, no police on streets of Thiruvananthapuram

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Thiruvananthapuram may be the only capital city in India where the police has done away with patrolling during day and night hours. Barring the cavalcade of police jeeps accompanying the ministers and high-security risk individuals, no police vehicles could be seen in the city. This is not because any worthwhile improvement in law and order but for a reason which is likely to embarrass the State administration. The Police Department does not have funds to pay for the fuel stations and the latter have decided not to offer any more fuel till they pay cash," said Yaga Sreekumar, secretary to one of the residential associations and a social activist of repute.
Sreekumar said that despite his complaint to the police station about some dubious vehicles parked in the vicinity of their residential area, the police declined to entertain the complaint and refused to visit the area. "They said they do not have fuel in the police vehicle and were hard pressed for cash to summon cabs. If we assure them that a cab would be deployed to pick them up and drop them back and we ourselves will pay for the vehi-



cle, they may turn up," said Sreekumar. The top brass of the police were unavailable for comments. T P Senkumar, former State Police Chief feigned ignorance about the situation.
A Bank manager had this to tell about the night patrolling: "Since March 18, no beat police have visited our locality. The police beat book kept in an ATM counter remain unsigned since March 18 which proves that the beat police have stopped patrolling the area."
"These may sound simple issues but the fact is that Thiruvananthapuram city stands in the top of the table with the highest number of murders and mayhem in the State. If any untoward incidents happen in the capital city, I do not know what the State Government would do. For the last few weeks, we have been alerting the Government about the seriousness of the situation," said V V Rajesh, leader of the opposition in the Municipal Corporation.

Mukul's son files missing plaint for dad; BJP man held

Roy surfaces in Delhi next day

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The police on Tuesday arrested a BJP worker in connection with alleged abduction of former Union Minister Mukul Roy who mysteriously went missing from his Kolkata residence on Monday evening only to surface at IGI Airport in New Delhi the next morning. The arrest was made after Subhrangshu Roy a former Trinamool Congress MLA and son of Mukul Roy lodged a missing complaint at a local police station alleging his father might have been abducted for ulterior political motives.
While the senior Roy a former BJP national vice president — before crossing over to TMC post 2021 Assembly election results — told media men in Delhi that he had come to the national capital for personal reasons his son told reports in Kolkata that his father was suffering from a multiple diseases and had been abducted by someone with vested interest who wants to use him to malign the name of Trinamool Congress national vice-president Abhishek Banerjee.
" My father is suffering from a whole lot of ailments ... he is suffering from dementia, Parkinson's disease, high blood sugar and other issues... presently he is mentally disoriented and needs support ... it is deplorable that some people are trying to utilize him for their own benefits," the junior Roy said. When asked as to who were trying to utilize his father he said, "there are people who want to malign the name of Abhishek Banerjee and hence they have staged this entire game plan by misleading him and then abducting him."
The junior Roy's statements came amid buzz of his father's possible move to join the BJP, a development that the



former called cruel. "It is cruel to play political games with a person who is mentally not-sound and cannot take care of himself," he was quoted as saying. In Delhi when the senior Roy was questioned about the reasons of his visiting the Capital he tended to fumble in the beginning saying why he as a local MLA-MP could not visit Delhi. "I am an MLA here ... an MP... so why can't I visit Delhi," he said before choosing the right words saying that there was no specific agenda for his Delhi visit. "I have been an MP for several years. Can I not come to Delhi? Earlier, I used to come to Delhi regularly," he said.
Tuesday's drama unfolded amid claims on Monday by Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari that many TMC MLAs were under the ED and CBI scanner and that in a year's time the total number of ruling party legislators would come to hundred or even less.
Adhikari's statement came in tandem with an allegation leveled by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who quoting an earlier speech by Union Home Minister Amit Shah — that the TMC Government would not last its whole term till 2026 and might crumble down soon after 2024 — said that there were dirty designs to topple her government. Senior TMC MLA and former minister Madan Mitra on Tuesday joined the "loose ends" saying "if we are to go by the statements of various sides over the past several days then Mukul's abduction would assume a big importance."

BJP MLAs lodge complaint against Manipur CM Biren

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

A 'crisis' may be brewing in the ruling BJP in Manipur with over a dozen legislators from the State landing in the national Capital to 'protest' against Chief Minister N Biren Singh and seeking a change in guard in the State.
The MLAs have met the central leadership here with the latter downplaying the development saying issues are being discussed and "sorted-out". According to sources, the central leaders ruled-out any change in the leadership saying "raising of grievances are part of the politics."
Many of the "disgruntled MLAs" are from the Kuki tribes who have understood to have conveyed to the high command that many of their demands for the community have not been addressed by the state leadership.
Issues related to demographic and regional grievances are also used by some for political reasons, according to the central leaders.
State party officials have confirmed that at least four BJP MLAs from Manipur valley are in Delhi to meet central leaders. An unconfirmed number of party MLAs from the Kuki tribe are also believed to be camping in the national capital.
The Kuki tribe is represented by 10 MLAs in the



assembly of whom seven are from BJP.
Some party leaders are of the view the Kuki's grievances are also borne out of vetting process put in place by the chief minister following the suspected influx of people from Myanmar.
They have discussed , among other issues "the border and developmental issues of Manipur".
The trip of the group of BJP MLAs to Delhi to meet national leaders came a day after BJP MLA Karam Shyam of Langthabal constituency tendered his resignation on Monday from the chairmanship of Tourism Corporation Manipur Limited complaining that he had "not been assigned any responsibility."
On April 8, BJP MLA Thokchom Radheshyam of Heirok constituency had resigned from the post of advisor to the chief minister citing similar grievance.

Mamata ruined economy: Adhikari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday lambasted Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for ruining the economy of Bengal and destroying the future of the State's youth by driving away industries from the region.
Speaking at a rally at Singur from where Banerjee had started her anti-land acquisition movement in 2006 forcing the ₹2,500 cr Tata Nano plant to leave the State Adhikari said



"the Chief Minister has not only destroyed the economy of the State but also ruined the future of the youth, the working class and the farmers ... during her rule not a single industry has come to the State and most others have fled."
Alleging that never in the

past the State had seen such large-scale corruption in all the fields, Adhikari said, "the queen bee of corruption has to be thrown out in order to end corruption in the State... there is not a single department which has been left out...every where the TMC has perpetrated the rule of corruption and mafia."
Raising once again the "no-vote-to-Mamata slogan," Adhikari who was once a close associate of Banerjee — particularly in the Singur and Nandigram movements —

— before joining the BJP in 2021 Assembly elections said "if the TMC Government is not removed immediately from power then the glory of Bengal cannot be salvaged ... Bengal is on the edge of destruction and if it has to be saved then Mamata Banerjee has to be driven out."
Adhikari's attack comes a day after he claimed that soon the TMC MLAs would start leaving the party in hordes and by the end of the year the ruling outfit would turn into a minority in the Assembly.



Young women walk through an alley covered with hanging umbrellas on a hot summer day, at Dilli Haat in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Indian Youth Congress prez is sexist, chauvinistic, says Assam wing chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI

Trouble seems to be brewing for Indian Youth Congress chief Srinivas BV as Assam Youth Congress president Angkita Dutta on Tuesday accused Srinivas of being "sexist and chauvinistic", and discriminating against her based on gender. She also claimed of informing the matter to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.
Angkita has accused Srinivas of harassing her for the past six months, discriminating against her for "being a woman" and using foul language to destroy her image. Angkita claimed during the Jammu leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra she had in person put the words to Rahul Gandhi about the misdeeds of Srinivas.
In a tweet message, Angkita said she was "keeping quiet" till date for the sake of Congress, "but harassment doesn't stop by Srinivas BV". "How can a sexist and chau-



vinistic IYC leader torture and demean a woman every single time. What happened to party's high profile general secretary Priyanka Gandhi's 'Ladki Hoon Ladd Sakti Hoon program launched during the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls," Angkita, daughter of former Congress minister, Anjan Dutta, said. She has also apprised her testament to Priyanka Gandhi about other party leaders who according to her are yet to take cognizance.
Angkita alleged that Srinivas has continually harassed her and was "discriminating on the basis of her gender". "My values and education doesn't allow me any-

more. The leadership has played deaf ears despite bring front of them many times," she said. Dutta claimed that despite complaints, no enquiry committee has been initiated against Srinivas. "Is this the safe space Rahul Gandhi talks about women," she said in a tweet message. Dutta, however, did not cite any specific instance to substantiate her claims.
Meanwhile, when contacted, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhupen Kumar Borah refused to comment on the issue. "I am in touch with AICC state in-charge Jitendra Singh over the matter. I can comment only after a thorough discussion with the AICC," Borah said.
Angkita cited a one instance when Srinivas went on saying that she is an alcoholic. "He undermined my existence because of being a woman. At the Rampur session, I was going inside the Mayfair hotel to meet seniors, while Srinivas was on his way out.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

New possibilities

Cook's visit is more than a celebrity event; it is about scaling up Apple's engagement with India

On the face of it, Apple chief executive Tim Cook on Tuesday launching his company's first retail store in India in Mumbai was more a celebrity event than business news. After all, Apple is an iconic company and Cook a globally-known corporate boss. Indeed he was trending on Twitter in our country. There were videos showing him waving to customers and opening the store's doors with employees cheering in the background. The inauguration has all the makings of a grand event, complete with greetings and selfies. In fact, his entire visit to India is a big newsmaker. A day before the inauguration, he posted a picture of himself eating a vada pav with Hindi film star Madhuri Dixit. Soon after inaugurating the Mumbai store, Cook tweeted, "The energy, creativity, and passion in Mumbai is incredible!"



We are so excited to open Apple BKC - our first store in India." On Thursday, Cook will attend the inauguration of the second Apple store in Delhi. He may also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The last time Cook visited India was in 2016; Apple was then starting to augment its operations in the country. While the tech giant has made its presence felt in the country, its spread is still very limited; the platform on which over 95 per cent of smartphones run is that of Google's Android. Cook's visit and Apple stores are likely to increase the company's footprints in the country.

It is not just that Apple would be selling more of its phones in India; it looks like it would also be manufacturing more in India. In the last couple of years, it has already scaled up its iPhone production in the country strikingly, making 5-7 per cent of them here in the previous financial year. In the same year, the tech major's exports crossed Rs 40,000 crore. Apple partners like Foxconn Technology Group and Pegatron Corp assembled iPhones in India. This is good progress, considering the fact that India manufactured just 1 per cent of the world's iPhones in 2021. Cook is likely to meet government officials to explore the possibility of manufacturing more Apple products locally. The company may reportedly begin the production of headphones, iPads, and watches. AirPods may also be manufactured in India. Foxconn is said to be contemplating a \$700-million investment for a new plant to increase local manufacturing of iPhones. Apple's Taiwanese supplier Pegatron is also reported to set up a second factory in Chennai. Evidently, the Modi Government's production-linked incentives or PLI scheme is nicely aligned with the China Plus One strategy that many global majors have embraced. This is a win-win situation for both multinational corporations and India. Our Government must ensure that this development doesn't get derailed by Swadeshi zealots and other xenophobes. They have done enough damage to the economy; it should be allowed to grow unhindered.

PICTALK



Tourists visit Elephanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on World Heritage Day, in Mumbai

The significance of Prachanda's visit



ASHOK K MEHTA

The decision on the Agniveer recruitment drive is likely to be delayed until May-June when the Nepali PM discusses the issue with PM Modi in India

Last week, I celebrated Nepal's New Year in Pokhara covered in a perpetual haze obscuring the splendour of the iconic Machhapuchhre (Fishtail Mountain), which is also the presiding deity of the valley which was recently blessed with a Chinese-built international airport that threatens to become a white elephant. The Chinese-built Pokhara-Kathmandu road is being turned into a six-lane highway over five years till when dust kicked up by earthmovers and forest fires will keep Machhapuchhre shrouded.

In Kathmandu, the nine-party coalition is hampered in completing government formation by the single-largest but factionalised Nepali Congress party and three byelections due on April 23 to accommodate, among others, the defeated Janta Samajwadi Party stalwart, Upendra Yadav, in case he wins from Bara constituency.

Meanwhile, PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal's (Prachanda) visit to India due this month is delayed till May for lack of a full Cabinet, especially Foreign Minister NC's NP Saud, who was sworn in on Sunday.

Always divided into camps, NC now has a Shekhar Koirala-Gagan Thapa faction demanding four Cabinet berths but has settled for three Ministers and one Minister of State. This will be the eighth Cabinet expansion since December 26, 2022. Prachanda will start breathing normally once his Cabinet is formalised. He has won two votes of confidence and obtained a majority vote for NC chief Ram Chandra Paudel.

In a wobbly coalition, there are likely to be three PMs - Prachanda for two years, Madhav Nepal (Nepal Communist Socialist) for one year and Sher Bahadur Deuba (NC) for two years. There is no certainty about the longevity of this unorthodox power-sharing agreement. A new development could roil this arrangement. The tintinnabulating Rashtriya Swatantra Party whose charismatic and controversial leader Rabi Lamichhane, after settling his citizenship case, is hoping to reclaim his Chitwan seat following the dual citizenship



fiasco. RSP is the fourth largest party but has lately been embroiled in fraud and corruption. After the Lamichhane imbroglio, lawmaker Dhaka Kumar Shrestha was allegedly caught on video demanding Rs 2mn for securing the Health Minister's portfolio for one Durga Prasai. Shrestha was instantly sacked by Lamichhane for a clean image.

RSP is engulfed in discontent due to Lamichhane's arbitrariness in appointing Shrestha's replacement as a lawmaker through a proportional representation system. Lamichhane's ambitions are larger than his ego, his opponents say. Privately, he has been saying that if the leader of a party not recognised as national and with only 10 seats - Madhav Nepal - can be PM, why not RSP with 20 seats? The tantalising question is whether the Prachanda-Deuba coalition will take him or his party on board or can he, by joining Opposition KP Oli's coalition, destabilise the government. That seems quite unlikely. A twist in the tale is the deep bonding between Lamichhane and Gagan Thapa, NC's rising star.

For Prachanda, Maoist excesses during the civil war along with his statement that he was ready to take moral responsibility for 5,000 conflict

victims (out of 17,000 insurgency deaths), he says, has no legal implications as it was a political statement with a focus on Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Haribol Gajurel, his chief advisor, has said the TRC Bill will hasten the conclusion of the peace process.

Ahead of Prachanda's visit to New Delhi, Nepal, according to Kathmandu Post, has 'gifted' India Lower Arun II to Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam. This is the third project on a single river awarded to India after the 900 MW Arun III and 695 MW Arun IV projects. Fiscal Nepal reported last September that Adani Group representatives had thrice met then Deuba government officials in Nepal Electricity Authority and wished to invest in the 10,000MW Karnali-Chisapani project and construct 400-600 KV transmission lines.

Other projects awarded to India are West Seti Hydroelectric 750MW and SetiVI 669 MW. Nepal, at long last, has learnt a lesson from Bhutan on its liquid gold assets. In 15 years, Nepal has increased its power production from 600 MW to 2500 MW and, last year, earned \$100 mn by exporting power to India in the wet season.

In my conversations with Indian Army Gorkha ex-servicemen, I learnt that on long-

delayed Agniveer four-year recruitment, there are mixed feelings. A Gorkha veteran told me that Agniveers returning to Nepal will be branded as 'rejected' when only 25 per cent are re-enlisted. Some are happy that these lads will return with Nepali Rs18 lakh and can start a business or go abroad. But many are unhappy there has been no recruitment for three years. The new Cabinet will likely be fairly ignorant about Agniveer.

While the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Committee will be formed later this month, the decision on Agniveer is likely to be delayed into May-June after Prachanda visits India. Gorkha Regiment Training Centres in India have so far trained a batch of Indian-Domiciled Gorkha Agniveers. Another batch is under training and both exclude Nepali Domiciled Gorkhas. With only IDs available for recruitment, the elite Gorkha Brigade of the Indian Army will be missing its Nepali brethren. PM Prachanda will urge Modi not to leave Nepal with an unsavoury option on Agniveer. (The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)



AHEAD OF PRACHANDA'S VISIT TO NEW DELHI, NEPAL, ACCORDING TO KATHMANDU POST, HAS 'GIFTED' INDIA LOWER ARUN II TO SUTLEJ JAL VIDYUT NIGAM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SETBACK FOR KARNATAKA BJP

Sir - Senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar (67) has joined the Congress ahead of the May 10 Assembly elections. A few minutes after he joined the Congress, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president DK Shivakumar handed over to Shettar the 'B' form to contest elections from Hubballi-Dharwad Central constituency for which he resigned from the BJP. Before he joined the Congress, Shettar on Sunday had resigned as the Hubballi-Dharwad (Central) MLA after the BJP denied him the ticket. Shettar is not the first one to join the Congress; before him, former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Sangappa Savadi joined the Congress for the same reason. Shettar is the second top leader of the Lingayat community after BJP's BS Yeddyurappa. People wonder at the way BJP's Karnataka's former CM and Deputy CM joined the Congress, which is something unique for them.

Because people are fully aware to see how the majority of Congress leaders, from time to time either due to attraction of BJP's money and power, or they know what will be their fate at the hands of enforcement agencies who are arm-twisted, misused, manipulated and controlled by the Central Government, defect to the BJP to save their skin. Naturally, the ruling BJP-fielded Lingayat strongman BS Yeddyurappa attacked the leaders, former CM Shettar and Deputy CM Savadi, both Lingayats from Kittur Karnataka. He said both of their resignations are against the ideology they have "been committed to all these decades. This is unpardonable." Whatsoever, defection or joining from the parent party to another party (against grievances) is now the part and parcel of democracy. Time will tell whether Shettar or Savadi's joining the Congress in their revolt against BJP is right or wrong. But one thing is sure, due to their revolt Congress will be eager to earn the Lingayat community votes as many as possible and the result will be known on May 13. Bidyut Kr Chatterjee | Faridabad

For a faster Vande Bharat Express



The Vande Bharat Express is India's fastest train, but it has been running at an average speed of around 83 kmph over the last two years. It is due to poor track conditions, an RTI reply has revealed. It has a permissible top speed of 130 kmph for commercial services. During this period, a train on one route hit an average speed of 95 kmph. The train is built to run at a maximum speed of 180 kmph, but has a permissi-

ble top speed of 130 kmph. Officials assert that the speed of such trains depends on the track conditions. While the Mumbai CSMT-Sainagar Shirdi Vande Bharat Express has the lowest average speed of around 64 kmph, the fastest average is maintained by the country's first Vande Bharat Express train - the New Delhi-Varanasi Vande Bharat Express - which was launched in 2019 and runs at 95 kmph.

The Rani Kamalapati (Habibganj)-Hazrat Nizamuddin Vande Bharat Express comes a close second, maintaining 94 kmph. Officials said the average speed of Vande Bharat trains is better than Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains due to their faster acceleration/deceleration. The manufacture of the first version of the Vande Bharat train - called "Train-2018" - was completed in October 2018. During the test runs, the train achieved an operational speed of 180 kmph. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

MEDIA, MAFIA AND MURDERS

Sir - After gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf were shot dead in Prayagraj, the UP Police imposed Section 144 across the State and beefed up security. Days after Atiq Ahmed's son Asad was killed in an encounter in Jhansi, At5iq and his brother Ashraf Ahmed were killed while being taken for a medical examination in Prayagraj. As many as three people were arrested, informed police after the duo was shot dead in Prayagraj. A day after three men posing as journalists killed gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf in Prayagraj, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs decided to issue detailed guidelines and standard operating procedures (SoPs) for the safety and security of media personnel while covering any spot or press conference. Thus, the media, mafia and the murderer all brought the State machinery to a standstill and looked for the motive for the merciless killing. CR Krishnan | Ghaziabad

OVERTHINKING BEGETS TROUBLE

Sir - Overthinking is not a disease but it's no less than a disease either. Either it is caused by or contributes to depression, anxiety or a host of other serious mental disorder, which affect our mental health and interfere with a person's healthy life and wellbeing. A huge number of youth today is suffering from overthinking these days, which is not at all beneficial to them. "Not all ruminations are bad", but when it inhibits your daily life and wellbeing, it turns into a bane for you; you may feel restless or agitated, face difficulty in concentrating and experience impairments with sleep. It takes you to the worst-case scenario and you also overestimate the likelihood of that scenario happening. People fritter away their time brooding about their past/future all because of their overthinking. Anmol Porwal | Ujjain

Intellectual wellness leads to a happy life

Most people focus on physical activity, eating right and staying fit but they forget about intellectual wellness, which is vital for a good life



SAKSHI SETHI

In the words of William Shakespeare: "Our bodies are our gardens - our wills are our gardeners." In this fast-paced world, the term wellness isn't restricted to a trend; rather it has become a way of maintaining a healthy and balanced life.

Various aspects of well-being (such as physical, social, economic, emotional, psychological and many more, have sprung out from mental health. It is mental health that lays the foundation for all wellbeing.

Today the majority of people solely focus on physical activity, eating right and staying fit and forget about one of the most significant aspects of bodily health - intellectual wellness. The University of New Hemisphere defines intellectual wellness as allowing the brain both stimulation and rest for critical thinking, curiosity and creativity. This wellness helps an individual develop good study skills, become a critical thinker and learn and explore a balanced life. With time and experience, the individual becomes more and more mindful of their thoughts and actions,



thereby stimulating curiosity. Curiosity is important because it motivates an individual to try new things and develop a better understanding of how a person sees the relationship between self and others.

As the saying goes "You got to nourish to flourish". Just like physical and emotional health, the intellect too needs nourishment. Intellectual well-being consists of critical thinking, stimulating curiosity, problem-solving and creativity. It is not confined to classroom or office. An intellectually well-oriented person cherishes mental growth and stimulation, is involved in intellectual and cultural activities, engages in the exploration of new ideas and understandings, has the abil-

ity to problem solve, explore creative expression, adopt new ideas, think critically and pursue topics of personal interest. Studies have also revealed that with older adults, practising intellectual wellness can even combat the likelihood of succumbing to diseases like Alzheimer's or dementia.

Simultaneously, intellectual wellness is about improving an individual's thinking skills, integrating motions and acting decisively. It is about being open to new ideas, learning to think and act critically and, at times, finding creative ways to overcome serious challenges. Indulging in activities such as spending time learning more about what interests him helps an individual grow his knowledge bank and feel revitalised. Reading a book or writing a journal can help relax the body by lowering the heart rate and easing the tension in the muscles. Practising the art of meditation or yoga aids in the relaxation response. Taking part in cultural activities either offline or online helps in expressing creativity. Playing brain games such as Sudoku, Scrabble,

solving jigsaw puzzles and much more are a few practices that can be practiced to increase intellectual wellness.

Remember, well-being is attained only when learning is viewed as an end unto itself rather than a means to a specific outcome. In order to live a life that is full of happiness and joyfulness, the only important factor necessary is to choose wellness. The true well-being of a person consists of multiple interconnected layers that begin with work and social life and ends with emotions and spirit.

Well-being is a complex interaction of different dimensions that leads an individual to a better quality of life where neglect of any one dimension for any length of time, can have adverse effects on overall health. Well-being is not about learning new things or challenging the brain, rather it's about little things that help establish a sense of purpose and fulfillment. It plays a key role in promoting mental health, self-esteem and a sense of purpose which is indeed the need of the hour. (The author is an educator)



FIRST COLUMN

SUSTAINABLE INVESTING TRENDS FOR 2023

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues will be at the forefront



ANKUR SHRIVASTAVA

As we move through 2023, sustainable investing continues to be a major trend in the world of finance. This is driven by a growing awareness of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, and the desire to invest in companies that are making a positive impact on society and the planet.

According to a report by the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA), global sustainable investment assets reached \$35.3 trillion in 2020, up from \$30.7 trillion in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the growth of ESG investing, with many investors placing a greater emphasis on it. A BlackRock survey found that 88% of institutional investors globally believe that ESG considerations will become more important as a result of the pandemic. In this backdrop, here are six sustainable investing trends that investors should be paying attention to in 2023:

The rapid rise in investments in climate tech: Climate change is one of the most pressing global issues today, and investors increasingly realize the need to invest in climate solutions. The focus on climate is also driven by government policy support, financial incentives, ESG considerations and technological advancements. Not surprisingly, investment in climate tech has been growing at a faster pace than overall VC investment recently. We believe this trend is going to become stronger in 2023.

ESG integration in investment decision-making & corporate governance: ESG factors are increasingly being recognized as critical indicators of long-term business sustainability and performance, and this trend will continue in 2023. We believe that companies and investors with ESG-focused decision-making are more likely to identify and mitigate risks, build stronger relationships, and generate long-term value. Already, 90% of S&P 500 companies published their sustainability reports in 2020 compared to 20% in 2011, as per the Governance & Accountability Institute.



The rise of impact investing: Impact investing refers to investments made to generate positive social or environmental impact, in addition to financial returns. Driven by increasing awareness of environmental and social issues, regulatory pressures, and changing consumer preferences, it has become a rapidly growing segment of the sustainable investing landscape. It's also particularly relevant in India, where many social and environmental challenges require innovative solutions. In 2023, we can expect impact investing to continue creating significant opportunities for startups that aim to generate social and financial returns.

The emergence of sustainable debt: Sustainable debt is a relatively new & rapidly-growing type of financial alternative that allows companies to raise capital for sustainable projects, including green bonds to finance environmental projects, and social bonds to finance social impact projects. As per Loan Market Association, sustainability-linked bonds and loan issuance increased by 141% and 125% respectively in H1 2021, compared to H1 2020. In 2023, we will see the growing utilization of sustainable debt by companies and investors to fund their initiatives.

Growth of circular economy: More and more investors are putting their money into a circular economy, which is restorative and regenerative by design. The circular economy aims to keep products, components, and materials at their highest utility and value at all times, minimizing waste and creating new opportunities for value creation. It is particularly relevant in India, where there are many opportunities to create value from waste and reduce the environmental impact of the industry. According to Ellen MacArthur Foundation, investment in circular economy businesses is expected to increase by 15% per year.

Increased diversity and inclusion in sustainable investing: Diversity and inclusion have become important issues in sustainable investing. In 2023, we can expect to see increased efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, both in terms of the companies being invested in and the investors themselves.

(The writer is the founder & managing partner of Momentum Capital)

A corridor in POK will lead to subversion

The Home Minister's announcement to explore possibility of a corridor in POK can be detrimental to India's security



RATTAN KAUL



"Peoples and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deducible from it — G.W.F. Hegel".

It is disturbing, to say the least, the way politics and hidden agendas are swirling in both countries; India and Pakistan including Azad Kashmir (POK), over the monument located across LOC, with redacted fame. At stake is the country's security, sensitive Kashmir and religious sensitivities.

On March 23, Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Sharada Temple at Teetwal (Kashmir) near the LOC, constructed by Sringeri Mutt, via video link. He also noted that this "will connect South with North" and a plan to 'explore' possibilities of establishing a pilgrim corridor on the pattern of Kartarpur Corridor. One is not sure what exploration means and how this proposal will come through without getting Pakistan and POK within the ambit of the proposal.

The Legislative Assembly of Azad Kashmir (POK) passed a resolution on March 29, 2023, calling for the construction of a Kartarpur-like corridor to "meet Kashmiris across the LOC". Viewed in the light of a five-day gap, enough time to get the go-ahead from the Pakistan Government and the Pakistan Army. The counter resolution wordings are so different from India's proposal; a poisonous hiss instead of a response.

Many members who approved this resolution are now calling it inappropriate and foolish. Many Kashmiri parties on either side, including the Hurriyat Conference, have raised questions. Amongst the critics are the parties and MLAs who were present when the resolution was approved, including former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Raja Farooq Haider. The buzz for this turnaround is that the legislatures now



NONE OF THE ASHOKA EDICTS, TRAVELOGUES OF NOTED CHINESE MONKS OR CHRONICLES OF KASHMIR (NILAMAT, RAJATARANGINI) MENTION THIS PARTICULAR MONUMENT WITH RELIGIOUS ROOTS OR ACKNOWLEDGE EITHER OF THESE CLAIMS

(The author is a retired brigadier, a defence analyst and a war veteran. He has written several books on Kashmir's history, politics, and security. The views expressed are personal)

believe that the Indian proposal was basically to introduce the influence of an Indian religious institution in the disputed state.

The working of the Pakistani mind has been articulated by Mr Basit, ex-High Commissioner of Pakistan in India, who calls the resolution frivolous and reminds India about CBM 2005 and the transit trade agreement 2007 across the LOC. Both remain in abeyance, as Aman Setu, transit trade became a route for subversive acts, arms and drug smuggling. Basit further defined Kartarpur Corridor in terms of an international border, with an agreed mechanism, terms proposal unworkable unless two sides of the erstwhile J&K State are joined together and LOC becomes redundant. He pointed indicators as to how this announcement will allow new life to Pakistan's demand for a solution to the Kashmir problem. The wording of the resolution; to meet Kashmiris across the LOC, has been lost sight of, which surely will include many shrines in the valley. Implications include opening a window of opportunity for Pakistan to trap India to bring their Kashmir vision on international, political and regional benefits of the dispute and the Indian motive behind the proposal.

This "exploration proposal", a sure route for subversion in the UT of J&K, gives politically and internationally a new lease of life to the Kashmir problem. Pakistan's ISI would be delighted to reactivate their conduits on both sides. Is this Indian announcement an indication to revive both these agreements by India, knowing Pakistan has never

been sincere and each of their moves is suspect, proved by previous subversive acts? One wonders, even if an agreed mechanism comes through, how both countries will reconcile to the attribution of this monument. Pakistan has declared it a Protected Buddhist Monument dating to Ashoka, denying its claim as a Hindu temple. Hindus claim it to be the ancient shrine of Sarada, the Goddess of Knowledge and closely associated with the Sharada script and language.

This temple, constructed near the LOC, is that of Goddess Sharadamba, a form of Parvati, spouse of Chandramouleshwara (Shiva), presiding deity of the Sringeri Mutt. It is misleading that it is Sarada of Kashmir, a form of Saraswati and Goddess of Knowledge. An imaginatively created fictional visit to Shankaracharya by one of the pontiffs of the Mutt, at the end of the 14th century, is associated with the Sarada Shrines of Kashmir. Many erudite South Indian scholars and people have questioned this myth. It is not for me to comment on what prompted the Home Minister to connect the two institutions, two distinct religious philosophies and the proposal of a corridor.

My knowledge of the area is decades old, having served opposite this area along LOC for over three years and am aware of how this area has been used post-1989 by Pakistan. Our surgical strike (September 2016) targets were predominantly in this very area, a hotbed base for ISI covert activities. There are conflicting claims from both sides about the monument as

indicated above. None of the Ashoka edicts, travelogues of noted Chinese monks or chronicles of Kashmir (Nilamat, Rajatarangini) mention this particular monument with religious roots or acknowledge either of these claims.

Notwithstanding concerted efforts of a religious institution's other side of LOC. Even in the later part of the 19th century, Auriel Stein remarked: "In a particular year, once every fourth lunar year, two or three hundred from a nearby area (Kupwara) visit basically for religious ceremonies of the dead. In normal years, it attracts few pilgrims". He also mentions that "Brahmans of Srinagar and roundabout hardly know the existence of this monument." This proposal and encouragement of a pointed religious structure are apt to create more apprehensions and alienation in the valley. It is better to separate religious sentiments from the security of the country. It may be prudent not to allow the visit of the pontiff of a mutt to Kashmir on May 23.

There is a need to analyse the security threats of such a proposal and a separate study of the history of the monument. One need not be carried away by sentiments and the influence of religious institutions or inclinations. It is clear that willingly we have put our hand inside a beehive, not realising the extent of the stings which will remind India of a grave blunder committed.

Congress is in a classic Catch-22 situation in Rajasthan

The big question is: can Congress leadership save Rajasthan from going the Punjab way?

With the Assembly election later this year, Rajasthan faces a political crisis again. The party lost Punjab last year because of mishandling by the Gandhis by backing the wrong horse. Will the Congress leadership be able to save Rajasthan from going the Punjab way?



KALYANI SHANKAR

Congress and BJP have been alternating in Government, and now it is the turn of the BJP to win the elections in Rajasthan. Congress desperately needs to retain the big state in the Assembly polls. In a catch-22 situation, Congress is still dithering whether to face the electorate with Ashok Gehlot as Chief Minister or the rebel Sachin Pilot instead.

(The author is a senior journalist)

Chief minister Sachin Pilot are at loggerheads again. The power tussle between the two started in 2018, first over party tickets and later over the chief minister's position. Gehlot wants to keep his job, and Pilot wants to grab it immediately.

Pilot had rebelled twice in the meanwhile. In 2020, he led a revolt with the tacit support of the BJP with 20 of his legislators; the one-month-long political crisis ended after the Congress high command promised to look into the issues raised by Sachin Pilot.

The second time was in September 2022, when the Gehlot camp consisting of 90 MLAs, submitted their resignation letters to prevent Sachin Pilot from succeeding Gehlot. This was when Ashok was

offered the party chief's position. The lot wanted to be chief minister and party president and rejected the party post.

The Pilot thinks it is now or never as the time is running out. Though he is only 46, if Pilot misses the boat, his next shot would be in 2028. He is not in the mood to waste 15 years of political life.

Last week, Pilot announced a one-day dharna accusing the Gehlot Government of failing to act against the excise mafia, illegal mining, land encroachment, and the Lalit Modi affidavit case sat in dharna for a day. He complained Gehlot had been reluctant to act against the predecessor Vasundhara-led Government. Incidentally, Vasundhara Raje (BJP) quietly helped Gehlot win the confidence

vote in 2020. Also, she is staking her claims to become chief minister again.

Sachin is young, charismatic, ambitious, articulate, and sophisticated. He is also close to Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi; However, he is a rebel, impatient, and ambitious. There are speculations that BJP might offer him a ministerial berth. With few young leaders left, Pilot's quitting could hurt Congress before the polls. Ashok Gehlot is 71, asking the electorate for one last chance. If disturbed now, he will break the party.

The options before Congress are few. One is to Counsel patience, Sachin. He has chosen corruption as an issue this time. When Rahul Gandhi is spearheading corruption, how could they blame

Sachin? Moving Pilot to Delhi to give organizational responsibilities was one of the options, but Pilot would not be satisfied. Alienating Gehlot also will have repercussions. One option is to convince the one-time magician Gehlot to step down. Gehlot had been the chief minister twice earlier and was an experienced leader from the OBC community. He has shown many times that he is a man in control. But, he is an ageing leader, lacks charisma, and indulges in factionalism. He also faces anti-incumbency.

It will be an acid test for the six-month-old Congress Chief Mallikharjun Kharge busy amid Karnataka Assembly polls. Last month, he was toying with making Pilot the state party chief, which would

have soothed Sachin but upset Gehlot. Kharge may be waiting for the Karnataka elections to conclude. With pretty good chances of winning the state, he could deal with both leaders from a position of strength. Ultimately, it depends on the party's high command to find an acceptable formula for both. But this is easier said than done. Congress leadership has little time to dither.

The first and foremost is to quieten the warring camps. The Congress has roped veteran Kamal Nath to mediate between the two sides. Secondly, the High command should act swiftly. Keeping the crisis unaddressed will result in further chaos. It might also affect the party's chances in Karnataka. Thirdly, Kharge should ensure

Rajasthan is not messed up as they did in Punjab by backing the wrong horse and losing the state.

Fourthly, there are few politically savvy peacemakers like Ahmed Patel. Also, Sonia Gandhi has taken a backseat. Kamalnath has reportedly offered Pilot a 'meaty' role in the AICC secretariat, a member of the Congress Working Committee, and a vital role in the screening committee for the upcoming Rajasthan elections.

The High Command is not willing to disturb Gehlot. So, Congress must tread carefully, as any misstep would mean losing Rajasthan. It will need all the mediating skills to resolve the issue at a time when Congress needs to win and not lose.

Top spy chiefs brief Pakistan SC judges on security issues

PUNJAB PROVINCE ELECTION

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

The heads of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI) met Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and two other top judges for more than three hours and briefed them on the security issues facing Pakistan, amidst a tussle between the government and the apex court over holding snap elections in the politically crucial Punjab province.

A three-judge bench — led by the chief justice and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jjazul Ahsan — on April 4 declared as “unconstitutional” the Election Commission of Pakistan’s (ECP) decision to postpone the election for the Punjab Assembly and ordered it to hold polls in the province on May 14.

At an earlier hearing, Defence Secretary, Former Lt Gen Hamood Uz Zaman, requested the bench to get an in-camera briefing on security issues. But the bench had asked him to first submit a classified report. “It seems that these officials directly shared with the judges the reasons why the Army troops could not be made available for security duty on May 14,” a lawyer told the paper.

The meeting between the spy chiefs of Pakistan and the top judges took place on Monday in the chamber of Chief Justice Bandial, the Express Tribune newspaper reported on Tuesday.

The two top spymasters ISI chief Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum and MI Chief Major General Wajid Aziz briefed Chief Justice Bandial on the security issues confronting the country, it said.

The current term of the National Assembly will complete its five-year term in August this year.

It is not clear whether the Supreme Court expressed satisfaction with the briefing. However, the briefing will have far-reaching implications if the

judges get convinced that the security situation in the country does not allow the deployment of troops to ensure security during the poll in Punjab.

Holding provincial elections has taken centre stage in Pakistani politics as former Prime Minister Imran Khan has been pushing for snap elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

PTI Chairman Khan has been demanding early national elections since his ouster in April last year after he lost a confidence vote in Parliament.

According to the Constitution, elections shall be held within 90 days after the dissolution of the lower house. This means that the election must be held by mid-October. The last general election was held in July 2018.

Indian mountaineers rescued from Mt Annapurna in Nepal

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Two Indians, prominent woman climber Baljeet Kaur and the youngest Indian to climb Mt Everest in 2010, Arjun Vajpayee, were rescued from Mt Annapurna in Nepal on Tuesday, officials from the expedition organisers said.

Kaur, 27, who scaled the world’s 10th highest peak without using supplemental oxygen, went missing near Camp IV while descending from the summit point on Monday.

She was rescued from 7,363m after an aerial search team located her above Camp IV, Chairman at Pioneer Adventure Pasang Sherpa, was quoted as saying by the Himalayan Times newspaper. “She has suffered from frostbite,” Sherpa said.

Kaur has been admitted to CIWEC Hospital in Kathmandu for treatment. Kaur was seen descending alone towards Camp IV by the aerial search team, according to Sherpa.

The leading Indian woman climber, who was left alone below the summit point, remained out of radio contact till this morning, the report added.

An aerial search mission was initiated



ed on Tuesday morning only after she managed to send a radio signal asking for immediate help.

According to Sherpa, her GPS location has indicated an altitude of 7,375m (24,193ft). She climbed Mt Annapurna along with two Sherpa guides at around 5:15 pm on Monday. At least three helicopters were mobilised to trace her.

In May last year, Kaur, from Himachal Pradesh, scaled Mt Lhotse and became the first Indian climber to have climbed four 8000-meter peaks in a single season.

Indian climber Arjun Vajpayee was also rescued from 6,800 metres, Seven Summit Trek’s Expedition Director

Chhawang Dawa Sherpa said. “He has sustained injuries,” Department of Tourism Director Yubraj Khatriwada was quoted as saying in The Kathmandu Post newspaper.

Vajpai, 29, was admitted for treatment to Hams Hospital after being airlifted to Kathmandu.

He was awarded by Guinness World Records in 2022 for becoming the youngest person to climb two higher 8000ers (Mt. Everest in 2010 and Summit Lhotse in May 2011).

Vajpai has already scaled Mt. Everest, Mt. Lhotse, Mt. Makalu, Mt. Kangchenjunga, Mt. Manaslu, and Cho-Oyu, making several mountaineering world records. On Monday, Anurag Malu, a resident of Kishanghar in Rajasthan, went missing while descending from Camp III of Mt. Annapurna.

A team of five Sherpa climbers has been conducting a ground search for Malu, who fell from around 6,000 metres into a deep crevasse. Pakistani climbers Shehroze Kashif and Naila Kiani were also evacuated after they fell ill while descending from the summit point, Sherpa was quoted as saying in the report.

Chinese national sent to 14-day judicial remand

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has sent a Chinese national to jail on a 14-day judicial remand on blasphemy charges in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after he was arrested on Monday, according to media reports on Tuesday.



The police arrested the Chinese national identified as Tian on Sunday and on Monday he was shifted to Abbottabad via an Army helicopter due to security concerns as the police feared local people could harm him.

Tian was booked on blasphemy charges and sent to prison on a 14-day judicial remand by an Abbottabad anti-terrorism court on Monday, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The Chinese citizen, a manager at the Dasu Hydropower Project, the biggest hydropower project in Pakistan, in the Upper Kohistan district of the province, allegedly made blas-

phemous remarks on Friday when the workers were going to perform the weekly prayer.

According to local people, the Chinese manager complained to workers at the dam that “precious time” was being lost due to prayer breaks.

The Dasu Hydropower Project is a major venture under the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CEPC).

“We have arrested the foreigner suspect under blasphemy and terrorism charges and airlifted him from here to present him before the anti-terrorism

court (ATC) in Abbottabad,” District Police Officer (DPO) Upper Kohistan, Mohammad Khalid, was quoted as saying in the report.

The suspect was later produced before the ATC amid strict security measures. The DPO said the Chinese national was moved to Islamabad onboard a helicopter on Monday evening, the report said.

Meanwhile, in Beijing, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the embassy in Islamabad was verifying the information.

“The Chinese government always asks Chinese nationals overseas to abide by laws and regulations of the host countries and respect local customs and traditions. If the incident involves Chinese nationals, our Embassy will provide consular protection and assistance within the purview of its duty,” Wang told reporters in response to a question at a regular news briefing.

Pak’s top diplomat returns

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan’s head of the diplomatic mission in Kabul returned to the Afghan capital on Monday, more than four months after he survived an assassination attempt, according to a media report.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch confirmed that Ubaidur Rehman Nizamani, the Pakistani Charge d’Affaires, returned to Kabul, however, she did not provide further details. The Express Tribune newspaper reported on Monday.

Nizamani’s return followed a phone call between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. The development came ahead of a planned visit of Muttaqi to Islamabad next month.

Quoting sources, the report said the decision to send back the Pakistani envoy was made during the call.

Nizamani was on a routine walk inside the sprawling embassy compound in Kabul on December 2 when shooters opened fire on him from a near-

by multi-storey building.

He escaped unhurt, but his Pakistani security guard was hit in the legs by bullets.

Pakistan immediately evacuated the senior diplomat and demanded the Taliban enhance the security of its embassy.

However, it was not clear at the time that it would take over four months for Pakistan to send back its envoy to Kabul.

The delay was attributed to a lack of security as well as friction between the two sides on a range of issues particularly the continued attacks by the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group.

Sources said that Bilawal extended the formal invitation to his Afghan counterpart during the telephone conversation. Though no official confirmation was available, sources said that Muttaqi is expected to travel to Islamabad in the first week of May.

This would be his second visit to Islamabad and first, since the coalition government replaced former prime minister Imran Khan in April last year, the report said.

Tunisian Islamist leader detained

AP ■ TUNIS

Influential Tunisian Islamist leader Rached Ghannouchi was detained Monday after a police search, according to his lawyer, in a move denounced by his supporters as a stepped-up effort by the president to quash Tunisia’s opposition. The move against the 81-year-old former parliament speaker comes amid growing social tensions and deepening economic troubles in Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring pro-democracy movement more than a decade ago.

Ghannouchi, head of the Ennahdha party, is the most prominent critic of Tunisian President Kais Saied. While he has been detained for questioning in the past and released, his supporters described Monday’s action as a more serious step.

Police entered his house for a lengthy search and brought him to the El Aouina jail in the east of the capital, his lawyer Nejib Chebbi told The Associated Press.

Ennahdha called for his



release, saying in a statement that it “condemns this very dangerous development.”

Tunisia’s official TAP news agency reported that he was detained on a warrant by counterterrorism prosecutors as part of an investigation into recent “provocative” comments. It did not elaborate.

Other Tunisian media reported that Ghannouchi was to be questioned over a video circulating online in which he purportedly says that the president’s perceived efforts to “eradicate” Islamist opposition threaten to unleash civil war. Ghannouchi has been detained before for questioning on sus-

picion of money laundering and terrorism financing through a charity. He has denied wrongdoing and his party says the accusations are politically driven.

His daughter Yusra said her father had cooperated with police during past detentions, and lamented that the president “ordered a raid on his house and his arrest after sundown during the most holy night of Ramadan.” Islamist lawyer Ines Harrath questioned why he wasn’t summoned for questioning during normal working hours. “We are no longer living in a state of law,” she said.

Landslide kills 2 Af nationals, buries 20 trucks in Pak

Peshawar (PTI): A massive landslide struck a key highway near the Torkham border town in northwestern Pakistan that killed at least two Afghan citizens, injured eight others and buried some 20 trucks on Tuesday morning, according to a media report.

The landslide occurred in the early hours of Tuesday following a strong thunderstorm on the main road through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Khyber Pass near the Afghanistan border, burying the trucks transporting goods, the Dawn newspaper reported.

According to rescue officials, two Afghan citizens have been killed in the landslide and authorities were trying to recover their bodies. “Two Afghan citizens had been killed in the landslide and authorities were trying to recover the bodies.”

‘Nepal can attain economic prosperity by exploiting its hydropower potential’

Kathmandu (PTI): Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” said on Tuesday that the government recognises the importance of the hydropower sector and its potential to become a strong base for the Himalayan nation’s economic prosperity and export clean and green energy.

Prachanda was the chief guest at the inaugural session of the Power Summit 2023, which kicked off on Tuesday here with the slogan “Broaden green energy market.”

Over 250 delegates from around two dozen countries, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, are participating in the summit, organised by the Independent Power Producers’ Association of Nepal (IPPAN). The Prime Minister underlined Nepal’s need to export surplus electric-

ity to attain economic prosperity.

He identified four areas where hydropower can be utilised in the country: agriculture, cooking, industry and transportation, and asserted that domestic use of hydropower not only helps to reduce pollution but also aids in minimising the Himalayan country’s huge trade imbalance by bringing down the import of expensive petroleum products and Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

Nepal’s hydropower potential is estimated to be above 50,000 MW but actual electricity generation from hydropower is currently 800 MW.

Nepal can meet not just its own electricity needs, but also serve energy-hungry neighbours like Bangladesh and India, according to experts.

UN: Leaving Af would be ‘heartbreaking’

United Nations (AP): The United Nations is ready to take the “heartbreaking” decision to pull out of Afghanistan in May if it can’t persuade the Taliban to let local women work for the organisation, the head of the UN Development Program said.

UN officials are negotiating with the Islamist government in the hope that it will make exceptions to an edict this month barring local women from working for the organisation, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner told The Associated Press.

“It is fair to say that where we are right now is the entire United Nations system having to take a step back and reevaluating its ability to operate there,” Steiner said. “But it’s not about negotiating fundamental principles, human rights.”

Clinton optimistic Northern Ireland govt will be revived

AP ■ BELFAST

Former US President Bill Clinton said on Tuesday he was optimistic that one of Northern Ireland’s main political parties would soon end a boycott that has kept the regional government on ice for more than a year.

Clinton said he had met with Democratic Unionist Party leader Jeffrey Donaldson on Monday, and “I left that meeting more optimistic than I entered it.”

Clinton is in Belfast this week to mark 25 years since the Good Friday Agreement ended decades of sectarian bloodshed. The deal established a Northern Ireland government with power shared between British unionist and Irish nationalist parties.

The DUP walked out more than a year ago to protest post-Brexit trade rules that



imposed a customs border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

It has refused to return, despite a deal reached by the U.K. and the EU in February to remove many of the border checks.

Clinton said the deal, known as the Windsor Framework, had gone a long way to resolving the political

impasse. “So I expect that, in the not too distant future, the barriers to bringing up the government again will be removed,” he told the BBC. “Because everybody knows that economically, socially and politically, they would be worse off if they packed it in over the current level of disagreement.”

UK Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris also urged the DUP to go back into government, saying those who valued Northern Ireland’s place in the United Kingdom should “put the union first, restore the devolved institutions and get on with the job of delivering for the people of Northern Ireland.”

“The biggest threat to Northern Ireland’s place in the union is failing to deliver on these priorities,” he told a Good Friday Agreement commemoration conference in Belfast.

British Gujarati parliamentary group faces objections

London (PTI): A number of Indian diaspora organisations in the UK have issued letters objecting to the creation of a new cross-party parliamentary group for British Gujaratis, warning that the move could be “divisive.”

The British Gujaratis All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was registered as a new body with the stated purpose “to ensure that the economic, health, social and cultural needs of the British Gujarati community are reflected in Parliament, with a particular emphasis, on health, education, and elderly care.”

PGs, which have no official status within the British Parliament, are informal cross-party groups formed by members of Parliament (MPs) and House of Lords peers who share a common interest in a particular policy area, region or country.

“We see this move as divisive and against the interests of the British Indian community,” reads a letter from the Friends of India Society International (FISI) UK issued last week to the office-bearers of the new group. “We fail to see any concrete reasons for its creation as the concerns raised are not separate from those of the British Indian community and hence the same can be addressed through APPG for British Hindus and APPG for India,” it notes.

It warns that the move to create the new group is “an attack on the unity of the British Indian community and also on India.” Such disharmonious and mala-fide attempts creating strife within the wider Hindu/Indian community needs to be discouraged,” it adds.

Similar sentiments have been expressed in a series of letters issued by groups such as the Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB), British Sikh Association and the National Association of Patidar Samaj – which represents the British Gujarati community.

US, Japan plant cherry tree at WH to mark friendship

Washington (AP): Stepping gingerly over the lawn in their spiky heels, first lady Jill Biden and Yuko Kishida, the wife of Japan’s prime minister, planted a cherry tree at the White House on Monday to honour decades of friendship between their countries.

“This is how you always plant a tree,” Biden said, laughing about their shoes as she and Kishida shovelled soil around the base of a Yoshino cherry tree sapling on the south grounds.

Kishida is on a rare solo visit to the United States. It’s the first time the spouse of the prime minister has travelled alone to the United States, and Kishida visited at Biden’s invitation, according to the Japanese embassy in



Washington.

She is spending part of the week in Washington to promote friendship between the US and Japan, as well as cultural exchanges, the Japanese government said.

Biden told Kishida to the Oval Office to see President Joe Biden, the White House said,

and hosted her for lunch. Among those invited to the women-only meal were Rep. Doris Matsui, D-California; Maki Onuki, principal dancer at the Washington Ballet; and Akiko Iwasaki, immunology professor at Yale University School of Medicine, according to the first lady’s office.

CBC pausing Twitter after ‘govt-funded media’ label

Toronto: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation paused its use of Twitter on Monday after the social media platform owned by Elon Musk stamped CBC’s account with a label the public broadcaster says is intended to undermine its credibility.

Twitter labelled CBC/Radio-Canada “government-funded media” — the same label that prompted National Public Radio in the US to similarly quit Twitter last Wednesday.

“Twitter can be a powerful tool for our journalists to communicate with Canadians, but it undermines the accuracy and professionalism of the work they do to allow our independence to be falsely described in this way,” CBC spokesman Leon Mar said in a statement announcing the change Monday afternoon.

Sweden public radio exits Twitter

Helsinki (AP): Sweden’s public radio said Tuesday that it would stop being active on Twitter, but it did not blame new labels that Elon Musk’s social media platform has slapped on public broadcasters, leading some major North American outlets to quit tweeting.

Sveriges Radio said on its blog that Twitter has lost its relevance to Swedish audiences. National Public Radio and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, meanwhile, have pointed to Twitter’s new policy of labelling them as government-funded institutions, saying it undermines their credibility.

For a long time, Sveriges Radio has de-prioritised its presence on Twitter and has now made the decision to completely stop being active on the



platform, at the same time that we are shutting down a number of accounts,” said Christian Gillingier, head of the broadcaster’s social media activities.

He cited a recent study showing only some 7 per cent of Swedes are on Twitter daily and said the platform “has simply changed over the years and become less important for us.” “The audience has simply chosen other places to be.

“Consequently, we will be pausing our activity on our corporate Twitter account and all CBC and Radio-Canada news-related accounts,” the statement said.

CBC has sent a letter to Twitter asking the company to re-examine the designation. Musk later tweeted about it and changed it to “69 per cent Government-funded media.”

CBC does not meet those criteria, Mar argued, because it is publicly funded through a parliamentary appropriation that is voted upon by all members of Parliament, and its editorial independence is protected in law in the Broadcasting Act.

The CBC’s board of directors determines how the funding it receives is spent. In 2021-22, the CBC received more than USD 1.2 billion Canadian (USD 900 million) in government funding. AP

32 killed in two separate fire incidents in China

At least 32 people were killed in two separate fire incidents involving a hospital and a factory in China, official media reported on Tuesday. A hospital's admissions building in Beijing's Fengtai district caught fire at 12:57 pm (local time) on Tuesday, leaving 21 dead, state-run China Daily reported. The fire was extinguished at around 1:33 pm, and the rescue operation lasted until 3:30 pm. A total of 71 patients were evacuated and transferred. The cause is currently under investigation, the report said. In a separate incident, 11 people died in a factory fire in Wuyi county, Jinhua city in China's eastern Zhejiang province on Monday, the local government said on Tuesday. The blaze broke out at 14:04 on Monday. Firefighters, police officers and emergency



medical personnel rushed to the spot after receiving an emergency call about the incident. Two rounds of search and rescue operations were carried out by 4 am Tuesday after the fire was brought under control and 11 bodies were found, the China Daily reported. The fire was reported to have started in a plant where wooden doors are made, possibly from materials such as wooden doors, paint and packages. Those alleged to be responsible for the incident have been detained and a more thorough investigation is underway, the announcement added.

China's military chief vows to bolster ties with Russia

Moscow (AP): The Chinese defence chief vowed on Tuesday to take military cooperation with Moscow to a new level, a statement that reflects increasingly close Russia-China ties amid the fighting in Ukraine. Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Li Shangfu held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu after attending a meeting Sunday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin. "The armed forces of China and Russia will implement the agreements reached by the heads of state and expand military cooperation, military-technical ties and arms trade," Li said in opening remarks at Tuesday's meeting with Shoigu. "We will certainly take them to a new level." Li's trip follows last month's three-day state visit to the Russian capital by Chinese leader Xi Jinping, reflecting China's strengthening engagement with Russia. Moscow and Beijing have closely aligned their policies in attempt to reshape the world order to diminish the influence of the United States and its Western allies. China has refused to criticise Russia's actions in Ukraine and blamed the U.S. and NATO for provoking Moscow. Xi's visit to Moscow gave a strong political boost to Putin, sending a message to Western leaders that their efforts to isolate Russia have fallen short. After the talks, Putin and Xi issued joint declarations pledging to further bolster their "strategic cooperation," develop cooperation in energy, high-tech industries and other spheres and expand the use of their currencies in mutual trade to reduce dependence on the West. After more than a year of fighting in Ukraine and bruising Western sanctions, Russia's dependence on China has increased significantly.

Russia upholds detention of American reporter

Moscow (AP): A Russian judge on Tuesday upheld the detention of jailed American journalist Evan Gershkovich, who was arrested on spying charges as part of a sweeping Kremlin crackdown on dissent amid the war in Ukraine. He and the US government vehemently deny the allegations. The Wall Street Journal reporter is the first US correspondent since the Cold War to be detained in Russia on spying allegations and his arrest rattled journalists in the country and elicited outrage in the West. Dozens of journalists crowded into the courtroom to catch a glimpse of Gershkovich, who looked calm as he stood inside a glass cage to appeal his detention. Russia's Federal Security Service detained the 31-year-old in Yekaterinburg in March and accused him of trying to obtain classified information about a Russian arms factory. Gershkovich, his employer and the US government deny he was involved in spying and have demanded his release. "Evan is a member of the free press who right up until he was arrested was engaged in newsgathering. Any suggestions otherwise are false," the Journal has said in a statement. Last week, the US official declared that Gershkovich was "wrongfully detained." He could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted. Russian lawyers have said past investigations into espionage cases took a year to 18 months, during which time he could have little contact with the outside world. He has been held in Moscow's Lefortovo prison, which dates from the czarist era and has been a terrifying symbol of repression since Soviet times. The arrest comes at a moment of bitter tensions between the West and Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine and as the Kremlin intensifies a crackdown on opposition activists, independent journalists and civil society groups. The sweeping campaign of repression is unprecedented since the Soviet era. Activists say it often means the very profession of journalism is criminalised, along with the activities of ordinary Russians who oppose the war. Last month, a Russian court convicted a father over social media posts critical of the war and sentenced him to two years in prison. Monday, a Russian court convicted top opposition figure Vladimir Kara-Murza Jr. of treason for publicly denouncing the war and sentenced him to 25 years in prison. The US has pressed Moscow to grant consular access to Gershkovich. US Ambassador Lynne Tracy, who attended Tuesday's hearing, said a day earlier that she had visited Gershkovich in prison. She said on Twitter that "he is in good health and remains strong," reiterating a US call for his immediate release. US President Joe Biden spoke to Gershkovich's parents last week and again condemned his detention.

China's economic growth accelerates

China's economic growth accelerated in the latest quarter as consumer flocked back to shops and restaurants following the abrupt end of anti-virus controls. The 4.5 per cent growth in gross domestic product from January to March compared to the same period in 2022 was the fastest in the past year, and outpaced the 2.9 per cent growth in the previous quarter, according to government data released Tuesday. But authorities cautioned that China will likely face import and export pressures in the coming months amid an uncertain international economic environment, and also warned of inadequate domestic market demand in the world's No. 2 economy. Fu Linghui, the director general of China's National Bureau of Statistics, said on Tuesday that authorities will implement various policies to "stabilise growth" and stimulate domestic demand, as well as help support the development of emerging industries. The higher-than-expected rise in GDP for the quarter comes amid a rebound in consumption, as people flocked to shopping malls and restaurants after "zero-COVID" restrictions were removed at the end of 2022. Analysts initially pegged economic growth to be about 4 per cent. Earlier this year, China's government set this year's economic growth target at "around 5 per cent," a conservative target that will only be met if GDP grows faster in the months ahead. In March, total retail sales of consumer goods went up by 10.6 per cent year on year, and grew 7.1 percentage points compared to the first two months of the year. "The combination of a steady uptick in consumer confidence as well as the still-incomplete release of pent-up demand suggest to us that the consumer-led recovery still has room to run," said Louise Loo, an economist at Oxford Economics in a note. But while consumption and

Putin rallies troops with 2nd Ukraine visit

Kyiv (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin visited command posts of the Kremlin's forces fighting in Ukraine, officials said Tuesday, as the war approaches its 14th month and Kyiv readies a possible counter-offensive with Western-supplied weapons. A video released by the Kremlin and broadcast by Russian state television showed Putin arriving by helicopter at the command post of Russian forces in southern Ukraine's Kherson province and then flying to the headquarters of the Russian National Guard in Luhansk province, which is in the east. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the visits took place Monday. The trip, Putin's second in two months to Russian-occupied territory in Ukraine, represented an apparent attempt by the Russian leader to rally his troops and demonstrate his authority. Dressed in a dark suit, Putin appeared to chair meetings with his military top brass during both of his stops. The locations of the military head-



quarters weren't disclosed, making it impossible to assess how close they were to the front line. Nor was it possible to independently verify the authenticity of the video footage. On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made his latest trip to positions near the front line to stiffen the resolve of soldiers battling Putin's troops. Zelenskyy visited units in Avdiivka, a city in Donetsk province where fierce battles are taking place, his office said. He heard first-hand reports about the battlefield situation and handed out awards. Zelenskyy's visits to areas of his country that have felt the brunt of Russia's full-scale invasion gathered pace last month as he shuttled across the country, often by train. As with Putin, the Ukrainian leader's wartime trips usually aren't publicised until after he's already left an area. Russia's war in Ukraine has become largely deadlocked amid heavy fighting in the east, particularly around the Donetsk province city of

Suspected shooting attack in Jerusalem wounds two

Jerusalem (AP): A suspected shooting attack by a Palestinian gunman in Jerusalem on Tuesday left two Israeli men wounded, police said. It was the latest in a year-long cycle of violence that shows no sign of abating after weeks of heightened tensions around Jerusalem during the overlap of the Jewish holiday of Passover and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Israeli police were searching for the suspected attacker who fled the scene in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The two wounded, who were shot while inside a vehicle, were treated for moderate gunshot wounds. Tensions in Israel and the occupied West Bank soared weeks after an Israeli police raid on Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site, the compound home to the Al-Aqsa mosque. The mosque sits on a contested hilltop known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, revered as the third-holiest site in Islam and the holiest site in Judaism. Earlier this month, the Israeli military struck sites linked to the Palestinian group Hamas in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip after militants in the two territories fired salvos of rockets at Israel. Palestinian attacks have killed at least 20 people, including one soldier, since the start of the year.

US approves F-16 upgrade after Turkey eases stand on NATO

Washington (AP): The US agreed Monday to sell Turkey \$259 million in software it has long sought to upgrade its fleet of US F-16 fighter jets. State Department approval of the sale comes about two weeks after Turkey dropped its objections to Finland joining NATO. Turkey continues to withhold its approval for Sweden to join the military alliance. NATO requires unanimous approval to admit new members. Turkey also still wants to buy 40 new F-16s from the US, but some in Congress oppose the sale until Turkey approves NATO membership for both Nordic countries. Turkey fell out of grace with the US on high-tech military aircraft purchases after it decided in 2017 to acquire Russian air-defence

G7 vows tough stance on Russia's war

Karuzawa (Japan): Top diplomats from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies vowed a unified front against Chinese threats to Taiwan and Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, saying at the close of their meetings Tuesday that they were committed to boosting and enforcing tough sanctions against Moscow. The G-7 communique laying out their commitments also included strong words over an unprecedented run of North Korean missile tests. But it was China's growing assertiveness in Asia and Russia's invasion of Ukraine that highlighted the three-day summit hosted by Japan in this hot springs resort town. "There can be no impunity for war crimes and other atrocities such as Russia's attacks against civilians and critical civilian infrastructure," the ministers said. "We remain committed to intensifying sanctions against

NOTICE: A notice of intended marriage has been received from Mr. Naman Goel S/O Mr. Anil Kumar Goel R/O A-50, Akshardham Colony, Modipuram, Meerut-250110 and Ms. Priya Verma D/o Late Mr. Ajay Kumar Verma R/O F-1207(A), 13 Floor, Amrapali Princely Estate, Sector-76 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar in the office of the undersigned, any person interested therein, may file objections to it on any day upto 02-05-2023 in the office of the undersigned. City Magistrate/Marriage Officer Noida Gautam Budh Nagar

PUBLIC NOTICE: Be it known to all that my clients MS. Tripti Arora D/o. SH. VIRENDER KUMAR, R/O. FLAT NO 74-C AYODHYA ENCLAVE SECTOR-13, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, has broken all relations from her father namely SH. VIRENDER KUMAR and her mother namely SMT. VANDANA both R/O. FLAT NO 74-C AYODHYA ENCLAVE SECTOR-13, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, in every manner as they have been interfering in the peaceful life of my client and not letting her take her own decisions for her welfare as she is a responsible, mature and adult person. SATISH PRAKASH GUPTA (ADVOCATE) 110/1, ANAND VIHAR WESTERN WING, TIS HAZARI COURTS, DELHI - 54

Murugan misses out on Int'l Booker Prize shortlist

London (PTI): Perumal Murugan's Tamil novel 'Pyre', translated into English by Aniruddhan Vasudevan, missed out on the next stage of the International Booker Prize 2023 as the shortlist for the literary prize was unveiled at the London Book Fair on Tuesday. The coveted literary prize, won last year by Geetanjali Shree and translator Daisy Rockwell for the first-ever Hindi novel 'Tomb of Sand', is awarded annually for a work of fiction written originally in any language, translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. The GBP 50,000 prize money is shared between the writer and translator of the winning work, to be known on May 23. Murugan's 'Pyre', which tells the love story of an inter-caste couple, made history last month as the first-ever work in Tamil to make the longlist of the prize. The 56-year-old Tamil Nadu born and based author, scholar and poet has written 10 novels, five collections of short stories and four anthologies of poetry and is working on his next novel. Meanwhile, the six books to be shortlisted from the so-called 'Booker dozen' of 13 longlisted novels include: 'Boulder' in Catalan by Eva Baltasar, 'Whale' in Korean by Cheon Myeong-kwan, 'The Gospel According to the New World' in French by Maryse Condé, 'Standing Heavy' in French by Gauz, 'Time Shelter' in Bulgarian by Georgi Gospodinov, and 'Still Born' in Spanish by Guadalupe Nettel. It marks the first nominations for books translated from Bulgarian and Catalan and wife-husband author-translator team of Maryse Condé and Richard Philcox for their French novel. Conde, 86, dictated 'The Gospel According to the New World' to Philcox as she has a degenerative neurological disorder that makes it difficult to speak and see.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, केन्द्रीय भण्डार, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान जल भवन, 'बी' ब्लॉक, नेहरू कालोनी, देहरादून। निविदा सूचना दिनांक : 18.04.2023 उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से केन्द्रीय भण्डार, देहरादून द्वारा निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा, दू-विड सिस्टम (लकनीकी विड एवं कॉम्पिउटिजल विड) आघार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा सं.	कार्य विवरण	घरौहर धनराशि रु.	ई-निविदा प्रथम आवेदन करने की तिथि एवं समय	ई-निविदा अपलोड करने की प्रारंभ एवं अंतिम तिथि व समय	ई-निविदा सूचना खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	तकनीकी विड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	निविदा की वैधता	द्वि-विड मॉडिंग की तिथि एवं समय	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
23/22-23	वार्षिक दर अनुबंध पर, M.S. Intake Chamber size 40.5cm. x 40.5cm. x 50cm. as per departmental drawing and design की आपूर्ति।	1,25,000.00	20.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	25.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	03.05.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	23.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	
24/22-23	अर्हता - Only manufacturers/fabricators of M.S. Intake Chamber as per departmental drawing and design are allowed to take part in this tender.	वार्षिक दर अनुबंध पर, M.S. Uttaranchal Koop having 4, 5 & 6 laterals size 200, 250, 300 and 350 mm as per departmental drawing and design की आपूर्ति।	1,55,000.00	20.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	25.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	03.05.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	23.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
25/22-23	अर्हता - Only manufacturers/fabricators of ISI marked Manhole Covers having BIS license for IS: 12592/2002 are allowed to take part in this tender.	वार्षिक दर अनुबंध पर, ISI marked Pre-cast concrete Manhole Covers conforming to IS: 12592/2002 with M.S. Frame (M.S. Frame for square and rectangular shall be made from hot rolled steel flat iron 5 mm. thick with arrangement for hold fast 10 cm. long at each corner) of suitable size, quality and load bearing, for placing of M.H. Covers की आपूर्ति।	92,500.00	20.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	25.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	03.05.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	23.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
28/22-23	मात्रा दर अनुबंध पर, SITC of Energy Efficient Centrifugal Pumpssets (3600 LPM, 75 Meter Head, 2980/2900 RPM) at Raw Water Pumping Station Pump No. 1 under New Tehri Pumping W/S Scheme, Distt. Tehri Garhwal कार्य।	1,03,000.00	20.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	25.04.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	02.05.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	03.05.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	23.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	
			अर्हता - Only manufacturers or dealer authorised by manufacturer for this tender and who have experience in supply and installation of Energy Efficient Centrifugal Pump set of required duties and efficiency are allowed to take part in this tender.						

ई-निविदा से सम्बंधित समस्त जानकारीयें व शर्तें उत्तराखण्ड की वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in एवं विभागीय वेबसाइट <http://ujls.uk.gov.in> पर ऑन लाइन देखी/प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp. IT Park, Sahasthradnara Road, Dehradun Ref. No. 95/11-02(xix)-2/ITCO/URRDA/23 Dated : 17.04.2023 PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice-01/2023-24 The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Nainital & Uttarkashi for 02 number of Packages with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 16.86 Crore including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent. Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 18.04.2023. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) form one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (f) of ITB with CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/MBD, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works), either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids. Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 25.04.2023 01:00 PM. For further details please log on to www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in Chief Engineer URRDA, Dehradun *Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract. Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

Sensex, Nifty fall for 2nd day on profit taking in oil, banking stocks



PTI ■ MUMBAI
Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower for a second day on Tuesday due to profit-taking in select banking, power and FMCG stocks amid mixed global markets and foreign fund outflows.

Fall in index major Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank also dented sentiment.

Reversing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 183.74 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 59,727.01. During the day, it declined 331.45 points or 0.55 per cent to a low of 59,579.30.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 46.70 points or 0.26 per cent to end at 17,660.15 as 29 of its stocks declined while 21 advanced. After a gap-up opening, the index moved in a range of 17,766.60 to 17,610.20 during the day.

Among Sensex stocks, PowerGrid fell the most by 2.62 per cent. UltraTech Cement, Titan, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, ITC and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

Nestle India bucked the trend, closing with gains of 1.99 per cent. HCL Technologies, IndusInd Bank, Wipro, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

"The banking stocks pared the performance during the day while the market was grappling with the sell-off in the IT sector. However, the IT sector experienced a marginal relief rally, aided by bottom fishing, as the recent correction has made the sector attractive for long-term investment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Global markets struggled to

make much headway on Tuesday as investors weighed Chinese data that pointed to an uneven recovery, as well as the possibility of further policy tightening by the Federal Reserve and other central banks, said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.52 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.22 per cent.

Among indices, utilities fell 0.81 per cent, power went lower by 0.76 per cent, telecommunication declined by 0.71 per cent, consumer durables (0.62 per cent) and commodities (0.18 per cent). Realty, healthcare, metal, IT and tech were among the winners.

"Markets languished in negative territory for the better part of the trading session and ended weak for the second day in a row as selective profit-taking in banking, power & FMCG stocks weighed. However, buying in realty and metal stocks limited the downside," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Hong Kong ended lower, while Japan Shanghai settled with gains.

European markets were trading with gains during the afternoon trade. The US markets had ended in positive territory on Monday. The Sensex had tanked 520.25 points or 0.86 per cent to settle at 59,910.75 on Monday. The Nifty fell 121.15 points or 0.68 per cent to finish at 17,706.85.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.12 per cent to USD 84.66 per barrel. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 533.20 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

NPA of self-help groups down to 1.8%: Rural Development Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Non-performing assets (NPAs) of self-help groups (SHGs) have gone down to 1.8 per cent, Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh said on Tuesday and called upon banks to provide incentives to those having NPA of less than one per cent.

Speaking at an event here, Singh said NPA for self-help groups was 9.58 per cent in 2014. "NPA has come down to 1.8 per cent as I speak..." he said.

Singh stressed that loans given to those in need do not become NPA.

"When I was the Cooperative Minister, I sent a team to Bangladesh to understand why NPA was lesser there. When they returned, I understood that need-based finance never becomes NPA. The loans given at face value become NPA," he said.

The minister said that a waiver of three per cent will be given on the interest being



paid on loans. He also urged banks to provide incentives to those who have NPA of less than one per cent.

Singh was speaking at a gathering after launching "Sangathan Se Samridhhi — Leaving No Rural Woman Behind", a national campaign aimed at mobilising 10 crore women from eligible rural households into self-help groups. The minister said that in 2014, only 2.35 crore women were part of self-help groups and the number has increased to more than nine crore now.

"Our aim is to increase the number to 10 crore by 2024," he said. He said the government is working on covering SHG workers under a pension scheme.

The campaign's primary objective is to mobilise disadvantaged rural communities unaware of the benefits of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana — National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

The campaign will be organised in all states with the expectation of forming more than 1.1 lakh SHGs.

SHG members from different states participated in the event and women from Bihar, Tripura, Telangana, Maharashtra and Haryana shared their experiences on how the DAY-NRLM SHG movement supported them to come out of poverty by creating livelihood opportunities leading to their economic independence and social empowerment.

Pvt equity inflow in real estate plunges 95% to \$45 mn in Jan-Mar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Private equity (PE) investment into Indian real estate fell sharply by 95 per cent in January-March to USD 45 million amid global uncertainties, according to property consultant Savills India.

PE investment stood at USD 1 billion in the year-ago period.

"The investment activity has been subdued due to growing global recession concerns, rising capital costs, and a mismatch in valuation expectations between sellers and investors, which have become significant

hindrances to capital deployment in India," Savills said in a report.

Furthermore, recent events in the global financial world, including the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the contagion spreading to other mid-market US banks, have contributed to the overall uncertainty in India's office leasing demand, it added.

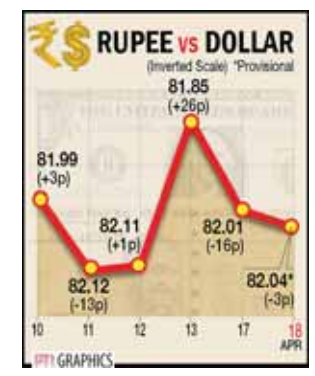
"The dip in private equity investment inflows into the Indian real estate sector in Q1 is understandable, given the prevailing geo-political and economic global challenges and uncertainties," said Diwakar

real estate products in India, is another factor that will result in muted investment volumes, he said. "However, the demand for investing in core office, core retail, warehousing, data centres and life sciences is extremely strong. Indian Real Estate offers huge potential for strategic investments and significant returns with new investment formats aligned to current requirements," Rana said.

The data indicate that commercial office assets remained the top performer in Q1 2023, capturing about 64 per cent of the total investment, Savills said.



Rana, Managing Director, Capital Markets, Savills India.



Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 82.04 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee depreciated 3 paise to close at 82.04 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, tracking negative sentiments in the domestic equities market. Forex traders said a weak greenback against major currencies and falling crude prices, however, resisted the fall in the domestic unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened strong at 81.99 against the dollar. During intra-day, it climbed to 81.96 and hit the lowest level of 82.09.

It finally ended the session at 82.04 (provisional), 3 paise lower from its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee settled at 82.01 against the dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.37 per cent to 101.73. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.32 per cent to USD 84.49 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 183.74 points or 0.31 per cent lower at 59,727.01 points. The broader NSE Nifty declined 46.70 points or 0.26 per cent to 17,660.15 points.

India's gem, jewellery exports decline 23.7% to ₹21,501.96 cr in March; marginally up in FY23

PTI ■ MUMBAI
India's overall gem and jewellery exports grew marginally by 2.48 per cent to Rs 3,00,462.52 crore (USD 37,468.66 million) in 2022-23 due to global challenges like inflation, the Russia-Ukraine war and the lockdown in China for almost six months, GJEPC said on Tuesday.

The total gem and jewellery exports during 2021-22 stood at Rs 2,93,193.19 crores (USD 39,331.71 million), the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said in a statement.

The overall exports of gems and jewellery declined by 23.75



per cent to Rs 21,501.96 crores (USD 2,612.65 million) in March 2023 compared to Rs 28,198.36 crores (USD 3,699.90 million) in the same month last year.

"India's gem and jewellery industry has shown remarkable resilience and perseverance in the face of global challenges. Despite inflation in the US, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the lockdown in China for almost six months, a key market, the industry has managed to put up a commendable performance," GJEPC chairman Vipul Shah said.

The overall gems and jewellery exports grew 2.48 per cent to Rs 3,00,462.52 crores compared to last year and the timely implementation of the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has resulted in a remarkable 17 per cent growth in exports of plain gold jewellery in 2022-23, Shah added.

Gold falls ₹180; silver declines ₹240

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Gold prices fell by Rs 180 to Rs 60,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 60,480 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also declined by Rs 240 to Rs 75,780 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 60,300 per 10 grams, down Rs 180 per 10 grams.

Cook launches Apple's first India store



PTI ■ MUMBAI
Apple's chief executive Tim Cook on Tuesday launched the iconic consumer technology company's first retail store in India, welcoming customers into the facility inside a mall in suburban BKC.

"The energy, creativity, and passion in Mumbai is incredible! We are so excited to open Apple BKC — our first store in India," Cook, who opened the doors of the store for customers, tweeted.

Hundreds of customers had queued up since last night to be among the first ones to shop or get a feel of the store, which comes 25 years after the company first started selling its products and services in the country through partners. Dressed in a black-t and grey pants and accompanied by the company's senior vice president for retail Deirdre O'Brien, Cook opened the doors of the store to walk into a crowded foyer to pose for the media, and then started welcoming customers into the store.

Customers took selfies with Cook, sought autographs and exchanged pleasantries before going in. One among them, a designer from Mumbai, carried

Razorpay sets up advisory board, ropes in former RBI Dy Governor as chairperson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Payment gateway and neobanking platform Razorpay has roped in former RBI deputy governor NS Vishwanathan and former State Bank of India managing director Arijit Basu to lead its newly-formed advisory board.

The founding independent members of the board also include retired civil servants — Aruna Sundararajan, former Secretary, Ministries of Steel, IT, and Telecom, GoI (Member) and KP Krishnan, former Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (Member). The board has been set up to assist the fintech unicorn develop long-term strategies, anticipating challenges and suggesting mitigation measures, especially in the context of regulatory and compliance processes, Razorpay said in a statement.

Razorpay is one of the leading fintech companies operating in India, serving over 10 million businesses across India.

"As part of Razorpay's constant endeavour to enhance customer experience, the newly formed advisory board is founded with the singular vision of establishing the highest standards in customer experience, corporate governance and risk and compliance in the Indian fintech industry, for others to follow," it said.

The council will also help contribute to the development of Razorpay's payment infrastructure and help engage with key institutions and stakeholders.

All the members of the Advisory Board will periodically convene to review, analyse and provide recommendations and directions on both strategic and tactical levels. The key subject areas for the Advisory Board will be accelerating product innovation around customer experience and customer safety; building the best-in-class practices for regulatory and compliance management processes; working with various stakeholders to enhance risk monitoring and cybercrime prevention; and building new processes around digital information security that will help shape the future of fintech ecosystem.

IN SHORT

- ZYDUS GETS USFDA NOD FOR GENERIC MEDICATION**
New Delhi: Zydus Lifesciences on Tuesday said it has received approval from the US regulator to market a generic female hormone, which helps reduce symptoms of menopause, in the US market. The company has received final approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to manufacture and market Estradiol Transdermal System USP in the American market. Estradiol transdermal system is indicated for prevention of postmenopausal osteoporosis.
- TWO LIVER TRANSPLANT SURGERIES PERFORMED**
New Delhi: Within a week, liver transplant surgeries were successfully performed on two patients at Vellore Naruvi Hospitals, a record of sorts in health and medical care in this region, Dr GV Sampath, founder Chairman of Naruvi Hospitals said today.
- 32,000 BENEFITED BY JOB PORTAL**
New Delhi: WorkIndia, India's leading job portal for blue-collar workers, has collaborated with over 250 corporates to cater to their critical hiring needs. The company's unique platform connects job seekers with employers, making the recruitment process easier with an easy-to-use app. Over 32,000 employees have benefitted through their corporate outreach.

Twitter to restrict visibility of tweets that violate its policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Social media platform Twitter will allow freedom of speech but not "freedom of reach" as it will restrict visibility of tweets that violate its rules, the company said in its policy update.

Twitter will initially apply the visibility filter on tweets that are found violating hateful conduct rules and expand it to other domains later.

The social media firm said that Twitter users have the right to express their opinions and ideas without fear of censorship.

"We also believe it is our responsibility to keep users on our platform safe from content violating our rules. These beliefs are the foundation of freedom of speech, not freedom of reach — our enforcement philosophy which means, where appropriate, restricting the reach of tweets that violate our policies by making the content less discoverable," the firm said.

The sample screenshot shared an example of visibility restriction of tweets that may violate Twitter's rule against hateful conduct.

Employee services from branch office to head office, and vice versa to attract 18% GST: AAR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Services provided by employees of a company's branch office to its head office and vice versa located in different states would be liable to 18 per cent GST, the AAR has said.

Profisolutions Pvt Ltd, which has its registered office in Karnataka and a branch office in Chennai in Tamil Nadu, had approached the Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) seeking a ruling on whether the services provided to head office will attract GST.

The branch office of the applicant is providing support physical presence.

The AAR observed that under GST law supply of services between two registrations of the same person in same state or in different states attract tax.

"Services, including services of common employees of a person, provided by branch office to head office and vice versa, each having separate GST registration, will attract GST liability," the AAR said. AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said this AAR ruling upheld the levy of 18 per cent tax for such flow of services between two GST-registered entities under the same PAN.

LIVERPOOL HIT LEEDS FOR SIX

AP ■ LEEDS

Liverpool crushed Leeds 6-1 as Cody Gakpo's controversial opener provided the spark for the Reds' first win in five Premier League games on Monday.

Jürgen Klopp's side took the lead at Elland Road when Gakpo's goal was allowed to stand despite the ball striking Trent Alexander-Arnold's arm in the build-up.

It was reported the VAR official did not check the incident because it happened too far back in the move, but Leeds were furious at the perceived injustice.

Mohamed Salah rubbed salt into Leeds' wounds when he increased Liverpool's lead four minutes later before Luis Sinisterra got one back for the struggling hosts.

Diogo Jota's double, another Salah strike and Darwin Nunez's late effort ensured Liverpool ended their five-game winless run in all competitions.

After coming within a whisker of winning a quadruple last season, Liverpool have been reduced to scrambling to reach next season's Europa League or Europa Conference League, with the Champions League seemingly out of reach.

With that target in mind, the eighth-placed Reds are now within two points of seventh-placed Brighton.

"It's the best game we've played this season from all different perspectives," Klopp said.

"My favourite part was in the 92nd minute when we chased the poor boy on the ball from Leeds. The counter-pressing was the best for, I want to say, decades!"

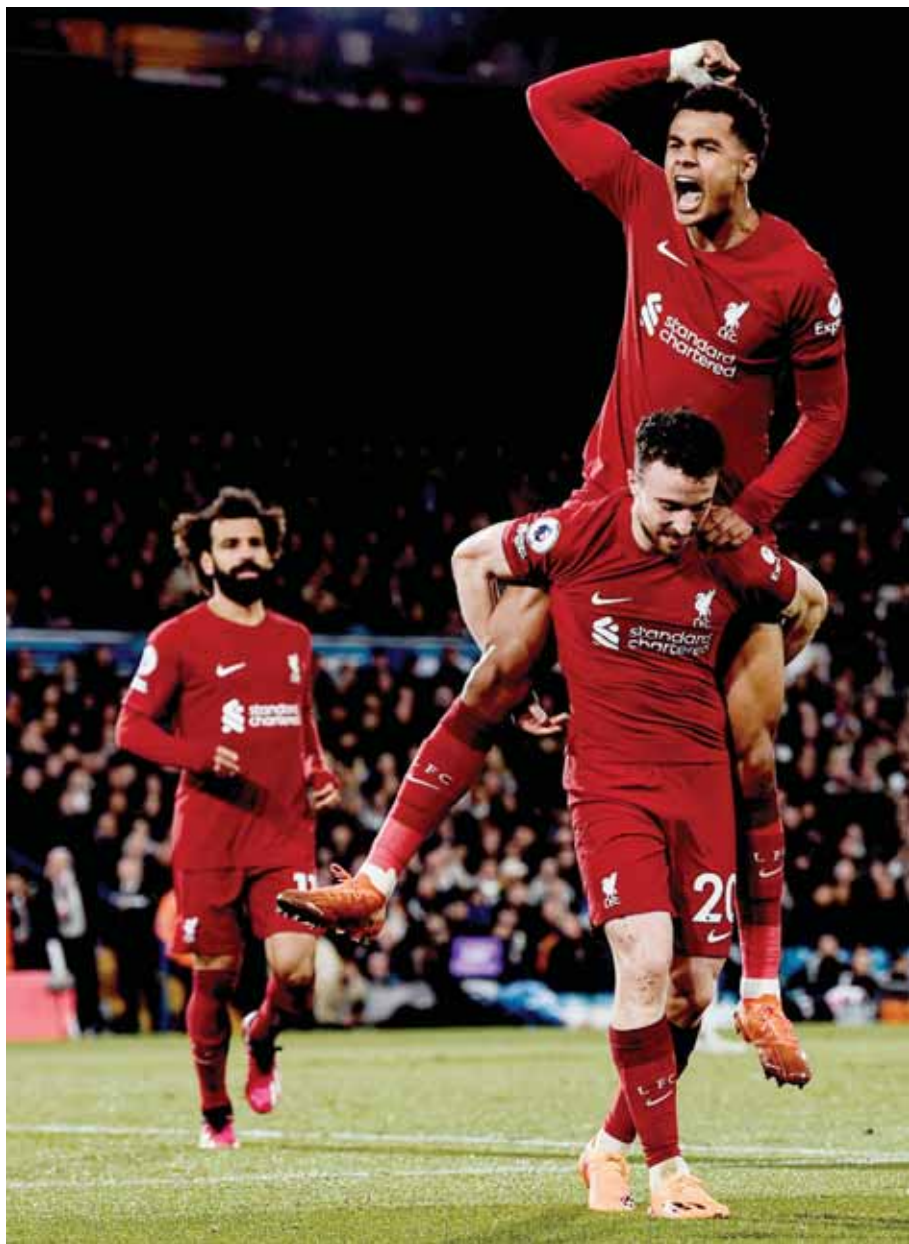
Klopp has compared fan criticism of Liverpool potentially not making big-money transfers in the coming close-season as like a five-year-old asking for a Ferrari for Christmas.

But on the evidence of this composed display and the recent fightback from two goals down to draw 2-2 with leaders Arsenal, Liverpool still have the foundations in place for a return to prominence next term.

"The second half against Arsenal was super important to us. We have to do what we did tonight again and again," Klopp said.

"I hope these one-and-a-half games gives us the right sign for the end of the season."

"I would like to see us with the same desire and passion. That's the job, to bring it consistently."



Leeds crumbled again eight days after their 5-1 home defeat against Crystal Palace and sit just two points above the relegation zone with seven games left.

Javi Gracia's team were booed off after becoming only the second club to concede five or more home goals in successive Premier League games.

RAMPANT REDS

After marking the 34th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster before kick-off, Liverpool quickly seized the momentum before their dubious opener in the 35th minute.

Alexander-Arnold blocked Junior Firpo's pass with his elbow before picking out Salah.

When Salah passed back to Alexander-Arnold, the right-back squared for Gakpo to slot home from close range.

Leeds were fuming, only for VAR to opt against checking the incident despite their protests.

Gakpo's fifth goal since signing from PSV Eindhoven in January was followed by the latest example of Salah tormenting Leeds.

Salah's eighth goal in six appearances against Leeds came in ruthless fashion.

Jota was allowed to advance unchecked before slipping a pass to Salah, who finished with unerring precision.

Ibrahima Konate handed Leeds a goal in the 47th minute when the Liverpool centre-back allowed himself to be dispossessed by Sinisterra on the edge of the area.

Sinisterra gratefully accepted the gift as he clipped his shot over the exposed Alisson Becker.

But Leeds' comeback hopes were extinguished within five minutes as Curtis Jones' raking pass picked out Jota, who drilled past Illan Meslier from just inside the area for his first league goal in 12 months.

VAR did disallow a Liverpool goal when Salah's effort was ruled out for offside against Virgil van Dijk, but the rampant Reds still bagged their fourth of the night in the 64th minute.

Gakpo took Andrew Robertson's pass and teed up Salah for an emphatic finish from six yards.

Jota swept in Jordan Henderson's cross after 73 minutes before Nunez put the final flourish on Liverpool's powerful performance when he controlled Alexander-Arnold's pass on his chest and fired home in the 90th minute.



Man City to expand Etihad Stadium to over 60,000 capacity

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City have submitted a planning application to expand the capacity of their Etihad Stadium to more than 60,000, while adding a hotel, museum and other facilities in a £300 million investment.

The plans will add around 7,000 new seats to the stadium as well as a new covered fan zone, club shop, museum and 400-bed hotel.

Last week, the Etihad was included on the list of 10 stadia which would host matches if the UK and Ireland's joint bid for organising Euro 2028 is successful, with the bid quoting a planned new capacity of 61,000.

"Over several months we have been developing concepts and designs for a best-in-class fan experience and year-round entertainment and

leisure destination at the Etihad Stadium and are delighted to have now submitted a planning application to Manchester City Council," said City's managing director of operations Danny Wilson.

"As with all club developments, ensuring our local community benefit is a key priority and we believe these proposals will deliver long-term economic and social opportunities, building on the regeneration work delivered in East Manchester by City Football Group since 2008."

Since an Abu-Dhabi backed takeover 15 years ago, the area around the Etihad has been transformed.

The Etihad Campus, which comprises the club's training ground and office headquarters, opened in 2012 and a previous expansion of the Etihad's south stand was completed in 2015.

Jayasuriya's 10 wickets lead SL to big win over Ireland

AP ■ GALLE

Sri Lanka defeated Ireland by an innings and 280 runs inside three days of the first Test and recorded its biggest victory margin on Tuesday.

Ireland lost 13 wickets on the day to be all out for 143 and 168 in reply to Sri Lanka's 591-6 declared.

Slow left-arm Prabhath Jayasuriya led the Sri Lankans with a 10-wicket haul, taking the last wicket of the match when he trapped Ben White for 1 soon after tea. Jayasuriya took 3-56 in the second innings after a career-best 7-52 in the first.

Spin bowling partner Ramesh Mendis had the best figures in the second innings of 4-76 and a match haul of five wickets. Mendis equalled Dilruwan Perera in becoming the fastest Sri Lankan to 50 Test wickets in 11 matches.

Seamer Vishwa Fernando

took the other four Irish wickets, including opener Murray Commins for a pair.

The win surpassed Sri Lanka's previous highest victory margin of an innings and 254 runs against Zimbabwe in 2004.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said the Irish had the bowling quality but their inexperience showed in their bowling lengths, and the field placings were more alike to limited-overs cricket, which made it easier for his batters to score.

The home innings was built on centuries by Karunaratne (179), Kusal Mendis (140), Dinesh Chandimal (102) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (104).

Ireland began day three on 117-7 and lost its last three wickets all on 143. Lorcan Tucker made a team-high 45 when he tried to sweep Jayasuriya and missed. Mark Adair was stumped off Jayasuriya and



Ramesh Mendis finished the innings.

Forced to follow on 448 runs in arrears, Ireland was 41-

5 by lunch.

While the bowlers were pinning down Ireland, Nishan Madushka was also outstanding

in the field. His sharp low grab at short leg removed Peter Moor minutes before lunch, and his anticipation of a paddle sweep

ended the 60-run resistance between Curtis Campher and Harry Tector.

Tector was dismissed shortly after, run out for 42 after slipping while trying to return to his crease and losing his bat. Ireland was 108-7 and lasted 15 more overs.

Ireland played only its fifth Test, and was involved in its first Test series. The second and last Test starts at the same venue on Monday.

"Sri Lanka at home are a daunting prospect for any team, never mind a team that haven't played a lot of test cricket," Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie said. "There are learnings. We've got to find a way to compete better and more consistently."

"We had one test (in Bangladesh two weeks ago) which prepared us for this one, but it's still probably not enough preparation."



Inzaghi wants Inter to forget domestic crisis

AP ■ MILAN

Simone Inzaghi on Tuesday said that Inter Milan need to put their dreadful Serie A form behind them as they stand on the verge of getting past Benfica and reaching the Champions League semi-finals.

Inter have a two-goal lead following a superb first-leg display in Lisbon and are heavy favourites on Wednesday to make the last four for the first time since they were last crowned European champions in 2010.

Last week's win at Benfica was Inter's only victory in their last eight matches and Inzaghi's team, who sit outside the Champions League places in Serie A, have lost their last three home games without scoring a single goal.

However they are having another positive season in cup competitions and will have an all-Italian semi-final against either Napoli or AC Milan to

look forward to if they don't collapse at the San Siro.

"We're aware of our cup runs and that our league situation isn't what we wanted," Inzaghi told reporters.

"We are getting bad results but things aren't bad in terms of performances, we are still creating chances. The defeats are already in the past, we need to focus on tomorrow night. We know what kind of team we are facing. Tomorrow is a very important and difficult match."

Inter's bad form has led to talk that Inzaghi could be sacked at the end of the season, as not qualifying for next season's Champions League would damage the club's finances.

"If you read things before the match with Barcelona (in the group) it was the same, as it was before Porto (in the last 16)," added Inzaghi.

"I'm used to it. As long as they criticise me and not my players I'm fine with it... it's part of the job."

ACT is a litmus test for Asian Games: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh on Tuesday said the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai will be a "litmus test" for the side ahead of the Asian Games to be held in September-October later this year.

The seventh edition of the Asian Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held from August 3 to 12, serving as a precursor to the Hangzhou Asian Games in September where teams will vie for gold and qualify for the Paris

Olympic Games.

"For many of us, it will be the first time that we will be playing in Chennai. I remember our seniors talking about the Asia Cup in 2007 held in Chennai which was a great tournament for India, defending the title in a successful campaign," Singh said in a release.

"This will be an ideal tournament for us to see where we stand against the same teams with whom we will be competing in the Asian Games. It will be a litmus test for the team ahead of the Asian Games."

Djokovic has elbow concerns before Banja Luka opener

AP ■ BANJA LUKA

Novak Djokovic on Monday said that he has not fully recovered from an elbow issue which hindered him in his Monte Carlo Masters last-16 exit last week.

The world number one struggled with his serve before falling to Italian Lorenzo Musetti in Monaco.

"The elbow is not in ideal condition, but let's say it's good enough. Hopefully it will be fully ready for the first match," said Djokovic, who had elbow surgery in 2018, ahead of this week's event in Banja Luka.

The Serb won the Australian Open earlier this year to draw level with Rafael Nadal's



Luca Van Assche, who ousted Swiss veteran Stan Wawrinka 1-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 on Monday, in the Banja Luka second round.

"I've never met this boy before, I don't know much about

him. I know he's young, he's just joined the top 100," said Djokovic before the tournament which has been relocated from his hometown of Belgrade because of work on the venue.

"I sincerely thought that Wawrinka was going to win today, he was leading most of the match. So it's indeed a surprise, the victory of this little guy, this Frenchman." Van Assche battled back against former world number three Wawrinka, 20 years his senior, who has dropped to 84th in the world.

"It will be incredible for me and I'm only 18," he said of playing Djokovic.

"I know that the crowd will not be with me, I think, but I will enjoy it and I will try to win."

NZ survive Iftikhar onslaught to win 3rd T20I

AP ■ LAHORE

All-rounder James Neesham held his nerve in the final over to give New Zealand a dramatic four-run win over Pakistan in the third T20I in Lahore on Monday despite Iftikhar Ahmed's brilliant innings.

Ahmed brought Pakistan back into the contest from 88-7 with a whirlwind 24-ball 60 as they attempted to chase down New Zealand's 163-5.

Needing 15 to win from Neesham's final over, he hit a six and a four to reduce the target to five off the last three deliveries.

But Neesham had Ahmed caught at long-on by Daryl Mitchell and then after a dot ball dismissed last man Haris Rauf in the same manner.

"It was a great game and it's satisfying to get across the line and keep the series alive," said visiting captain Tom Latham.

a lot of confidence from this match moving forward.

"The three early Pakistan wickets in the powerplay set us up and we pride ourselves on our fielding and keep the bar high every time we set foot into the middle."

Ahmed led the fightback with Faheem Ashraf as the pair added 61 for the eighth wicket, with Ashraf holding out after a 14-ball 27 studded with two sixes and as many fours.

Ahmed smashed six sixes and three fours.

The victory means New Zealand trail the five-match series 2-1 after Pakistan won the first two games, by 88 and 38 runs, also in Lahore.

The last two matches are in Rawalpindi on April 20 and 24.

Pakistan lost wickets at regular intervals with prolific opening pair Babar Azam (one) and Mohammad Rizwan (six) both gone by the fourth over with the score on just 17.



Azam was caught at third man off pacer Adam Milne while Rizwan was found short of his crease after trying to take a sharp single.

Pakistan were further jolted by left-arm spinner Rachin Ravindra who dismissed Fakhar Zaman (17) and Imad Wasim for three while Saim Ayub fell to Neesham for 10.

Ish Sodhi dismissed Shaheen Shah Afridi for six and Milne accounted for Shadab Khan for 16, leaving Pakistan reeling. The hosts battled back thanks to Ahmed, but were bowled out from the final ball on 159.

"We didn't bat well enough tonight," said Pakistan skipper Azam. "We kept losing wickets at crucial stages, because of which the pressure kept building throughout the run chase, but our bowling has been superb this series."

Earlier, New Zealand's innings was anchored by Latham's 64 after winning the toss.

CL chasers Atalanta held at Fiorentina



AP ■ FLORENCE

Atalanta slipped up in their bid to reach next season's Champions League after being held 1-1 at Fiorentina in Serie A on Monday.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side

had the chance to move level on points with fifth-placed Inter Milan with a win in Florence and looked good after Joakim Maehle poked the away side ahead eight minutes before the break.

But Arthur Cabral earned Fiorentina a point and extended his team's unbeaten record to 14 matches by rolling home a 16th-minute penalty following Rafael Tolo's handball.

A win would have greatly improved sixth-placed Atalanta's top-four hopes after Inter and AC Milan both dropped points at the weekend.

They are four points behind Milan, who sit fourth and could only draw 1-1 at Bologna on Saturday.

HAT-TRICK OF WINS FOR MUMBAI INDIANS

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Cameron Green flaunted his brute power on the way to a maiden IPL fifty before Arjun Tendulkar bowled a brilliant 20th over in extreme pressure as Mumbai Indians defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 14 runs for their third straight win here on Tuesday.

Green (64 not out off 40) and Tilak Varma (37 off 17) fired Mumbai Indians to a challenging 192 for five after being put in to bat.

With the odd ball not coming on to the bat, it was tough to get the boundaries from the get go but Sunrisers recovered from an ordinary powerplay to take the game deep with the help of opener Mayank Agarwal (48 off 41) and Heinrich Klaassen (36 off 16). In the end, they fell short and were all out for 178 in 19.5 overs for their third defeat in five games.

While Agarwal got some much-needed runs, it was Klaassen's knock that put Mumbai under pressure. The South African took the attack to veteran leggie Piyush Chawla, reverse sweeping him for a four and six in a 21-run over.

Sunrisers needed 60 off the last 30 balls and Marco Jansen (13 off 6) and Washington Sundar (10 off 6) made the game interesting with a string of boundaries before the latter paid the price for casual running between the wickets.

Playing his second IPL game, Tendulkar again bowled two overs with the new ball before returning to bowl the high pressure final over with Sunrisers needing 20 runs.

Tendulkar chose to bowl full and wide and was able to do the job for his team. He got his maiden IPL wicket in the process.

Earlier, fast-rising Varma and Green took Mumbai to a competitive total. The other contributions came from skipper Rohit Sharma (28 off 18) and Ishan Kishan (38 off 31).

The 20-year-old Varma has been the stand out batter in the star studded Mumbai line-up and his rare talent and skill was on display again in his crucial cameo.

Mumbai were finding it tough to get going in the middle overs but Varma's high quality knock gave the innings the much-needed momentum.

The lanky Marco Jansen was punished for 21 runs in the 15th over when Varma dispatched him for successive sixes, one in the cow corner and the other over the bowler's head.

In the following over, the southpaw used his wrists beautifully for a four over extra cover off leggie Mayank Markande before sweeping him for a maximum for a 14-run over.



Green, who struggled to get his timing right initially, got down to business after Varma's dismissal. The tall right-hander hammered three straight fours off T Natarajan to bring up his half-century before collecting a straight six in a 20-run over. Natarajan leaked runs in the 20th over and ended up conceding 50 runs in his four overs. Mumbai managed to smash 62 runs in the last five overs.

'QUALITY WAS ALWAYS THERE'

The IPL has always had quality, but what took it to another level was the successful hosting of the league in South Africa in 2009, and the interest it generated in a foreign country, feels former India coach Ravi Shastri.

The second edition of the Indian Premier League had been moved to South Africa as its dates clashed with the general elections in the country. The IPL was started on this day 15 years ago.

Shastri, who was part of the league's governing council then, reminisced about the tournament's early days.

"If you look at all the players who played a part in this, the quality of cricket was so good that it took off. But the final stamp on the IPL came when we went to South Africa. To go there and to see that South Africa saw the IPL with the same interest as India, that shocked the world," Shastri said during an interaction with Star Sports.

He added, "Because by that time, people around the world had started picking

teams. What you see in football now, that had happened in the IPL from the second season itself.

"The IPL has been going on for years, teams like Arsenal and Manchester United, but here in two years fans in IPL had their teams - Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings or Royal Challengers Bangalore."

Former New Zealand swashbuckler Brendon McCullum got the IPL off to a blazing start with his 73-ball 158 for Kolkata Knight Riders against Royal Challengers Bangalore in 2008.

Shastri reminisced the first day of the IPL.

"I remember that day very well, I was backstage, I was with the governing council, I knew what is happening behind the scenes. How are players being signed, how much interest was there.

"India won the World Cup in 2007, so because of that, the amount of interest that was created was unbelievable. And the one thing that I saw that never happened in other formats of the game, the kind of people that came to support it, it looked like the entire nation was united to come there and watch the match.

"Advertising industry, cricket fans, Bollywood, Kollywood, Tollywood, you name it, everyone was there. And the quality of cricket that was seen from the first game itself, there was no substitute for that."

India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja spoke on how his experiences in the IPL have differed over the years, from winning the inaugural edition in 2008 with Rajasthan Royals to becoming a multiple time winner with Chennai Super Kings.

"IPL 2008 was the first year, so there was a lot of excitement with the new and big tournament and we U-19 players used to think about Indian team players who will be a part of this IPL like MSD, Yuvraj Singh, Harbhajan Singh etc. So I was excited thinking in which team I'll go and play.

"But in IPL 2018, it was an emotional moment for us in CSK, because we came back after a break of 2 years. Fans were also waiting for CSK to come back and play in Chepauk stadium. "So winning the tournament after the comeback was something very special. CSK fans who waited for us and even supported the team in those 2 years even when we didn't play, that gave us a lot of motivation," Jadeja said.

Kohli fined 10% of match fee

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Virat Kohli has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for breaching the Indian Premier League (IPL) Code of Conduct during the team's eight-run loss to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

A statement said that Kohli had breached the rules under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct.

While the IPL statement did not go into details about the incident, which attracted the code of conduct violation, it could have been due to the former RCB skipper's over-the-top celebration following CSK middle-order batter Shivam Dube's dismissal off the bowling of Wayne Parnell on Monday.

Dube struck a 27-ball 52 in CSK's mammoth 226 for 6 in the 'Southern Derby' as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's team won by eight runs.

"Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Virat Kohli has been fined 10 percent of his match fee for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru," said the IPL statement.

It said Kohli, who scored six runs on Monday, had "admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct".

"For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the statement added.

Dhoni will be banned if CSK bowlers don't buck up: Sehwag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India opener Virender Sehwag feels Chennai Super Kings' bowlers are repeatedly letting MS Dhoni down and has urged them to "buck up" to avoid the risk of getting their talismanic skipper "banned".

CSK posted an imposing 226/6 in their IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday, but Dhoni struggled to defend the total with his bowlers conceding six wickets before prevailing over by eight runs.

"Dhoni was not looking happy because he has mentioned it before that he wants the bowlers to reduce the number of no balls and wides," Sehwag said on Cricbuzz. "It shouldn't go to a stage where Dhoni gets banned and CSK has to take the field without their captain."

In all, CSK bowled as many as 11 extras against RCB. The four-time IPL champions had leaked 18 runs in extras against Lucknow Super Giants earlier and Dhoni had warned them to cut down on extras or be ready to "play under a new captain".

"Dhoni has said earlier too to restrict wides and no balls. And to bowl six wides, is really disappointing," Sehwag said. Seamer Tushar Deshpande conceded three wides to continue his poor run in the IPL, but Sehwag was livid with their spinner Maheesh Theekshana for bowling wide. "It's really disappointing when you bowl so many wides, especially by a spinner. At least they should control their wides." "With the kind of knee injury he has, it



appears he might play only a handful of matches more anyway. He is constantly pushing himself, but if his bowlers are bowling so many wides and no balls, then Dhoni will have to take rest," Sehwag added. A knee injury to Ben Stokes means that the English stalwart is unable to bowl. CSK's attack is also plagued by injuries to Deepak Chahar, Mukesh Choudhary and Sisanda Mangala.

"I've been saying from day one Chennai is thin on bowling. It's their weak link. They have to focus on their bowling. They have to manage with this, they will have to bowl better, execute better," Sehwag said. Sehwag further pointed out that CSK bowlers had 37 dot balls, but despite that, RCB went on to score 218/8. "So it meant the runs are scored in 14 overs! They (RCB) almost reached the target because they were hitting in fours and sixes. "CSK bowling will have to buck up and bring out the best in them, execute their plans properly. Be it yorkers, slower ones. They will also have to improve a bit in fielding," he said, referring to their four dropped catches.

Inconsistent LSG face Royals test

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Blowing hot and cold, Lucknow Super Giants will look to tick all the boxes and return to winning ways when they clash with table-toppers Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

With three wins and two losses so far, LSG is a team overflowing with talent but they have

missed a trick or two at times to find themselves on the losing side twice. In the last match against the Punjab Kings, Lucknow couldn't get enough runs in the middle overs, leaving them 10-15 runs short in the end.

While KL Rahul returning to form with a sizzling 56-ball 74 is a big positive, LSG will rue the scoring opportunities they squandered in the middle overs. Lucknow have no dearth of power in their batting, with Kyle Mayers at the top and Nicholas Pooran and Marcus Stoinis in the middle capable of pulverising any opposition.

While Mayers did his job in the powerplay, he, perhaps, needs to think about building partnerships after the first six overs, especially with Deepak Hooda struggling to get runs at the top.

Against PBKS, LSG also committed the mistake of bringing in the talented Ravi Bishnoi too late, allowing the batters to take the chase deep into the final

over. Bishnoi is a wily customer with a mean googly, and skipper Rahul may think of using him in the middle as well, instead of holding him back for the death overs.

Krishnappa Gowtham and Krunal Pandya too have done well in their respective roles. Among the fast bowlers, LSG possess the fiery pace of Mark Wood and Avesh Khan. Yudhvir Singh Charak too will look to carry on his good run after a sensational two-wicket haul on debut against Punjab.

However, for Lucknow, it will be an uphill task to disturb the appellation of the Royals, who have performed like a well-oiled machine with a hat-trick of wins to grab the top spot in the IPL standings.

RR possess a formidable batting line-up with the likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jos Buttler and Sanju Samson ensuring that the side has a good start and has enough runs in the powerplay.

While Buttler, with 204 runs has been their highest run-

scorer, Jaiswal has struck at 149.45 during his 136 runs so far in the IPL.

And, when the duo failed the other day against GT, skipper Samson rose to the occasion, bailing out the team with a 32-ball 60 as West Indian Shimron Hetmyer completed the job with a 26-ball 56.

Devdutt Padikkal too has come up with cameos but Riyan Parag hasn't been able to grab the opportunities.

RR also has some quality spinners, with the trio of Yuzvendra Chahal, Adam Zampa and Ravichandran Ashwin making life difficult for the opposition.

It was the spinners who had won them the match against Chennai Super Kings, while pace spearhead Trent Boult did the job against Delhi Capital by taking those two wickets in the first over to derail their chase.

Medium pacer Sandeep Sharma too has used all his experience, taking wickets regularly during his spells.



RR vs LSG
 Live from 7:30 pm IST
 JioCinema

Left-handed batters on ground with short boundaries did the trick for CSK: Maxwell

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore all-rounder Glenn Maxwell feels Chennai Super Kings' left-handers did the trick for the four-time champions by exploiting the shorter boundaries to the hilt to earn a crucial eight-run win in their IPL clash here.

CSK won the high-scoring 'Southern Derby' on Monday, with three of their left-handers

— opener Devon Conway (83 off 45 balls), middle-order bat Shivam Dube (52 off 27) and Moeen Ali (19 not out off 9) — helping them amass 226 for 6, which proved to be a winning total. "I think with short boundaries (at the Chinnaswamy Stadium), they played heavy left-handers. Devon Conway batted for a long period in that innings," said Maxwell, who could have taken the match away from MS Dhoni's side had

he remained at the crease for a little bit longer. The Australian all-rounder, who struck his second half-century in this IPL, added that bringing in left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed to bowl to left-handers would have been a risky proposition. "I think, it would have been a risk to bowl Shahbaz Ahmed to those guys," said Maxwell, though he added that the 28-year-old all-rounder was a "clever bowler".

Impact player rule has worked well for RR: Chahal

PTI ■ JAIPUR

India and Rajasthan Royals spinner Yuzvendra Chahal claimed on Tuesday that the new rule of impact substitute has worked well for last year's Indian Premier League finalists Rajasthan Royals, who are at the top of the points table with four wins in first five matches.

While none of the three Rajasthan Royals' bowlers — Adam Zampa (1/43 against Chennai Super Kings), Murugan Ashwin (0/11 against Delhi Capitals) and Navdeep Saini (0/34 against Sunrisers Hyderabad) — have been able to make an impact as substitutes, it is their batters who have played crucial knocks. Dhruv Jurel's 32 not out off 15



balls against Punjab Kings almost won the game for RR — who lost by five runs — in Guwahati, whereas Devdutt Padikkal scored a vital 26 against Gujarat Titans to help RR record their first win over the IPL 2022 champions in four meetings.

"It has worked in our favour given the way Dhruv (Jurel) and Dev (Devdutt Padikkal) have batted. It is a plus point because I am of no use with the bat. It helps when you are chasing a big total and an extra batter gets added, which is a plus point," Chahal, who has been substituted out twice in five matches, told the media ahead of RR's contest against Lucknow Super Giants.

RR played their first two 'home' games at Guwahati and the contest on Wednesday night will be their first at the home ground in Sawai Mansingh Stadium here. "It is a bigger ground here so as a spinner I am happy," Chahal said. The ace Indian spinner said he is enjoying the challenge of bowling in tandem with senior Ravichandran Ashwin and Australia's Zampa. "The management decides as per situation (on playing them together). We have a good bonding between us, having played the last two games together," he said. "My main motive this year is to win the trophy, not just the Purple Cap," said Chahal, who has claimed 11 wickets in five matches so far, having finished as the highest wicket-taker last IPL with 27 scalps.

Taylor backs Warner to play in WTC final, Ashes

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain Mark Taylor has backed David Warner to play in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final against India at The Oval in June and to also feature in the initial stage of the Ashes 2023 in England.

Warner has gone through a lean patch in Test cricket since the start of 2021, averaging below 39.

Despite scoring a double century (200) in the Melbourne Test in December 2022 against South Africa — his only Test hundred since January 2020 — Warner averaged 30.05 in 11 games last year. In the three Test matches that he played this year, Warner has managed a mere 36 runs at 9.00.

Warner, 36, has in the past spoken about retiring from Test cricket in order to push on in the shorter formats, and his participation was considered doubtful for the next red-ball assignments for Australia, especially after his horrendous run in India with the bat. However, former Australia captain and commentator Taylor has backed Warner to make the cut in the squad for the WTC final and the Ashes.

Taylor told AAP on Tuesday, "If I am reading the tea leaves right, it sounds like they will stick with David for the World Test Championship (final) at The Oval. And if that's the way Australia are thinking about the World Test Championship, then yes, they have to start with him for the Ashes."