

**OPINION 6**  
A MAN IS A MAN,  
A WOMAN A WOMAN

**WORLD 8**  
UKRAINIAN DRONES  
TARGET SEVASTOPOL

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX RECLAIMS 60K MARK,  
NIFTY NEAR 17,743 ON GAINS

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY APRIL 25, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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MUMBAI TO  
FACE TITANS IN  
IPL 2023 TODAY  
12 SPORT

## CAPSULE

**7.1 MAGNITUDE QUAKE HITS REMOTE PACIFIC**  
Wellington: A magnitude 7.1 quake struck in a remote part of the Pacific Ocean on Monday but did not appear to generate a tsunami.

**KEDARNATH: DEVOTEES FACE EXTREME WEATHER**  
Dehradun: The portals of Kedarnath in the Garhwal Himalayas are set to open for devotees on Tuesday but thousands of pilgrims en route to the temple have been stopped to proceed further due to bad weather conditions in the area, officials said. The pilgrims have been asked to wait in Rishikesh, Gaurikund, Guptkashi and Sonprayag till improvement in weather, they said on Monday.

**DELHI LOGS 948 NEW COVID CASES, 3 DEATHS**  
New Delhi: Delhi on Monday logged 948 fresh Covid-19 infections and three fatalities with a case positivity rate of 29.42, according to data shared by the Health department here.

**STRAY DOG BEATEN TO DEATH IN DELHI**  
New Delhi: A stray dog was thrashed to death by a group of people in central Delhi's Karol Bagh area, police said on Monday. A purported video of the incident that happened on Sunday surfaced on social media.

# Previous govts ruined yuva shakti, says PM

PNS ■ KOCHI/REWA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said youth power was the driving force of India's development journey as youngsters were instrumental in transforming the country into one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Taking a swipe at Opposition parties, the PM said that while former Governments were "known for corruption", the BJP Government was creating new opportunities for youngsters. "We aim to create a self-sustainable society," he said.

Earlier, Modi received a rousing welcome in Kochi here on Monday, with thousands of people, including BJP workers and supporters, lining up on both sides of the nearly two-kilometre long route of his road show from the INS Garuda naval air station to the venue of a youth programme. Modi landed at the naval air station after 5 pm and commenced his road show from there around 5.40 pm.

Dressed in traditional Kerala attire — a kasavu mundu, a shawl and a kurta — Modi began the road show on foot and waved to the people



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow in Kochi on Monday PTI

on both sides of the road and atop buildings along the route, which was under a tight security net with thousands of police personnel being deployed to ensure his safety.

Modi said that once upon a time India was one of the "Fragile Five" countries. "However, today, India is known as one of the fastest-growing economies. It's because of the youth, and therefore I

strongly believe in the youth of my country. I have faith in them," he said speaking at the Yuvam 2023 conclave here.

Modi on Monday launched a scathing attack on the ruling CPI(M) and Opposition Congress in Kerala, alleging that Kerala was being harmed due to the conflict between the two, and expressed confidence that the BJP would be accepted by the people of the State in

the coming days.

"Be it the Northeastern States or Goa, all those who have seen the BJP's work, the conduct of its government, be they of any sect, cult or denomination, they all have accepted the Bharatiya Janata Party. Thus, I can say with conviction that what the Northeastern States have done, what Goa continues to do, it will be done by Kerala too in the coming days," he said.

Earlier in the day during a public event in Rewa in Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of the National Panchayati Raj Day, the Prime Minister blamed the previous Congress governments by saying, "The party which ruled the most after Independence broke trust of villages...Meted out step-motherly treatment to them."

"People, schools, roads, electricity, storage facilities, economy of villages...All these were kept at the bottom of the government's priorities during the Congress regime," he said after virtually inaugurating a number of development projects. The previous governments used to avoid spending money for villages, because a village was not vote bank in itself. That is why they were ignored," he said.

## 'OP KAVERI' KICKS OFF

# 500 Indians reach Port Sudan to return home

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As a situation continues to be volatile in strife torn Sudan, India has commenced its evacuation process named "Operation Kaveri" and 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan. France has evacuated five Indians along with citizens of 27 other countries as part of its evacuation mission from the African nation. Saudi Arabia had evacuated at least three Indians with people of other nationalities on Sunday.

"Operation Kaveri is underway to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan while more are on their way. Our ships and aircraft are set to bring them back home. We are committed to assisting all our brethren in Sudan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar tweeted on Monday on evacuation process of Indians in Sudan. Over 3,000 Indians are living in Sudan.

India has deployed two C-130 J transport aircraft in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and an Indian Navy ship INS Sumedha reached Port Sudan early Sunday for evacuation of Indian nationals. The airport in



In this image from video provided by the French Armed Forces, military personnel load belongings of evacuees onto a plane at the airport in Khartoum, Sudan, on Sunday PTI

Khartoum, Sudan, is closed as heavy fighting is taking place around it.

The evacuation comes days after Jaishankar held talks with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Both countries had assured their "practical support on the ground".

Meanwhile, the French embassy in New Delhi said on Monday 388 people from 28 countries, including India, were evacuated. "French evacuation operations are underway. Last

night, two military flight rotations evacuated 388 people of 28 countries, including Indian nationals," it tweeted.

Five Indian nationals were evacuated from Sudan through French Air Force flight and were brought to France's military base in Djibouti along with people of over 28 other nationalities, French diplomatic sources said. Three flights have brought approximately 500 evacuees to Djibouti, they added.

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## Man pees on co-passenger on US flight, held at IGIA

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A passenger travelling from New York to Delhi in an American Airlines flight has been arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) for allegedly urinating on a fellow passenger.

The airline staff reported that the accused Indian passenger was under the influence of alcohol and the incident occurred during an argument on board American Airlines flight AA 292.

The alleged "unruly" passenger was apprehended by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) after the plane landed at IGIA on Sunday around 9 pm. The airlines reported the matter to the Delhi airport before landing and both the passengers involved in an altercation were later handed over to the Delhi Police. The victim passenger has filed a formal complaint, sources said.

The Delhi Police said in a statement, "Legal Action has been taken under non-cognizable offences of the Civil Aviation Act." "There was no corroborative evidence or complaint given by co-passengers regarding someone peeing on them," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Airport) Devesh Kumar Mahla said.

## Nitish talks to Mamata, Akhilesh to let Cong join united Opp front

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ KOLKATA/LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

With just a year left for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday expedited his efforts to unite Opposition parties and called on his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata, and former Uttar Pradesh CM and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow.

Sources said the leaders discussed the one-seat-one-candidate "Nitish Formula", to which Mamata said, "If thought, vision, and mission are clear, there will be no issues." "Nitish Formula" aims



to bring in Congress in the united Opposition front in order to prevent a split in the Opposition vote against Modi's juggernaut.

Both Akhilesh and Mamata had last month announced that they will not align with the Congress.

The Opposition unity bid is Nitish's second effort in less than a fortnight — he had



called on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Left party leaders D Raja and Sitaram Yechury during his visit to Delhi early this month.

On both the occasions, Nitish was accompanied by RJD leader and Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav.

Continued on Page 2

## Slanging match in K'taka hots up

### BJP accuses Cong of appeasement, Cong hits out at BJP with 40% Sarkar jab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The war of words intensified during the campaigning for the Assembly polls in Karnataka, with the BJP accusing the Congress of "appeasement politics" and the Congress retaliating by alleging the ruling party of running a 40 per cent Sarkar.

The bigwigs, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, on Monday held road shows, public rallies and interacted with the key community leaders in the State in their bid to make their respective parties surge ahead in the keenly fought poll slated for May 10.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a roadshow ahead of Karnataka Assembly elections, at Gundlupet in Chamaraajnanagar district. (R) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the interaction with sugarcane farmers in Belgaum on Monday PTI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah reminded Lingayats and Vokkaligas communities of the State of the increased quota accorded to them by the BJP Government in the State and sought to know from the

Congress at whose expense they would cancel it as it seem to be promising to the voters.

Shah said the May 10 Assembly polls in Karnataka was all about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development

politics versus Congress' appeasement politics, and defended the State BJP Government's decision to scrap the four per cent reservation for Muslims.

Continued on Page 2

## Will move SC if WFI chief not booked: Wrestlers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after top wrestlers resumed their protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar over the issue of sexual harassment allegations against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the protesting wrestlers on Monday threatened to approach the Supreme Court if an FIR is not lodged against WFI President.

They also sought to mobilise nationwide support by appealing to "khaps" and several other organisations to back their cause even as the Ministry of Sports stalled Federations

election on May 7 and asked the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to form an ad-hoc committee to conduct polls.

The IOA on Monday said it will hold its Executive Council meeting on Thursday to look for "actionable solutions" to end the current impasse in the WFI.

Admitting that they made a mistake by ending their protest three months back, the protesting wrestlers said they were back then, "manipulated" by certain people. Sakshi said their legal team was contemplating approaching the SC.

Continued on Page 2



Wrestlers Brijrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat during their protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

## Judges can't talk to media on sub-judice issues: SC

### SC seeks report on Calcutta HC judge interview to news channel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that judges have no business granting interviews on pending matters, the Supreme Court on Monday sought a report within four days from the Registrar General of the Calcutta High Court on whether Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay gave an interview to a news channel about the case related to the school job-for-bribe case in West Bengal. The apex court's order came when TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee complained against Justice Gangopadhyay's interview in TV channel ABP Ananada, while handling the case.

"I just want to say it that judges have no business granting interviews on matters which are pending," Chief Justice DY Chandachud, sharing a bench with Justice PS Narasimha, said while taking strong note of the purported interview given by Justice Gangopadhyay to a news channel about the case. "The petitioner (TMC



leader Abhishek Banerjee) has annexed a translated transcript of an interview of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay on a TV Channel ABP Ananda. The Registrar General of

Calcutta High Court is directed to clarify from the judge as to whether he had been interviewed by the news channel. The Registrar General is directed to file his affidavit before this court on or before Thursday. We will list it on Friday," the bench said.

The top court said its order will not come in the way of the ongoing investigation by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the alleged scam.

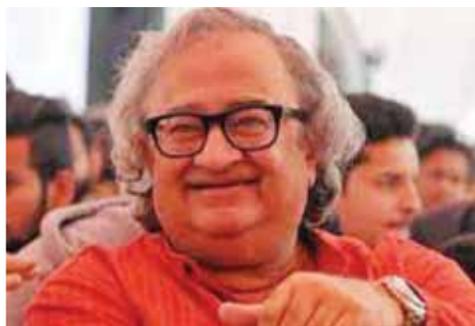
Continued on Page 2

## Fatah: Born in Pak, Indian at heart

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eminent Pakistani-Canadian columnist Tarek Fatah passed away on Monday after a prolonged battle with Cancer at the age of 73. His journalist daughter Natasha Fatah shared the news on micro-blogging site Twitter.

"Lion of Punjab. Son of Hindustan. Lover of Canada. Speaker of truth. Fighter for justice. Voice of the downtrodden, underdogs, and the oppressed. Tarek Fatah has passed the baton on... his revolution will continue with all who knew and loved him. Will you join us? 1949-2023,"



20 NOVEMBER 1949 — 24 APRIL 2023

Natasha tweeted. Fatah always called himself an Indian born in Pakistan. Fatah had been critical of the partition of India, and carving out of an "Islamic" state of Pakistan. Fatah was a critic of Pakistan. He questioned the legitimacy of the state and advocated support for Baloch separatists. He believed after Balochistan wins independence, the remainder of Pakistan will reunify with India.

Born in Pakistan in 1949, Fatah migrated to Canada in the early 1980s and worked as a political activist, journalist and television host in Canada

and authored several books.

The RSS on Monday condoled the demise of Fatah and said his significant contributions to the media as well as the literary world will be greatly remembered. In a condolence message posted on Twitter, RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale said Fatah was an eminent thinker, author and commentator.

"His significant contributions to the media and the literary world will be greatly remembered. He remained committed to his principles and beliefs throughout his life and was respected for his courage and conviction," he said.

## Constitutional duty of Guvs to clear Bills asap, says top court

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday took note of Governors of States delaying their assent to bills passed by the State legislature and opined that Governors keep in mind the mandate under Article 200 of the Constitution which casts duty on them to clear bills "as soon as possible". The observation was made while disposing a plea filed by the TRS led

Telangana Government seeking directions to State's Governor Tamilsai Soundararajan to give her assent to ten key bills passed by the State legislature pending before her.

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha said that the intent of the words "as soon as possible" in Article 200(1) of the Indian Constitution is significant and must be borne in mind by Constitutional authorities.

Continued on Page 2

# Modi: MP Govt changed male-dominated mindset

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed his party government for changing the 'male-dominated mindset', where owners of any property or commodity are 'traditionally men'.

"BJP has turned crores of Indian home makers into home owners. Each house of PM Yojana is for over a lakh, which means BJP has made crores of didis (sisters) lakhpati. Please bless us so that more didis in the country become lakhpatis (millionaires)," PM Modi said in Rewa, amid cheers from women in the audience.

At the event, the prime minister performed the virtual 'Griha Praves' (ceremony performed when entering one's new house) for 4.11 lakh beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana at the function held at the SAF ground in Rewa. PM Modi further said that the government schemes have helped generate employ-



ment in villages itself, giving people an opportunity to stay and earn in their areas rather than moving out to bigger cities. Addressing the public event on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day, Modi further said the BJP-led government has changed the situation and pumped in huge grants to panchayats.

"People have been given an aid of Rs 24 lakh crore under Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY). This has helped people start their own ventures in villages too. One of the biggest beneficiaries of this scheme are our mothers and sisters. All around the world,

people are talking about how our government has been empowering women in India. In the last nine years, nine crore women have been included in self-help groups.

In fact, in Madhya Pradesh, the government has made 'Didi Cafe' in every district," the prime minister said, adding that earlier governments hesitated to spend money for villages as they were not a vote bank in themselves. That is why they were ignored.

Many political parties were running their 'shops' by dividing village folks. He further said that the BJP has ended this injustice meted out to villages and opened our treasury chest for their development.

Modi virtually launched various projects, including the integrated e-GramSwaraj and GeM portal for procurement of goods and services at the panchayat level and redevelopment of Gwalior railway station. He also flagged off three trains.

# NIA attaches assets of Salahudeen's two sons

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday attached two properties of the sons of designated terrorist Syed Mohammed Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahudeen, the self-styled Supreme Commander of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) and Chairman of United Jihad Council (UJC).

The immovable properties of Shahid Yusuf and Syed Ahmed Shakeel, located in Kashmir's Soibugh Tehsil under Budgam district and Nursing Garh, Mohalla Ram Bagh, have been attached under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the NIA said in a statement.

Both Shahid Yusuf and Syed Ahmed Shakeel are lodged in Tihar jail here since their arrest in October 2017 and August 2018 respectively. They were chargesheeted on April 20, 2018 and November 20, 2018, respectively. The duo had been receiving funds from abroad from the associates of their father and over ground workers of HM. Syed Salahudeen, who had fled to Pakistan in

1993, was designated as an individual terrorist by India in October 2020. He continues to operate from Pakistan, from where he is guiding and instructing HM cadres as well as activists of UJC, also known as Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) which is a conglomerate of around 13 Pakistan-based Kashmir centric terror outfits.

"Besides instigating and operationalising militant activities in India, primarily in Kashmir Valley, Syed Salahudeen has been raising funds and routing finances to India through trade routes, hawala channels, and international money transfer channels for furthering the terrorist activities of HM cadres," the NIA said.

The NIA launched investigations in November 2011 into criminal conspiracy to raise/collect/provide funds to commit terrorist acts and distribute funds among the terror groups and their sympathizers in Jammu and Kashmir for purpose of committing terrorist acts.

# ED raids HPZ in payment gateway fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted search operations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at three bank/payment gateway premises in Gurugram, Mumbai, and Bengaluru in connection with an investigation relating to the misuse of app-based token "HPZ" and other similar applications by several entities and froze an amount of Rs 91.6 crore lying in banks and merchant accounts.

The PMLA case was recorded on the basis of an FIR registered by Cyber Crime Police Station, Kohima, Nagaland, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against HPZ token and others.

The HPZ Token promised users of large gains against investment by investing in mining machines for Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

# India, S Korea to discuss maritime ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and South Korea will discuss the entire gamut of their bilateral maritime ties here on Tuesday during a meeting of their respective Coast Guards.

This will be the 11th such meeting being undertaken, after a gap of three years in view pandemic restrictions.

The mutual exchange of dialogues will cover all aspects of capacity building that would foster professional relationship, officials said here on Monday.

A seven member delegation of the South Korea Coast Guard (KCG) led by Commissioner General KIM Jong Wook, Commissioner, Korea Coast Guard will be exchanging mutual cooperation dialogues with the Indian delegation headed by Additional Director General Rakesh Pal, they said.

# 'Constitutional duty...

From Page 1

The word "as soon as possible" [in Article 200(1)] has a significant Constitutional intent and must be borne in mind by constitutional functionaries, the Court said.

The case was disposed after the Court was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that no bill was pending with the Governor for assent and that some bills have been returned for additional comments. Mehta said no bills are pending with Governor now and many bills were given assent and some are returned for reconsideration.

Senior Advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Telangana Government, said that elected State Governments were being left at mercy of Governors due to such delays by them in giving their assent to bills passed by State legislature. He also said that it was happening only in States ruled by non-BJP parties.

"In Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, etc bills are assented within a day. But this is happening in opposition ruled States," Dave said. He then urged Court to mention in its order that Governors should give their assent to bills without delay.

# 500 Indians reach Port Sudan to return home

From Page 1

On Sunday, Saudi Arabia said it has evacuated from Sudan 66 citizens from "brotherly and friendly" foreign countries that included a few Indian nationals. People familiar with the matter said in New Delhi that Saudi Arabia evacuated three Indians, who were part of the crew of a Saudi flight and stuck in Sudanese Capital Khartoum. Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last 11 days that has reportedly left around 400 people dead.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Sunday said the Government is making all out efforts to ensure safety and security of Indians stranded in Sudan.

"We are closely monitoring the complex and evolving security situation in Sudan. We are also coordinating closely with various partners for the safe movement of those Indians who are stranded in Sudan and would like to be evacuated. Apart from the Sudanese authorities, the MEA and the Indian embassy in Sudan are also in regular touch with the UN, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and US among others."

"As part of our preparations, and in order to move swiftly, the Government of India is pursuing multiple options. Two Indian Air Force C-130J are currently positioned on standby in Jeddah. And, INS Sumedha has reached Port Sudan. Contingency plans are in place but any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation, which continues to be volatile with reports of fierce fighting at various locations in Khartoum.

Sudanese airspace currently remains closed for all foreign aircraft. Overland movement also has risks and logistical challenges." "Our Embassy is in regular touch with the stranded Indians in Sudan and is advising them on the viability of safe movement and the need to avoid unnecessary risk. It is also coordinating all possible assistance including possible exit from Khartoum city as and when the security situation permits safe movement," the MEA said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said all US personnel and their families were evacuated and operations at the US embassy in Khartoum have been "temporarily suspended." Diplomats of several Western countries like the US, UK, Sweden and France were evacuated by their Governments in the past hours.

# Nitish calls on Mamata, Akhilesh to let Cong...

From Page 1

While Mamata said there has to be "no ego clash" in the Opposition front, Nitish has been making extra efforts to convince parties such TMC, SP, BRS, which have been working for a non-BJP-non-Congress front, to bring the Congress in the united Opposition camp. Addressing a press conference along with Nitish and Tejashwi, Mamata said, "There is no question of ego or anything. We have to work collectively with every-

one." Nitish had clearly taken a swipe by stating there is only one front soon after Telangana CM and BRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao had called him in Patna last year after Mahagathbandhan government came into effect in Bihar.

"I have made just one request to Nitish Kumar. Jayaprakash (Narayan) ji's movement started from Bihar. If we have an all-party meeting in Bihar, we can then decide where we have to go

next," Mamata mentioned. After meeting with Akhilesh, Nitish said, "I Don't have lust for power and position. My endeavour is to work for the country's good."

An ambitious Nitish is eyeing to be the consensus Prime Ministerial Opposition candidate, however he has rejected the speculation. While details of the SP leaders meeting were yet to be known much, sources said a broader perspective on consensus to forge a formidable Opposition

was discussed. Sources said that in the run up to the change of guard in Bihar, Nitish had to convince RJD supreme Lalu Prasad to take the Congress on board for a larger national perspective.

Lalu was then reluctant to take the grand old party as alliance partner in Bihar due to Congress' arm flexing habits. "Nitish has now taken the lead after he was shared with the present thought process of Congress during the meeting with Kharge and

Rahul Gandhi.

Rahul is believed to have conveyed that Congress will never think to be in the running for PM race even if the party gets 99 Lok Sabha seats, precisely less than 100 in 2024. So a seasoned leader like Nitish is toiling hard for the much needed purpose to dethrone Modi, who is after all Opposition leaders using his band of agencies like CBI, ED, IT etc," a top Congress Parliamentarian confided to *The Pioneer*.

# Slanging match in K'taka hots up

From Page 1

He asserted that the BJP would form a Government with full majority in Karnataka and once again strengthen the party's entry in the south of India.

"Congress even today is indulging in appeasement politics. The four per cent Muslim reservation that was given by the Congress has been ended by the BJP, and it has increased the reservation for Lingayat, Vokkaliga, SC/STs," Shah said.

Addressing a large gathering after holding a massive road show in Gundlupet in Chamara Nagar district in the southernmost Karnataka, the top BJP leader pointed out that State Congress president D K Shivakumar had said that if

their party came to power they would once again bring in Muslim reservation. Asking people if they wanted Muslim reservation back, Shah said, "I want to ask Congress State President Shivakumar ji, you are speaking about bringing in Muslim reservation once again, but whose will you reduce? Answer the people of Karnataka, will you reduce Vokkaligas or Lingayats or SC/STs?"

"This election is all about Modi's development politics versus Congress' appeasement politics," said Shah, one of the party's key poll strategists and campaigners. Just ahead of the announcement of polls in Karnataka, the State cabinet led by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had decided to scrap

the 4 per cent reservation for Muslims under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota and to distribute it equally among the dominant Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities.

Expressing confidence in the BJP forming a Government with a full majority in Karnataka, once again strengthening the party's entry in South India, Shah said, "Under Modi's leadership a double-engine Government will be formed. Modi and our CM Bommai have worked for Karnataka's progress."

BJP president JP Nadda too is in Karnataka on a three-day visit and held road show in Sidlaghatta followed by a temple visit in Uttara Kannada district. On the second day of his two-day visit to poll-bound

Karnataka, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacted with sugarcane farmers and youth at Ramdurg in Belagavi district and thereafter left for Gadag to take part in "Yuva Samvaad" (interaction with youth).

Rahul then moved to the Chief Minister's neighbouring constituency of Hangal in Haveri district where he addressed a public meeting in the evening. Bommai is contesting from Shiggaon segment in the district.

On arriving in Karnataka on Sunday, Rahul had paid obeisance to 12th-century poet and social reformer Basaveshwara at his resting place in Kudala Sangama, on the occasion of his birth anniversary that is observed as "Basava Jayanti" in the State. He

then travelled to Vijayapura where he held a massive roadshow and addressed a public meeting. Rahul attacked the BJP State Government by calling it a "40 per cent Sarkar" saying it has "gone beyond being corrupt" with the Bommai reminding the Congress leaders of the alleged scams by the Congress.

On his part Siddaramaiah asserted that the people of Karnataka want to show the door to the ruling BJP, Siddaramaiah said the saffron organisation cannot "mislead" the voters like it did five years ago. Karnataka is expecting a host of BJP and non-BJP run states Chief Ministers to engage in the electioneering in the last leg of the campaigning for the May 10 polling.

**कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, भिलाई (छ.ग.)**  
निविदा सूचना  
क्रमांक/लोक.क.वि./जोन-4/2023/75/40 भिलाई, दिनांक 24/04/2023  
एकीकृत पञ्जीन प्रणाली अंतर्गत खसम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

क्र.	सिस्टम क्र.	कार्य का नाम	निविदा लागत (राशि रु. लाख में)	निविदा अचलनोद (किन्हे जाने की तिथि)
1	131799	जोन क्र 4 अंतर्गत छावनी चौक से हथखोज पुडिया तक मार्ग का नवीनीकरण कार्य। (सुतीय बार)	196.53	03.05.2023

निविदा स्वीकृत/रजिस्टर्ड डाक से स्वीकार किये जायेंगे। उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, निस्तृत निविदा विधायिका, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी संचालनालय की वेबसाइट [eproc.cgstate.gov.in](http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) में भी देखी जा सकती है।  
(धर से निकलने वाले गीले एवं सुखा कचरे को अलग कर सफाई मित्र (रिक्शा) को देंगे।)  
हस्ता/—  
जोन आयुक्त  
जोन - 4 शिवाजी नगर,

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**THANKSGIVING**  
Thank you holly spirit blessings Celine. PD(01)8C

**THANKSGIVING**  
Thank you holly spirit blessings Celine. PD(01)9C

**PUBLICATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT**  
(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)  
IN THE COURT OF SH. ANURAG CHAUDHARI, CIVIL JUDGE - 03, ROOM NO. 279, CENTRAL DISTRICT, TIS HAZARI, DELHI  
Case Reg. No.: CS SCJ/484/2021  
Next Date of Hearing 29.05.2023  
ICICI BANK LTD. ...Plaintiff  
GAURAV SINGH ...Defendant  
To: GAURAV SINGH S/O. SHAYAM SINGH R/O. H. NO. 29-A, NEAR KRISHNA MANDIR, GANESH NAGAR, EXT. 2, SHAKAPUR, EAST DELHI-110092  
MOBILE- 9818077524  
EMAIL- GRVSNHG@YAHOO.IN  
FILA - DESIGNATION : STORE MANAGER (SALES)  
EMPLOYEE ID : 4291, SHOP NO. 12,13,14, 1ST FLOOR, PACIFIC MALL, GURGAON, NEAR MARUTI SHOWROOM, HARYANA- 201010.  
THE DEFENDANT ABOVE NAMED WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 29.05.2023 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte.  
Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 17.04.2023.  
Civil Judge- 03 (Central), Tis Hazari Delhi

# Will move SC if WFI...

From Page 1

"We will go to the Supreme Court. If we are wrong in levelling the allegations, then a counter FIR should be filed against us," the Olympic bronze medalist Sakshi Malik said during a press conference.

Sakshi said they were manipulated, Bajrang also said that they want 'khaps' and other organisations to support their stir." "We wanted to keep it (protest) apolitical the last time around but now, we want the farmers' organisation, the women's organisation, the 'khaps' to support us."

The Delhi Police, meanwhile, has sought a report from the sports ministry in regards to the status of the oversight committee. Protesting wrestlers, meanwhile, spent the night on footpath in their stir against the WFI chief. Olympic medalist Bajrang Punia said this time "all parties are welcome" to join the protest against Singh.

"All parties are welcomed, be it the BJP, the Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party or any other party. When we win a medal, we don't have any party's flag but only the Indian flag.

When we win medals, everyone, not just one party, comes forward to congratulate us, and neither are we affiliated with a single party. We are a part of this country and all

Indians are welcome to join the protests. If we don't fight for the women of the country then we can't fight against anything," Punia told reporters at the protest site.

Punia said, "We are not going to listen to anyone (mediators) now. We will be the face of the protest but we will now be guided by our 'gurujans' (elderly) and 'coach-khalifas' (mentors)."

In a related development, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday said it will hold its Executive Council meeting on Thursday to look for "actionable solutions" to end the current impasse in the WFI.

Earlier in the day, the Sports Ministry on Monday stalled the scheduled May 7 elections of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and asked the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to constitute an ad-hoc committee to conduct the polls within 45 days of its formation and also manage the sports body.

The ad-hoc panel, which will conduct elections within 45 days of its formation, will also manage day-to-day affairs of the WFI till the sports body gets a fresh Executive Committee.

The protesting wrestlers said they have nothing to do with the WFI polls and would

continue to press for a proper investigation into their allegations that Singh sexually harassed women athletes.

The ministry's decision came after the country's top wrestlers, including Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist Bajrang Punia and World Championship medalist Vinesh Phogat, resumed their sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar on Sunday and demanded the public disclosure of the findings of the oversight panel that investigated the allegations.

The ministry instructed the IOA to form an ad-hoc panel but did not reveal if the oversight panel found merit in the sexual harassment allegations.

However it did say in its instructions that according to the oversight panel findings, the WFI did not have a proper system to address such complaints and that transparency and communication between the WFI and the wrestlers is required.

"...It is understood that the election to the EC (of WFI) has been scheduled on 07th May 2023. In this regard, considering the current situation, it is expedient that the said election process should be treated as null and void, and fresh elections to the EC should be conducted under a

neutral body/Returning Officer," a ministry letter to IOA president PT Usha said.

"...A temporary committee or Ad-Hoc Committee may be constituted by the IOA to conduct the election of the Executive Council of WFI within 45 days of its formation and to manage the affairs of WFI, including selection of athletes and making of entries for the participation of sportspersons in international events for the interim period till the next EC takes charge," the letter added.

The ministry also revealed that the Oversight Committee, formed on January 23, now "ceases to exist." "The OC has submitted its report to the Ministry and is currently under examination.

Some major findings include absence of a duly constituted Internal Complaints Committee under Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, 2013 and lack of adequate mechanism for awareness building among sportspersons for grievance redressal," the ministry said.

"...Need for more transparency and consultation between the Federation and stakeholders, including sportspersons. (And) need for effective communication between the Federation and the sportspersons."

# Judges...

From Page 1

On being told by Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the central probe agencies, that this may lead to stalling of the ongoing probe, the bench said the judge should not be giving an interview about the pending case that is before the single judge bench.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Banerjee, referred to the translated transcription of the interview given by Justice Gangopadhyay in which he allegedly spoke against the TMC MP and party general secretary. "With the greatest respect and humility, this just cannot be done," the senior lawyer said.

"I just want to say that judges have no business granting interviews on matters which are pending. If he said that about the petitioner, he has no business participating in the proceedings.

The question is whether a judge who has made statements like these about a political personality should be allowed to participate in the hearings.

There has to be some process," the CJJ observed. The CJJ said the judge should have recused himself and paved way for setting up another bench by the chief justice of the High Court.

# Free bus passes, insurance for 13 lakh workers

Kejriwal instructs labour department

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday instructed the labour department to provide free bus passes and group life insurance along with verification of all 13 lakh registered workers. Additionally, the Delhi Government has announced subsidised housing for construction workers in Delhi and will also provide transit hostels to migrant labourers working in the city.

The Chief Minister chaired a high-level meeting with the Labour Department on Monday to review the functioning of the Delhi Building

and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. The meeting was also attended by Labour Minister Raaj Kumar Anand and senior officials of the concerned departments. The Chief Minister expressed his displeasure with the Board's inability to reach out to every single construction worker of Delhi. In a meeting, the Chief Minister expressed his concerns regarding the lack of benefits reaching all workers and instructed the department to formulate an action plan to extend the benefit of all welfare schemes to each and every registered construction worker. He also directed officials to conduct a proper exercise along with Revenue Department teams to verify the registered workers by June this year.

"If the department is extending the benefit of these



schemes to barely 400-500 people in the name of applications for a scheme, then there is no point in running this department itself. The costs of the department would be higher than that of the welfare schemes. If the department has 3,000-4,000 crores lying with it, then it must extend the benefit of its schemes to all 13 lakh workers, there can be no compromise with the welfare of

our workforce," Kejriwal said. He also directed them to find out and submit the number of registered workers aged above 60 within one week, so the benefit of pension can be extended to them. "Start reaching out to all registered workers on their phones. The cost of sending SMS and IVRS messages to all the workers on their phones would be much lesser than running TV and radio

campaigns and it will be much more effective," he said.

The chief minister directed the Labour Department to provide free bus passes and group life insurance to the registered workers. The government has also announced subsidised housing for construction workers in Delhi and will also provide transit hostels to migrant labourers working in the city. During the review meeting, Kejriwal had instructed the officials to explore the feasibility of providing group life insurance and free bus passes to all the registered workers. The chief minister directed the board officials to meet Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) officials and group life insurance companies to chart out the costs of implementing the schemes at the earliest.

The meeting came as a follow up of a recently held review meeting during which the CM had instructed the board officials to formulate an action plan to utilise at least 25% of its funds on workers' welfare this year.

In addition to this, the Delhi government has announced that toolkits and skill training for masons, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and painters will be provided on a large scale. Kejriwal has also announced free coaching for children of construction workers, and the development of crèche facilities on sites. These measures come as a significant relief for construction workers in Delhi, who have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been struggling with several challenges.

# LG reviews ₹798 cr 'Safe City Project' of Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday reviewed the status and progress of the "Safe City Project" being implemented by the Delhi Police and issued instructions for making it fully functional and operational by August this year.

Being implemented at a cost of Rs 798 crore, this multi-dimensional ambitious project, funded by the Centre will augment and enhance overall technologically-enabled policing in Delhi and help prevent/curb all forms of crimes against women apart from others, the LG office said in a statement.

"The LG also issued instructions to incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) based applications into the project, so as to ensure real-time crowd assessment, picking up behavioral traits and discrepancies, and immediately notify the Command and Control Centres in PHQ, the Districts and Police Stations for immediate response in case of any deviations that point out towards impending crime," reads the statement.

With an objective to create a safe, secure and empowering environment for women in public places, to enable them to pursue all opportunities without the threat of gender-based violence and/or harassment, the Union Home Ministry in collaboration with Ministry of Women and Child Development had approved "Safe City Project" under Nirbhaya Fund for implementation by Delhi Police within the jurisdiction of Delhi.

The project aims to prevent and curb all forms of crimes against women in public places by providing technology-enabled surveillance system, 24x7 real time video-based analytics, quick and effective emergency response system and dedicated emergency vehicles for responding to women



in distress.

The project with an outlay of 857 crore (Bid amount Rs 798 crore) is under implementation by C-DAC (total Service Provider) and NEC (Master System Integrator)/RailTel (Internet Service Provider).

The objectives of the project are ensuring prompt availability of professionally equipped police personnel to reach women in distress through use of technology and, increased and demonstrative presence/visibility in public places through installation of CCTV cameras and deployment of dedicated women-safety Mobile Police Vans (PRAKHAR VANS).

Quick and effective emergency response system to address the needs women in distress, 24x7 CCTV monitoring of public areas frequently visited by women and susceptible to female crime and integration of location-based services and crime and criminal databases with CCTV feeds for prompt and effective resolution of women safety issues at public places are also included in the objectives of the project besides analysis of video and creation of actionable warnings/alerts for preventive and curative actions.

The project components include installation of 10,582 CCTV cameras in the jurisdiction of Delhi, Setting up of Command and Control Centre having facilities of Video Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Facial Recognition System among others at Police Headquarters, District HQs and Police Station Level.

# AAP councillor from Dwarka joins BJP ahead of mayoral polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the MCD mayoral poll, AAP councillor from Dwarka C ward Sunita joined the BJP in presence of senior leaders of the Delhi unit on Monday. The elections for the posts of mayor and deputy mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will be held on April 26. The switching of sides by the AAP councillor, however, will have little impact on the upcoming mayoral poll.

While welcoming Sunita into the party fold, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that common volunteers in AAP were treated like "bonded labour". Apart from Sunita, former councillor Ram Niwas from the AAP also joined the BJP. West Delhi BJP MP Parvash Verma alleged that many other AAP leaders are feeling "suffocated" and expected to soon join the BJP.

Reacting on the development, the AAP has accused the BJP of resorting to cheap politics ahead of the Mayoral Elections in the MCD. According to AAP MCD In-



charge and MLA Durgesh Pathak, the BJP is offering crores of rupees to councillors to switch sides and join their party. He said that the BJP's only motive is to buy councillors by hook or by crook. He also alleged that the MCD was a big source of BJP's loot and that's why they are restless after losing the MCD polls.

Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has said that AAP leader Pathak ran a long campaign for the Municipal Corporation elections for almost 3 years and even after that AAP won the MCD election with a slim margin in December 2022. BJP spokesperson has said that Pathak is politically frustrated

and his statement that BJP is giving money to our councillors is a rethoric allegation which he has made after every councillor's joining of BJP.

Sunita is the second AAP councillor to join the BJP. Sunita, who won from the Dwarka-C ward said she was feeling suffocated in the AAP. "We joined AAP last year with the hope of change, but there was only corruption and disappointment which left us disheartened and forced to leave AAP. We have joined the BJP after being influenced by the work of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his efficient leadership," Sunita said after joining the BJP. Sunita said she had close ties with the

BJP, particularly Verma, and expressed her desire to work hard to strengthen the BJP.

Earlier, Pawan Sehrawat from Bawana ward joined the BJP in February this year. Apart from Sunita, former councillor Ram Niwas from the AAP also joined the BJP.

The switching of sides by the AAP councillor, however, will have little impact on the upcoming mayoral poll. The AAP defeated the BJP in MCD elections in December 2022, winning 134 wards. The BJP managed to register victories in 104 of the 250 wards. AAP which has a clear majority in the MCD House, has a mayor and deputy mayor. The second round of mayoral polls is scheduled on April 26. The AAP has nominated incumbent mayor, Shelly Oberoi, and her deputy, Aaley Mohammad Iqbal, as the party's candidates for the polls. The BJP has fielded Greater Kailash councillor Shikha Rai for the post mayor while Soni Pandey, councillor from Sonia Vihar, will be BJP's candidate for deputy mayor

# Senior AAP councillor Goel to preside over MCD mayoral polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP councillor Mukesh Goyal will be the presiding officer for the election of mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on April 26. Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved Goyal's name. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has recommended Goyal's and sought the lieutenant governor's approval last week.

According to Delhi government official, Goyal is the senior-most councillor of the MCD. Kejriwal, while sending Goyal's name for approval of the LG, had said that his name was approved as per tradition of nominating the senior-most councillor as presiding officer for the elections of mayor and deputy mayor. He had also said that the



decision to appoint Goyal as presiding officer was binding on the LG unless he decided to refer the matter to the President in case of difference.

In February, a row had erupted with the AAP dispensation opposing tooth and nail Saxena's decision to appoint BJP councillor Satya Sharma as the presiding officer for the elections of mayor and deputy mayor in the first sitting of the newly elected MCD House. The L-G had rejected Goyal's name for presiding officer in February.

# Mega PTM for Classes 3-8 in MCD, Govt schools on April 30

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Mega parent-teacher meeting (PTM) will be organised for students from classes 3 to 8 in all schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Government schools on April 30. This will be the first time that Delhi government schools, under the ambit of the Directorate of Education, and those run by the MCD will hold mega PTM together. Delhi Education Minister Atishi and Mayor Dr. Shelly Oberoi announced the plan during a press conference on Monday. The Education Minister urged all parents to participate in the Mega PTM and provide suggestions for their children's education as well as for the improvement of schools.

"As you all know that for the AAP government, education is the highest priority



department, we are going to initiate a similar model to MCD schools too. We are going to organise a mega PTM on the 30th involving parents from both MCD and Delhi government schools. Delhi government schools under the Directorate of Education (DoE) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will hold Mega PTMs together for the first time. Parents have always been

important stakeholders in the process of education," Atishi said addressing a press conference. "Education has always been the priority of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi Government. In view of the same, in the past few years, the government raised the budget for education, improved school infrastructure, and focused exclusively on providing a conducive learning envi-

ronment to children in government schools. But apart from all this, we also worked to connect parents, important stakeholders of the education system, with the schools. Parents are one of the most important stakeholders in the education model. We appeal to parents to join the meeting in large numbers," Atishi said.

MCD Mayor Dr Shelly Oberoi said parents play a vital role in their wards' education. "That's the reason we are going to organise a mega PTM on the 30th of April. Parents will have one-to-one communication with teachers," Oberoi said. Talking about the importance of MCD schools, she said, "MCD schools are primary schools up to the 5th standard. This builds the foundation of students." During PTM, parents will also judge the atmosphere and surroundings of the school, she added.

# Delhi transport department deregistered 54 lakh overage vehicles till March 27

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's transport department deregistered more than 54 lakh overage vehicles, including autorickshaws, cabs and two-wheelers, till March 27. According to the transport department's data, some of the deregistered vehicles include those registered as early as 1900 and 1901.

In 2018, the Supreme Court banned diesel and petrol vehicles older than 10 and 15 years, respectively, in Delhi. It added that the vehicles plying in violation of the order would be impounded. A National Green Tribunal (NGT) order in 2014 bars vehicles older than 15 years to be parked in public places.

According to the data, the maximum number of vehicles were deregistered from South Delhi Part 1. A total of 9,285 three-wheelers



and 25,167 cabs were struck off till March 27.

As many as 2,90,127 vehicles have been de-registered from the Mall Road zone, 3,27,034 from IP depot, 9,99,999 from South Delhi Part 1, 1,69,784 from South Delhi Part 2, 7,06,921 from Janakpuri, 4,35,408 from Loni, 4,96,086 from Sarai Kale Khan, 2,99,788 from

Mayur Vihar, 1,65,048 from Wazirpur, 3,04,677 from Dwarka, 25,167 from Burari, 1,95,626 from Raja Garden, and 6,56,201 from the Rohini zone.

The Transport department kicked off a drive on March 29 to send overage vehicles directly for scrapping. According to officials, they are picking up 100 vehicles a

day. As part of the drive, the enforcement teams of the department carry out an intensive drive in a chosen area.

Transport Commissioner Ashish Kundra said, "Owners of overage vehicles are requested to get an NOC and sell their vehicles in a state where they are fit to ply. If the vehicles will be found plying or parked on city roads, they will run the risk of being bound down and handed over to the scrapper."

The total number of vehicles on the roads of the national capital has decreased by 35.38 per cent since the city government banned plying of overage vehicles, according to the 2022-23 Economic Survey of Delhi. In 2021-22, total 79.18 lakh vehicles were recorded on Delhi roads.

# Stray dog beaten to death by group of people in Karol Bagh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a horrific instance of animal cruelty in the nation's capital, a group of people in central Delhi's Karol Bagh area beat a stray dog to death. A disturbing video of the incident which happened on Sunday also surfaced on social media, which shows unidentified individuals attacking the dog with sticks. The case was registered after a social worker for animal welfare lodged a complaint with the Karol Bagh police station. Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal has condemned the incident and demanded strict action against the perpetrators. A senior official stated that an enquiry uncovered that the dog had previously attacked and bitten multiple local residents.

According to police, the matter came to light after an animal rights activist filed a complaint with the Karol Bagh Police Station. A senior police



officer said that during the enquiry, it was revealed that the dog had attacked and bitten several residents of the area in the past.

A case has been registered at Karol Bagh Police Station under sections 428 (mischief by killing or maiming animal of the value of ten rupees) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and sections of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act," said Sanjay Sain, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central).

Expressing her anguish, DCW chief condemned the incident, demanding stringent action against the perpetrators. "In Delhi's Karol Bagh area, a voiceless animal was mercilessly beaten to death with sticks. My heart broke when I saw this video. Who is human, who is an animal? @DelhiPolice strict action should be taken against these brutal people," Maliwal said in a tweet in Hindi. The investigation is underway and the accused have been identified and efforts are on to nab them, police said.

# 4 arrested for cheating 500 people in crypto trading fraud; ₹5.5 Lakh seized

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four people were arrested for allegedly cheating more than 500 people across the country in the name of online trading of cryptocurrency. According to police, the accused have been identified as Farhan Ansari (30), Sanjay Dabas (26), Pankaj Wadhwa (38) and Monu (42).

Police said they have recovered ₹5.50 lakh cash from Wadhwa and also frozen around ₹24 lakhs in different bank accounts of the accused. In February, a Central Delhi resident was duped of ₹22 lakhs in a single day using the same modus operandi, police said.



The woman, in her complaint, alleged that while searching for a job online, she received a WhatsApp message from an unknown number offering her to pay ₹50 per like for liking the link sent to her on her WhatsApp, they said. She

opened the various links sent by the caller who identified herself as Xarina and liked them.

"Xarina then asked her to open a telegram link to receive the credited amount. She joined the Telegram channel 'Mohini8' and received ₹150 in her bank account," police said. "Xarina gave her another task to invest in Cryptocurrency with the allurements of a huge profit. The first task started with Rs 1000. She got trapped in her net and lost around ₹22 lakhs in a single day," the complainant alleged.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Sanjay Sain said that based on inquiry, details of bank account trans-

# Delhi Fire Service refuses to renew safety certificate of Vignyan Bhawan over lapses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Fire Service has refused to renew the fire safety certificate of Vignyan Bhawan, a central government facility which hosts key events, on account of certain shortcomings, according to an official communication.

The fire department noted that there was no smoke management system provided in the basement, main hall and the atrium. In a communication on April 13, the department also noted that hose reels and hydrants were not covering the entire area on ground and upper floors.

It flagged that smoke detectors were found non-functional in some areas and that lift signages stating "not to use lift in case of fire" were not provided. It also stated that there was no seating arrangement in the main hall on the ground

floor though provided for in the Cinematograph Act 1952.

"They had applied for renewal of fire safety certificate. When an inspection was carried out by a team of fire officials, certain shortcomings were observed and they were asked to rectify them," a Delhi Fire Service official said.

"In view of above shortcomings, request for issuance of fire safety certificate is rejected. Therefore you are requested to rectify the above shortcomings at the earliest. Further, the occupancy of building/premises, in the absence of required fire and life safety arrangements, shall be at the risk and liability of the owner/occupier," he said.

Vignyan Bhawan is a premier events venue of the Centre. Its maintenance and upkeep is taken care of by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD).

# India, China agree to continue talks to ease tension along LAC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

India and China have agreed to continue the process of dialogue at the military and diplomatic levels to ease tension at the border in Ladakh and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

This reiteration came after the Corps Commanders of the two armies held the 18th round of talks on Sunday to find ways to hasten up the process of disengagement from remaining friction points at the Depsang valley and Demchok in eastern Ladakh.

Giving details of the talks, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said here on Monday the 18th round of India-China Corps Commander level meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side.

"The two sides had a frank and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in



the Western Sector so as to restore peace and tranquility in the border areas, which will enable progress in bilateral relations. In line with the guidance provided by the State Leaders and further to the meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in March 2023, they had an exchange of views in an open and candid manner.

In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector. The two sides agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable res-

olution of the remaining issues at the earliest," the MEA said.

Incidentally, the military level talks came days ahead of Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu's visit to New Delhi next week to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' conclave on April 27-28.

Pakistan's defence minister Khawaja Asif may also come though Islamabad is yet to confirm. Russia's defence minister Sergei Shoigu will also attend the meet. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to hold bilateral meetings with the Chinese and Russian defence ministers on the side-

lines of the meet.

It will be the first visit by a Chinese defence minister since tension flared up at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020. It saw a major clash between the two armies in the Galwan valley in June resulting in the death of 20 Indian army personnel including the commanding officer. The brawl also led to the death of more than 40 Chinese soldiers but Beijing is yet to give out the exact toll.

Moreover, the Corps Commander level talks took place days ahead of Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang's visit to Goa to attend the SCO Foreign Ministers' conclave on May 4 and 5.

As regards the latest round of Corps Commander level talks, the Indian side was led by Lt General Rashim Bali, chief of the Leh based 14 Corps. The two sides reportedly discussed de-escalation and legacy issues of Depsang plains and Demchok in the talks.

The 17th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side on December 20, last year.

# Australia for stronger defence ties with key allies in Indo-Pacific as China adopts aggressive stance

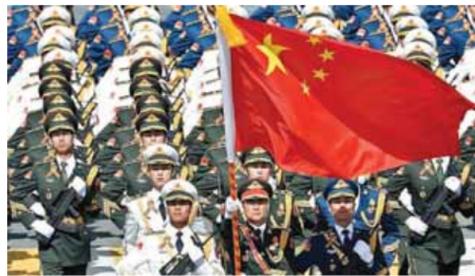
**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/MELBOURNE**

With China adopting an aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region and South China Sea, Australia on Monday said it will deepen its diplomatic and defence partnerships with key allies in the strategic zone, including India and Japan. "China's military build-up is now the largest and most ambitious of any country since the end of the Second World War", Australia said.

Unveiling the Defence Strategic Review in Canberra, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government set out a blueprint for Australia's strategic policy, defence planning and resources over the coming decades.

Incidentally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to attend the Quad summit in Australia next month. US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida along with Albanese will take part in the high-profile event.

The Australian review also highlighted the emergence of "major power" competition in the Indo-Pacific and said it has the potential to threaten



Australian interests in the region.

"No longer is our alliance partner, the United States, the unipolar leader of the Indo-Pacific. Intense China-US competition is the defining feature of our region and our time," it said.

"Major power competition in our region has the potential to threaten our interests, including the potential for conflict. The nature of conflict and threats have also changed," it added.

The report said Australia is a significant Indian Ocean state with the longest coastline in the region. "Australia must continue to expand its relationships and practical cooperation with key powers, including Japan and India," it said, adding that Canberra also

needs to invest in regional architecture.

The report has been written by former head of Australia's defence force Angus Houston and former defence minister Stephen Smith.

"For military planning, in terms of our strategic geography, the primary area of military interest for Australia's national defence is the immediate region encompassing the north-eastern Indian Ocean through maritime Southeast Asia into the Pacific," the report said. It said Australia's approach to statecraft must include measures internal and external to Australia and build on certain actions. Internal measures, it said, included increased defence and national security spending, the reorganisation of elements of the national intel-

ligence and substantial investments in cyber security.

"External approaches have included measures such as: the adoption of the strategic framework of the Indo-Pacific; expanding regional strategic multilateral, trilateral and bilateral partnerships, including the reinstatement of the Quad partnership with Japan, India and the United States," it said.

The report said a stable relationship between Australia and China is in the interests of both countries and the broader region. It said Australia will continue to cooperate with China "where we can, disagree where we must, manage our differences wisely, and, above all else, engage in and vigorously pursue our own national interest".

"China's military build-up is now the largest and most ambitious of any country since the end of the Second World War. This has occurred alongside significant economic development, benefiting many countries in the Indo-Pacific, including Australia," the report said.

"This build-up is occurring without transparency or reassurance to the Indo-Pacific region of China's strategic intent," it said.

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

To,  
ANWAR SADAT SON OF SHRI WALI MOHAMMAD,  
R/O HOUSE NO. 588/17, SHIVAJI NAGAR, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001.  
PAN NO. AUPDS9072M  
GURGAON, HARYANA-122001  
Also At,  
ANWAR SADAT SON OF SHRI WALI MOHAMMAD,  
R/O FLAT NO. 315, SILICON AVENUE BUILDING, DUBAI SILICON OASIS, POST BOX NO. 214560, DUBAI, UAE-214560.  
Also At,  
ANWAR SADAT S/O SHRI WALI MOHAMMAD AT BIZ EXCHANGE, COMMERCIAL BANK OF DUBAI BUILDING, OPPOSITE MO5, SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD, DUBAI-214560.  
Also At,  
ANWAR SADAT S/O SHRI WALI MOHAMMAD AT SCC 072, SKY COURT-DLF GARDEN CITY, SECTOR 86, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001  
GURGAON, HARYANA-122001  
(2) SHABNAM SADAT WIFE OF SHRI ANWAR SADAT R/O HOUSE NO. 588/17, SHIVAJI NAGAR, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001.  
Also At,  
SHABNAM SADAT WIFE OF SHRI ANWAR SADAT R/O FLAT NO. 315, SILICON AVENUE BUILDING, DUBAI SILICON OASIS, POST BOX NO. 214560, DUBAI, UAE-214560.  
Also At,  
SHABNAM SADAT WIFE OF SHRI ANWAR SADAT AT SCC 072, SKY COURT-DLF GARDEN CITY, SECTOR 86, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001  
GURGAON, HARYANA-122001  
SUMMONS  
WHEREAS, OA/204/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 09/03/2023.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 1,43,98,826/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;  
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 18/08/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 13/04/2023.  
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

**Form No. 3**  
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)  
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35 Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)  
Case No.: OA/825/2022  
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]  
Exh. No.: 15237  
ICICI BANK LIMITED  
Vs.  
GAURAV GOYAL

To,  
(1) GAURAV GOYAL D/W/S/O- GYAN CHAND GOYAL GAURAV GOYAL SON OF SHRI GYAN CHAND GOYAL, R/O FLAT NO. 202, SAGAR APARTMENTS, PLOT NO. 52, SECTOR 56, GURUGRAM HARYANA-122017. PAN NO. AJRPG1212B. 2ND ADDRESS:- HOUSE NO. 286, RAJENDER NAGAR, BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN - 321001. GURGAON, HARYANA  
Also At- H. NO. 286 PAJENDER NAGAR, BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN  
(2) RISE PROJECTS PVT. LTD. REGISTERED OFFICE AT 195, RAM VIHAR, NEW DELHI, DELHI  
Also At- GROUP HOUSE PLOT NO. 2, MCF LAND REVENUE ESTATE, VILLAGE SARAI KHAWAJA, SECTOR 41, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
SUMMONS  
WHEREAS, OA/825/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 19/12/2022.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 69,99,331/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;  
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 19/04/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 27/12/2022.  
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

**Publication Form No. 3**  
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)  
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35 Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)  
Case No.: OA/1454/2022  
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.  
Exh. No.: 15610  
ICICI BANK LIMITED  
Vs.  
RUPINDER KAUR

TO,  
(1) RUPINDER KAUR D/W/S/O- MANISH KUMAR RUPINDER KAUR WIFE OF SHRI MANISH KUMAR, R/O HOUSE NO. 4212, I.P. EXTENSION PART-II, SAINIK COLONY, SECTOR 49, DISTRICT FARIDABAD, HARYANA-121001. PAN NO. BATPK2204C, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
Also At  
HOUSE NO. 1421, WARD NO. 5 JAWAHAR COLONY, FARIDABAD, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
Also At  
C/O EDU GURU GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, 5 3/1 A, BP RAILWAY ROAD NIT, FARIDABAD, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
Also At  
MU HOTEL AND PG SERVICES, 4212, I.P. EXTENSION PART II, SAINIK COLONY, SECTOR-49, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
Also At  
HOUSE NO. 211/33, SBS COLONY, FARIDABAD, FARIDABAD, HARYANA  
SUMMONS  
WHEREAS, OA/1454/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 12/01/2023.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 43,86,167.68/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;  
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 23/05/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 28/10/2022.  
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

**Publication Form No. 3**  
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)  
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)  
Case No.: OA/121/2022  
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993  
Exh. No. 13822  
ICICI BANK LIMITED  
Vs.  
KAMLESH GUPTA

To,  
(3) NINEX DEVELOPER LTD. RES. OFFICE SF 05, NINEX CITY MARG SOHONA ROAD, SECTOR 49, GURUGRAM, GURGAON HARYANA  
ALSO AT- GOPI RAM BUILDING VILLAGE SULTANPUR, NEW DELHI  
NEW DELHI, DELHI  
SUMMONS  
WHEREAS, OA/121/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 19/10/2023.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 1,24,17,034/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;  
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;  
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 23/05/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 28/10/2022.  
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all concerned that my client Rattan Lal R/o R-582, Second Floor New Rajender Nagar New Delhi-110060, E-mail: Sanjeev.khatri16@gmail.com is the owner of following properties:- 1. Shop No. 4293 XV GF, FF with roof rights. 2. Shop No. 4293 XV GF, Ground Floor occupied by one tenant. 3. Property No. 4291 to 4293 XV consisting of First Floor with roof rights. 4. Part Property No. 4288, 4294-4298 XV GF, FF with roof rights consisting of 3 shops occupied by tenants in inside lane. 6. Property No. 4308 XV GF, SF with roof rights. 7. Property No. 4304-05 XV also known as XV 5338-39, GF, FF, SF with roof rights. If anyone have any objection regarding Ownership rights of my client in the above properties then he can raise such objection within 15 days time from the date of publication.  
G.L. Goswami (ADVOCATE)  
DELHI HIGH COURT  
Ch. No. 576, Western Wing, Tis Nazar Court, Delhi

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G.L. Goswami (ADVOCATE)  
DELHI HIGH COURT  
Ch. No. 576, Western Wing, Tis Nazar Court, Delhi

# Solar powered steam distillation units being introduced to cut down cost, carbon emissions



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

To cut down input costs and carbon emission, plans are afoot to introduce solar powered steam distillation units and do away with the conventional wood/straw stubble-fuel based one which are presently being widely used by farmers and industries for extraction of aromatics and medicinal oils from flowers and herbal plants.

Essential oils are complex mixtures of volatile organic compounds distilled from various plants and flowers and find huge demand in various industries like cosmetics, food and pharmaceuticals. As more and more farmers and entrepreneurs are showing interest in growing aromatic plants that offer higher and assured returns, it is being felt that water-steam distillation run on wood fuels/electricity for extracting essential oils will become major energy guzzlers in near future.

Hence, as an alternative, solar energy can be used to generate heat for the distillation of essential oils. "Designing solar distillation units to reduce carbon emissions is the need of the hour," said Dr Prabodh Kumar Trivedi, Director, of the Palampur-based Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology, a lab of the Central Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the

Union of Science and Technology Ministry.

He was speaking at a workshop organized recently by the Essential Oils Association of India (EOAI) with CSIR-IHBT Himalayan Phytochemicals and Growers Association (HIMPA), Mandi (HP), and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi (HP). The workshop on Himalayan Damask Rose under the theme "Development of Aromatic Cultivation and Essential Oil Industry of Western Himalayan Region" was attended by around 200 delegates from across India including scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, and farmers in the field of essential oils.

Developing the solar powered steam distillation system is under the mandate of the Aromatic Mission which would soon enter in its third phase. It was launched in 2017 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help farmers add up their income through aromatic plant cultivation.

"Soon our scientists will commence R&D in the direction of developing solar based distillation units. The idea is to cut down carbon emission as well as check on air pollution, since present fuels are carbon intensive," explained Dr. Rakesh Kumar, co-nodal of Aroma Mission at CSIR-IHBT and coordinator of the workshop.

# Babies' gut has more than 200 previously unknown viral families, say scientists

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

So far what we knew was that gut bacteria in young kids protected them from chronic diseases later on in life. But now scientists have found that babies' gut consists of more than 200 previously unknown viral families, which likely plays an important role in protecting them from diseases like asthma and diabetes when they become adults.

This they found after spending five years studying and mapping the diaper contents of 647 healthy Danish one-year-olds. However, what the researchers have not been able to discover is where the many viruses in the one-year-olds come from.

"We found an exceptional number of unknown viruses in the faeces of these babies. Not just thousands of new virus species — but to our surprise, the viruses represented more than 200 families of yet to be described viruses," said Professor Dennis Sandris Nielsen of the Department of Food Science, from the University of Copenhagen.

"This means that, from early on in life, healthy children are tumbling about with an extreme diversity of gut viruses, which probably have a major impact on whether they develop various diseases later on in life," he added.

In the research paper, published in Nature Microbiology, the team found and mapped a total of 10,000 viral species in the children's faeces — a number ten times larger than the number of bacterial species in the same children.

These viral species are distributed across 248 different viral families, of which only 16



were previously known.

"Our hypothesis is that, because the immune system has not yet learned to separate the wheat from the chaff at the age of one, an extraordinarily high species richness of gut viruses emerges, and is likely needed to protect against chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes later on in life," said Shiraz Shah, a senior researcher at Copenhagen Prospective Studies on Asthma in Childhood (COPSAC).

Further, the team identified 90 per cent of the viruses as bacteriophages. These viruses have bacteria as their hosts and do not attack the children's own cells, meaning that they do not cause disease.

The remaining 10 per cent of viruses are eukaryotic — that is, they use human cells as hosts. These can be both friends and foes for us.

"It is thought-provoking that all children run around with 10-20 of these virus types that infect human cells. So, there is a constant viral infection taking place, which apparently doesn't make them sick. We just know very little about what's really at play. My guess is that they're important for training our immune system to recognise infections later. But it may also be that they are a risk factor for diseases that we have yet to discover," Sandris Nielsen said.

# India keeps target to eliminate Malaria by 2030

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Amid the Covid-19 response, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have maintained their malaria-free status, and five countries of the region — Bhutan, DPR Korea, Nepal, Thailand and Timor-Leste — are among 25 countries and one territory globally identified as having the potential to eliminate malaria by 2025, the WHO said on Monday. India has kept the elimination target by 2030 even as neighbouring countries China and Sri Lanka are menace free.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for South-East Asia, however, noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has cast shadow on various countries plan to reach the two critical targets of the WHO Global Technical Strategy (GTS) for malaria 2016-2030: reducing global case incidence and mortality by



90 per cent or more by 2030, based on 2015 levels.

Hence, the countries affected by the disease globally should accelerate the reach of high-impact tools and strategies to prevent, detect and treat malaria, with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable, ensuring that no person is left behind, she said in a statement.

In 2021, an estimated 619,000 people globally died of malaria compared to 625,000 in 2020. There were an estimated 247 million new cases of malar-

ia, compared to 245 million in 2020. By the end of 2020, the South-East Asia Region was the only WHO region to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in malaria case incidence and mortality compared to 2015, the first GTS milestone," she stated.

"Today, the region is at a crossroads. Since 2010, overall funding for malaria prevention and control in the region has decreased by 36 per cent, mostly on account of flagging global support," Singh said.

"Malaria is not just a public health issue but also a social, economic and political challenge that requires the cooperation of all stakeholders. India was the only high-burden, high-impact country in the South-East Asia region to report a decline in malaria cases in 2020 as compared to 2019. India witnessed 85.1% decline in malaria cases and 83.36% decline in deaths during 2015-2022," Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Health Minister said in his virtual address at the Asia Pacific Leaders' Conclave on Malaria Elimination held on the eve of the World Malaria Day.

Dr V.K. Paul, Niti, Aayog member (Health) stressed on working on most marginalized and vulnerable communities with an inter-sectoral approach. "We can't eliminate malaria till we work together across borders, focus on high-burden areas with dense populations, migrant populations, areas inhabited by tribal popula-

# Basic structure doctrine still relevant on 50th anniversary

## 13-judge bench of Supreme Court by a 7:6 majority restricted Parliament's power to amend every bit of Indian Constitution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The historically acclaimed 1973 Kesavananda Bharati judgment on the "basic structure" doctrine, which clipped the widest power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and simultaneously gave the judiciary the authority to review any amendment, came into the limelight once again on its 50th anniversary.

The Supreme Court on Monday dedicated to people, including researchers, a web page containing details of the arguments, written submissions and the distinguished judgment to mark the anniversary of the verdict, which was delivered on April 24, 1973 by an unprecedented 13-judge bench of the top court by a 7:6 majority to restrict the Parliament's power to amend every bit of the Constitution.

The sharply-divided verdict, which later found many supporters in eminent jurists, had held that though Parliament had the power to amend the Constitution under Article 368, it did not have the



power to "emasculate" its basic features. The judgment said every provision of the Constitution could be amended but they would be subject to a judicial review to ascertain that the basic foundation and structure of the Constitution remained the same.

Recently, the verdict, which is often referred to in judicial proceedings, has been back in public discourses after Vice President Jagdeep Thakur, himself a lawyer, questioned it saying it had set a bad precedent. If any authority questions the Parliament's power to amend the Constitution, it

would be difficult to say "we are a democratic nation", Dhankhar said. Besides a vehement opposition by political parties to the path-breaking verdict was delivered in 1973 while deciding a case of Kerala seer Kesavananda Bharati, the petitioner who died in the southern state in 2020. In 1970, Bharati, the hereditary head of the Edeer Hindu "Matha" in Kerala's Kasaragod district, moved the top court challenging two land reform Acts of the state government meant to restrict the management of religious properties.

The case had a number of firsts to its credit. It was heard

keeping its soul intact. "The basic structure of our Constitution, like the North Star, guides and gives certain directions to the interpreters and implementers of the Constitution when the path ahead is convoluted," he said.

"The basic structure or the philosophy of our Constitution is premised on the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, secularism, federalism, freedom and the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation," Justice Chandrachud said. The path-breaking verdict was delivered in 1973 while deciding a case of Kerala seer Kesavananda Bharati, the petitioner who died in the southern state in 2020. In 1970, Bharati, the hereditary head of the Edeer Hindu "Matha" in Kerala's Kasaragod district, moved the top court challenging two land reform Acts of the state government meant to restrict the management of religious properties.

The case had a number of firsts to its credit. It was heard

by the largest bench ever of 13 judges for a maximum number of days (68) till date and the verdict ran into 703 pages. The arguments commenced on October 31, 1972 and ended on March 23, 1973.

However, the most important takeaway of the historic judgment was that the principle that Parliament has all the power under the sun to amend every bit of the Constitution was shattered by a wafer-thin majority of 7:6.

The 13-judge bench of the apex court was headed by Chief Justice S M Sikri, with Justice H R Khanna leading from the front. Justice Khanna used the term "basic structure" in his judgment and said the judiciary has the power to review and strike down constitutional amendments and Acts that are not in conformity with the doctrine. The top court had given the broad outline as to what would constitute the basic structure of the Constitution and said the concept of secularism and democracy would be its part. It had also left the issue wide open for

future benches to decide as to what will form part of the doctrine.

Bharti, whose case was argued by eminent jurist Nani Palkhivala, had challenged the validity of the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Acts of 1969 and 1971. The two laws were put in the ninth schedule of the Constitution to keep those beyond the judicial review power of courts.

However, later it became a case where the width and scope of Parliament to amend the Constitution under Article 368 was discussed and decided for all times to come. The 13-judge bench had delivered 11 separate judgments, in which the judges agreed on some points and differed on some other points. But the "basic structure" principle was supported by seven of the 13 judges, which later became grounds for setting aside several constitutional amendments. A recent such example is the quashing of the Constitutional amendment and the corresponding NJAC Act on appointment of judges in the higher judiciary. It has

been held that the independence of the judiciary is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution and hence, not amendable.

"The respondents (the government and others) who appeal fervently to democratic principles urge that there is no limit to the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution. Article 368 can itself be amended to make the Constitution completely flexible or extremely rigid and unamendable.

"If this is so, a political party with a two-thirds majority in Parliament for a four years (now five) could so amend the Constitution as to debar any other party from functioning, establish totalitarianism, enslave the people, and after having effected these purposes, make the Constitution unamendable or extremely rigid." This would no doubt invite extra-constitutional revolution. Therefore, the appeal by the respondents to democratic principles and the necessity of having absolute amending power to prevent a

revolution to buttress their contention is rather fruitless, because if their contention is accepted, the very democratic principles which they appeal to would disappear and a revolution would also become a possibility," the top court had said.

To prevent the possibility of amending every bit of the Constitution, the top court gave a broad outline as to what would constitute its basic structure.

The then CJI Sikri had said every provision of the Constitution can be amended, provided that its basic foundation and structure remain the same. The basic structure consists of the supremacy of "the Constitution, the republican and democratic form of the government, the secular character of the Constitution, separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, the federal character of Constitution", the top court had said.

The term "basic structure" has been expanded from time to time by apex court through various judgments.

# 'No ego clash': Didi on Opp unity post talks

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a curious development indicative of a little climb down in her strong stance vis a vis a Congress-led opposition, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the first time on Monday said that there was no "clash of ego" in reference to any grand alliance aimed at making a "zero" out of a BJP which posed itself as a "hero" intimidating the opposition and discriminating against the non-BJP-ruled states.

Banerjee, whose party had often resisted a Congress-led grand alliance, apparently made a conscious effort to dissolve the element of "ego" if there was some earlier, after her talks with her Bihar counterpart, Nitish Kumar and his deputy Tejaswi Yadav.

"I have no personal ego" on the issue of any grand alliance, she insisted. The two leaders on Monday met Banerjee at Nabanna, the State secretariat in Howrah. While Kumar said that "the talks had been very positive and fruitful," on the



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee greets Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as he arrives for a meeting, in Howrah district, on Monday

issues of opposition unity Banerjee invoked Jayaprakash Narayan, saying, as the JP movement started from Bihar, so should the message of grand alliance emerge from Kumar's State where she proposed the hosting of an all-party meeting. Banerjee — whose government has been under intense pressure in the wake of recent scams coming to the fore and her party getting derecognized as a national outfit — said, "I have

made just one request to Nitish Kumar... If we have an all-party meeting in Bihar — from where Jayaprakash (Narayan) ji's movement started — we can then decide where we have to go next." For that to happen, the opposition must stand united giving out a message of unity. "We have to give a message that we are united. I have said earlier that I have no objections... there is no personal ego from my side," Banerjee — some of

whose Cabinet colleagues and legislators are presently in jail on corruption charges reminded adding, "I have always iterated that BJP should be brought to zero... and there has to be a collective will to do so."

She said, "money and media had made the BJP a big hero by feeding fake narratives on daily basis," adding the saffron outfit only indulged in "jumlas and goondaism," even as Kumar and Yadav nodded sitting by her side post the "positive talks," as the Bihar Chief Minister would call it.

On whether she was game for the "one-seat-one-candidate" formula proposed by Kumar, Banerjee said, "first let the unity of mind be there and then things will themselves get sorted out," adding "if thought, vision, and mission are clear, there will be no issues." Kumar who earlier responded to Congress president, Mallikarjun Kharge's request to take up the cause of uniting the opposition parties said, the Monday's talks were, "very positive discussion." Kumar said, "the present rulers

have been doing nothing save self publicity," adding the BJP had done not a thing for the nation's development but everything for dividing its people. Alleging that the BJP was changing the history of the country, Kumar said "we all have the responsibility to save India and with that goal ahead we will talk with all the other parties and will proceed towards the right direction."

On the issues discussed Kumar said, "everything, that should have been discussed has been discussed and there is no dearth of initiative from any side... the talks have been fruitful and positive." Egged on by Akbar Road and having assumed responsibility of bringing parties allergic towards Congress on a common platform, Kumar had set out on a mission to meet likes of Banerjee, Samajwadi Party chieftain Akhilesh Yadav, Telangana Chief Minister T Chandrashekhara Rao and others. From Kolkata Kumar was likely to fly off to Lucknow to meet Yadav.

# SC to hear on April 28 plea for probe into Atiq-Ashraf's killing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear on April 28 a petition seeking an independent probe into the killing of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf. The plea, filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, has also sought an inquiry into the 183 encounters that have taken place in Uttar Pradesh since 2017.

Tiwari mentioned the matter for urgent listing on Monday before a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha. He told the bench that his plea was slated to come up for hearing on Monday but it has not been listed.

"Since five judges are not available, some cases in which dates were given have not been listed. We will try to list this on Friday (April 28)," the CJI said, adding, some apex court judges are down with COVID-19 while some others are indisposed due to other reasons.

The plea filed in the apex court has 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 "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," said the plea.

# Will take firm stand if anyone tries to break NCP, says Pawar

PTI ■ AMRAVATI

The Nationalist Congress Party would have to act firmly if anyone attempts to break the party, NCP chief Sharad Pawar has said against the backdrop of a buzz about his nephew Ajit Pawar's next political move.

Amid rumours that he is cosying up with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Ajit Pawar on Friday said he would "100 per cent like to be the chief minister" of Maharashtra and that the NCP can stake a claim to the CM's post now also instead of waiting for 2024, when the Assembly polls are due in the state. Sharad Pawar on Sunday said, "Tomorrow if anyone is



attempting to break the party (NCP) then it is their strategy. If we have to take any stand, then we have to do it firmly." "It is improper to talk about this today because we have not discussed this (issue)," the NCP chief said without elaborating. He was responding to a question on rumoured attempts to break away Ajit Pawar from the NCP if 16 MLAs of the Shiv

Sena, including Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, are disqualified by the Supreme Court. In his weekly column in Marathi daily 'Saamana' on April 16, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut claimed Sharad Pawar had told Uddhav Thackeray during their meeting that nobody wants to switch over but his (Pawar's) family is being targeted.

If anyone takes a personal decision to leave the NCP, it is an individual issue, but as a party "we will never go with the BJP," Raut had quoted Pawar senior as saying. Notably, Ajit Pawar has denied speculation that he and a group of MLAs loyal to him might align with BJP and said he would be with the NCP till he is alive.

# MPs, MLAs with more than 2 kids should be debarred from polls: Ajit

PTI ■ PUNE

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar has said that people who go on to have more than two children should not be given any concessions, and even legislators in such cases should be made ineligible to contest elections.

India has surpassed China in terms of population growth, Pawar said while speaking at an event in Baramati on Sunday.

"My grandfather used to tell me that when we got independence, our population was 35 crore and now it has reached 142 crore, and for that, we are all responsible," the Leader of Opposition in the state legislative Assembly said. Pawar said



that in an interview two days ago, he had asserted that all political parties should take this issue seriously. "Everyone should stop after having one or two children for the betterment of our country, state, district, and region," he said. He further said that henceforth, no con-

cessions should be given to people who have more than two children. "When Videsh Deshmukh was the chief minister, we were apprehensive while taking a decision that candidates aspiring to contest local body elections to gram panchayats, zilla parishads and taluka panchayats would be ineligible if they had three children," Pawar said.

"People ask why a similar decision was not taken with regard to MPs and MLAs. I tell them it is not in our hands. It is in the hands of the Centre and it is our demand that the Centre should do it," he said. People will become more aware and conscious about the issue if they are not given any concessions, the NCP leader said.

# Gehlot opens 'Mehangai Rahat' camp

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday launched his government's flagship initiative 'Mehangai Rahat' camps and appealed to people to "repeat" his government in order to further strengthen public welfare schemes.

He said Rajasthan is the first state in the country where schemes are available through which the impact of inflation on people can be reduced. Gehlot said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had focused on issues like inflation and unemployment in his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and those issues were considered while making the state budget.

Speaking at the state-level function to mark the inauguration of the camps at Mahapura panchayat in Jaipur, the chief minister said his government's aim is to provide relief to the general public from inflation.

"The country is facing the brunt of inflation and unemployment, and it has become difficult for the common man to run his house. In such a situation, with the aim of providing relief to the public, camps have been started to connect the common people with 10 public welfare schemes of the state government," he said.

Under the camps, registration of 10 schemes will be done and the beneficiaries will be given guarantee cards. After the registration, benefits will be passed on to the eligible persons from the date of commencement of the scheme. On the first day of the camp, beneficiaries of the LPG gas subsidy scheme, increased limit of Chiranjeevi health insurance and Chiranjeevi accident insur-



ance scheme were started on Monday. At the camp in Mahapura, Gehlot handed cylinders to the beneficiaries of LPG subsidy scheme for Rs 500 per cylinder. Those who are registered in PM Ujjwala Yojna and BPL category will get one cylinder per month for Rs 500. This will benefit nearly 76 lakh people in the state.

The scheme was announced in the state budget. Under the Chiranjeevi Health Insurance scheme, the insurance amount has been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh and from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh in Chiranjeevi accident insurance scheme.

Annapurna Food Packet Scheme, Free Electricity Scheme (Farmers), Free Electricity Scheme (Domestic Consumers), Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee scheme, Social Pension Scheme are among the other schemes which have been covered in the camps.

These camps will be organised across the state from April 24 to June 30 so that the benefits of various welfare schemes of the state government reach the beneficiaries. On this occasion, Gehlot said inflation is affecting people badly and that is why the state government is providing relief by providing LPG cylinders at Rs 500 under Ujjwala Yojna. People are unable to refill cylinders due to their cost so the Centre should come forward to provide relief.

# BRS chief holds 3rd public rally in Maha

KCR asks farmers to elect BRS in zilla parishad polls

Aurangabad: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao on Monday asked farmers to ensure a farmers government in their state, and called for emulating the "Telangana model" of governance. "Abki baar kisan sarkar," said Rao, addressing his BRS party's third public rally in Maharashtra. He asked farmers to elect BRS in zilla parishad elections. "We want to have the Telangana model of administration in Maharashtra," he ended.

Farmers are ending their lives, he said. It is unfortunate that farmers had to agitate in the national capital for 13 months, after which PM Modi apologized to them and gave an assurance, but nothing has happened, Rao said. "We need



out of box thinking to change India. BRS is not for any class or religion but for all people," he said. "We don't have to be afraid of anything. If there is sincerity we will win. That is why BRS is here," he said, adding the party is building a permanent office in Maharashtra. Rao said political will was needed to resolve water and electricity supply woes facing the country. PTI

# SC stays Telangana HC order of asking CBI to give questionnaire to YSRCP MP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Termining the Telangana High Court's directions as "atrocious and unacceptable", the Supreme Court on Monday set aside its order asking the CBI, probing the murder of former Andhra Pradesh Minister Y S Vivekananda Reddy, to provide a written questionnaire to YSR Congress Party Lok Sabha member Y S Avinash Reddy who is under the central agency's scanner.

The top court, however, said the high court can proceed with the hearing on the anticipatory bail plea of the lawmaker on April 25 without being influenced by its observations.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha was very critical

of the high court for its direction to the CBI to provide a written questionnaire to Avinash Reddy well in advance and prepare and print the question and answer, observing that it is "atrocious and unacceptable."

"What is this? If this is the stand of the investigating agency, then it is time to wind up the CBI. First the interim protection was granted, then CBI was asked to give questionnaire. This will turn upside down the criminal jurisprudence," the bench orally observed.

Setting aside the high court order, the bench said such an order deciding the mode of the probe will stultify the investigation and refused to protect Avinash Reddy from arrest for the next 24 hours, as was vehe-

mently sought by senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, the lawyer's counsel.

Termining the high court order "unwarranted," it said, "The findings of the high court at this stage were premature, particularly in the context of what has been stated by the CBI in its affidavit... Having regard to what is stated by the CBI on affidavit, we are clearly of the view that the high court has misapplied itself and passed an extraordinary order in terms of the directions which have been issued."

It was inappropriate on the part of the high court to observe that the questionnaire may also be handed over to the lawmaker, it said, adding such orders "prejudice the course of investigation."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Learn from history

Amritpal Singh has been arrested, but politicians should ensure that militancy doesn't return to haunt Punjab

Everyone seems to be trying to take credit for the arrest of pro-Khalistan leader Amritpal Singh by the Punjab Police at Rode village in Moga. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann claimed to have spent a sleepless night: "After receiving information about Amritpal, I did not sleep the whole night and I was in regular touch with senior officials over phone to get information. I wanted that entire operation should be done in a peaceful manner." It is indeed to the credit of his Government and the Punjab Police that Amritpal's arrest was a peaceful affair; the way the state administration and Punjab cops handled Amritpal, however, brings little credit to either. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) wants the credit to go to Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh. The party said in a statement here, "Following the peaceful manner in which Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh handed himself over to the law, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government should proceed against him only as per law and put an immediate end to the prosecution and harassment of innocent Sikhs." In general, the Sikh clergy doesn't seem to be very critical of Amritpal and his supporters. For instance, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, the body responsible for the management of gurdwaras, is reported collecting 25 lakh signatures which it intends to submit to Governor Banwarilal Purohit on April 27 for the release of Sikh political prisoners. Apparently, they include all Amritpal followers in this list, even though some of them indulged in violence in the recent past. This is unfortunate, as the cause Amritpal espouses was responsible for mayhem and



murder in Punjab in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Amritpal has been sent to the Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam which is regarded as secure; many of his close aides are already there. Meanwhile the Centre is working on tackling the overseas pro-Khalistani groups, especially those in Canada, the UK, the US, and Australia. Canada is most important, because not only many Sikh separatists live here but several of them are in persons of consequence. In fact, six years ago, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh had said that the five Sikh ministers of the Justin Trudeau government in Canada were Khalistani sympathisers. The ministers denied that, but it is a fact that a lot of Khalistanis are active in Canada, as also in other Western nations. They were the people who vandalised the Indian missions in London and San Francisco last month. Checking Khalistanis' nefarious activities abroad is important. At the same time, our politicians should also resolve to behave more responsibly. The roles of ISI of Pakistan and Sikh separatists played in the militancy in the 1980s and early 1990s are undeniable, but our political leaders didn't exactly cover themselves in glory in those days. They should redeem themselves and not seek short-term gains.

### PICTALK



Devotees gather as 'Baba Kedar's Doli' arrives at Kedarnath temple, in Rudrapur

# A man is a man, a woman a woman

It is unfortunate that a feminist myth, that the biological difference between man and woman is notional, gets SC approval



RAVI SHANKER KAPOOR

Once upon a time, the woods were lovely, men were handsome, and women beautiful. Circa 2023, forests have been ravaged, men go to beauty parlours, and women drive SUVs. And, worse, if we believe two judges of the Supreme Court, even the biological differences between men and women are notional.

Last week, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud made this point, to which Solicitor General Tushar Mehta responded. "You are saying that the very notion of a biological man or a biological woman is absolute," Chandrachud said during the argument. The SG retorted, "Biological man means a biological man. It is not a notion."

The CJI, however, insisted, "It is a notion. There is no absolute concept of a man or absolute concept of a woman at all. Biological definition is not what your genitals are. It's far more complex, that is the point... The very notion of a man or woman is not absolute based on what genitals you have."

Mehta persisted, "Biological man means what genitals he has." But Justice SK Kaul called Mehta's statement just "a point of view."

The opinion of the two SC judges' is influenced by a basic tenet of contemporary feminism: biology does not define gender differences and, as a consequence, what constitutes a woman. This tenet had its origin in The Second Sex (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir. She wrote: "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman. No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society."

An important point to be made here is that biology is not an exact science like mathematics, geometry, and, to a large extent, physics. Two times two will always be four, any point on any circle will always be equidistant from its centre, and action and reaction are always opposite to each other.

But biology is a life science; and since exactness eludes life, it also eludes life sciences. Therefore, there are instances of people with unhealthy lifestyles



living a long and healthy life, as well as people eating good food and doing regular exercise getting afflicted with, say, cancer. And of people driving very well even when drunk, and of teetotalers being bad drivers. Such examples, however, do not mean that an unhealthy lifestyle leads to a long, healthy life or that drunken driving is good for road safety. Exceptions do not invalidate the rule.

Contemporary feminism, just like contemporary liberalism, got corrupted by facts-defying doctrines and attitudes. Feminism began well though, as a child of the Enlightenment. As an ideology upholding equal political, economic, social, and religious rights, feminism played a salutary role in history. It is during the so-called second wave of feminism, during the 1960s and 1970s, that radicalism infected the movement and practically mutated it into a beast that is genetically collectivistic, illiberal, and counter-Enlightenment.

This was like cutting off the branch one was sitting on. For, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, "The feminist voices of the Renaissance never coalesced into a coherent philosophy or movement. This happened only with the Enlightenment, when women



IF A PERSON CAN CHOOSE THEIR GENDER, THEY CAN ALSO PARTICIPATE IN WHICHEVER CATEGORY THEY WANT TO IN A SPORTS EVENT. THIS IS HAPPENING IN THE US; MEN AND TRANSGENDERS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE WOMEN'S CATEGORY—AND WINNING

began to demand that the new reformist rhetoric about liberty, equality, and natural rights be applied to both sexes."

Contemporary feminism, however, went rogue by imbibing dogmas (myths actually) like de Beauvoir's "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman." This has resulted in the feminist movement setting a great store on 'gender fluidity.' Merriam-Webster describes gender fluidity as "of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is not fixed."

Such people do exist, but they are in a microscopic minority all over the world. Their rights must be protected and dignity recognised systematically, but this should not obfuscate the facts that are acknowledged by all. Generally speaking, a man is a man and a woman is a woman. In fact, such a statement is tautological till a few decades ago, but in this postmodern world even uttering tautologies has become a dangerous exercise.

In an age when academics owing allegiance to contemporary feminism or some other New Left pathology—and most academics actually do that—stating something as obvious as the differences between man and woman could attract the charges of being misogynist, transphobe,

etc. Many women, especially sportswomen, are suffering grievously because of the woman-is-made-not-born myth.

When a myth is accepted as a fact, it wreaks havoc in real life. If the difference between men and women is notional, there should not be men's and women's sports. If a person can choose their gender, they can also participate in whichever category they want to in a sports event. This is happening in the US; men and transgender persons are participating in the women's category—and winning.

Transactivists malign anyone who questions this. Even the retired tennis legend Martina Navratilova, who is a lesbian championing liberal cause, has not been spared. Such is the tyranny of activists who are wedded to various New Left causes. These activists are delusory, for they have cut themselves off from reality. They are also self-righteous and vicious when it comes to interaction with those who hold different views.

It is unfortunate that SC judges have countenanced a perfidious New Left ideology. (The writer is Resident Editor, The Pioneer, Delhi. He is the author of There Is No Such Thing As Hate Speech, Bloomsbury, 2017)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INSULT TO THE POOR

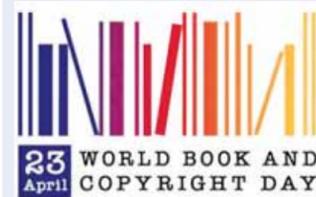
Sir — As per the report, the mass marriage scheme of the BJP-led Madhya Pradesh government stirred a row after some of the would-be brides were found to be pregnant during medical tests, with the opposition Congress seeking to know under which guidelines these tests were conducted and demanded an inquiry into the incident which it termed as an "insult" to the poor. A district official said there was a mum from a directive from the administration to conduct pregnancy tests but doctors at the site decided to medically examine those brides who complained of some gynecological issues. The issue is related to the marriage of 219 couples in Gadasarai town in Dindori district under the 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana' on Saturday to mark Akshaya Tritiya, an official said on Sunday. Dindori collector Vikas Mishra told the media that directives were issued during the mass marriage event for the detection of sickle cell (anaemia) among participants. During medical examinations, some brides spoke of period issues after which doctors at the site took a decision to conduct pregnancy tests on those with such complaints. The four women who were found to be pregnant were not allowed to take part in the mass marriage. Under the 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana', the state government provides Rs 56,000 as financial assistance to eligible couples.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### AMRITPAL NABBED

Sir — Amritpal Singh was on the run since March 18. He was absconding for so many days and when he found that the escape was no more possible, he gave up. It wasn't an arrest. Amritpal Singh surrendered like a VIP after giving a sermon in a Gurdwara. If the law & fair justice system prevails, the management of Gurdwara must be made accomplice in giving shelter/platform to an alleged terrorist. While talking about Surrender, a criminal surrenders only when there are

## Promote reading habits



Today is a special day for book aficionados. Every year 23 April commemorates the birth and the death of famous authors like William Shakespeare, and Miguel de Cervantes. It was on this day that the UNESCO General Conference held in 1995 organised the first World Books and Copyright Day.

This year's World Book Day focuses on Indigenous Languages to promote native languages. It is true that Books are the edifice on which rests our socio-cultural heritage. They transcend several generations and take the reader on a roller coaster ride of imagination where real life gets co-mingled with frictional life and offer something new to every reader based on their needs, choices and interest. In fact, serving as a bridge between past and present, and predicting the future many times with accuracy bestows them a place

that is higher in comparison to other modes of learning.

In an era where children are glued to their mobile phones library and online mode of reading, going to the bookstores and libraries has taken a back seat. Moreover, reading on gadgets is detrimental to children's health but it has negative effects on society as it can never match the experience of going to a bookshop or a library or the joy of reading and touching a real book. It can have both tangible and intangible benefits resulting in good health and happiness. Whenever one thinks of a world of literature, one is often reminded of a library where one could find comfort, solace and peace of mind far away from the hustle and bustle of hectic city life. It is a place where one gets immersed in the company of diverse books waiting to be explored.

Learning through the prism of the author's perspectives, ideas, and imagination fosters newer paths. In fact, books serve as a repository of wisdom than cannot be acquired from other means. So, we must take a pledge to inculcate reading habits as it adds real value to our life. Let's start this journey and grab the opportunities that underlie it. Hope, this day brings many more into the fold of reading so that it imparts a new dimension to our personality.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

no other options. This surrender won't make his crimes any less grave. All's Well That Ends Well. Hence the central government should show a serious response to this by punishing him with Section 53 IPC, 1860 "imprisonment for life".

Vishal Mayur | Tumkur

### REDEFINING GENDER

Sir — There is no absolute concept of a man or an absolute concept of a woman at all. Suddenly I am left wondering, who is the man? Or a woman? Or something else? Why would you redefine things which do not need a redefinition? Why would you want to go to uncharted territories and more importantly, unneed-

ed explorations? Understand your need to be recognized as the epitome of the protector of the rights of the people in this nation. From the time of Adam and Eve, the notion of man and woman has existed and marriages of a man with a woman were the norm, given legitimacy by various religions as well as law. Now to redefine Manhood and Womanhood, in pursuit of an ephemeral vision of the glory and to be known as the last man standing to protect personhood is completely unwarranted.

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Trichy

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

# IAS no longer an elite club; engineers rule

Civil services are no longer a preserve of the metropolitan elite; aspirants from small towns are cracking the coveted exam

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's clarion call to civil servants' Civil services day on April 21, to keep the nation's interest utmost in their mind means a lot if IAS officers desist from focusing on personal achievements and utilize their calibre to take judicious decisions which will benefit society. Modi made it clear that young civil servants will play an important role in the progress of New India during Amrit Kaal. Most politicians who become part of the government may lack experience, decision-making abilities, knowledge of file work, technicalities, rules and regulations etc. The bureaucrats become their guiding stars. Any regime can succeed only if it gets committed, dedicated and honest IAS officers or its failure is imminent. A large number of candidates from non-English-speaking backgrounds especially from small towns and villages have cracked preliminary and main examinations to be amongst the lucky ones who figure in the final list after facing the interview of UPSC.



Experts say the UPSC should study the profiles of

selected candidates including regional, linguistic and educational data. This is essential because while the government is pushing for domain expertise within civil services, it keeps taking more engineers or doctors.

In 2011 the central government first introduced the Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) in the UPSC Prelims and the net result is very encouraging. The data shows that now candidates from all urban centres are performing better in the examination. Similarly, a decade ago, non-English speaking candidates from lesser-known universities and towns started cracking all stages of civil services and the trend is witnessing an upward swing. This has lent an all-India character to this elite

service. The introduction of the Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) in the UPSC Prelims has also led to a surge in the number of successful engineer candidates in the IAS exam. After the CSAT was introduced in 2011 many IAS aspirants pointed out that the new pattern was advantageous to candidates with a technical degree. Some candidates feel that the introduction of the CSAT exam has favoured engineering students to appear for this examination.

Each year, the difficulty level of CSAT papers has risen. This usually eliminates many non-engineering students whereas science students perform better. The CSAT includes questions on mathematical ability, analytical ability, reasoning, English comprehension, etc. The UPSC Prelims exam consists of two papers namely the General Studies I paper and General Studies II (CSAT) paper. While the score in GS Paper-I determines whether or not you qualify for the cut-off of prelims, CSAT is qualifying in nature. An aspirant

needs to score more than 33% or 66 marks for the CSAT paper which creates a level-playing field for all candidates.

The maximum intake is from the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi etc. and three years' figures showed that 40 per cent of selected candidates came from an engineering background and enjoyed an advantage in selecting the scoring subjects. Notwithstanding the efforts of UPSC to diversify, engineers still account for 60 per cent of new civil services in the country.

Some of the Ex UPSC-chairpersons have argued that Engineers, with their science backgrounds, generally find the CSAT easy as compared to humanities graduates. But others have different opinions about their success. They feel that no particular streams has an edge in qualifying for the Civil Service exam. But since engineers have good analytical skills they qualify in large numbers.

(The writer is ex chairperson of the standing committee of state public service commissions in India and former chairman Himachal public service commission)



KS TOMAR



## FIRST COLUMN

## PRACTICE SELF-REGULATION TO OVERCOME WEAKNESS

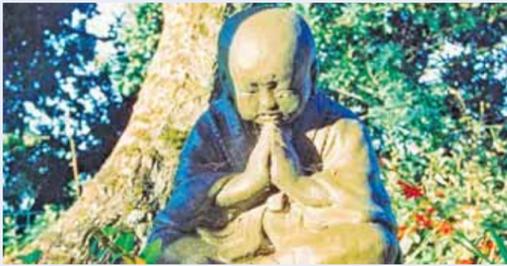
You have power over your mind, not outside events. Realise this to find strength



SAKSHI SETHI

Emotions form a normal part of everyday life. At once an individual can feel frustrated, sad or angry and happy, joyous and fulfilled the other. When an individual is able to absorb information, remain calm and communicate feelings and needs with others in an effective and appropriate manner one can say that the individual is able to regulate their emotions. No matter the reason for the emotional volatility, the good news is that an individual can learn better self-regulation and can benefit from learning strategies to control emotions.

Very often a person comes across a situation such as "I am losing it! I need to go for a walk and cool off" and just walks out of the place to get some fresh air in order to calm himself. This is when the individual starts developing to practice the art of Self-regulation. Self-regulation is the ability to control emotions, behaviours, thoughts and actions in the short term in order to reap the benefits in the long run. It is one of the five key components that make emotional regulation without which an individual can land up in emotional turmoil. It is through self-regulation only that an individual finds inner peace and promotes healing and recovery, thereby allowing oneself to thrive in all areas of life. It is an important precursor to emotional regulation. The process takes place from the minute an individual is born and keeps on developing till adulthood. Information is taken in, absorbed and in turn, builds one's ability to retain what one has learned.



There are tons of evidence that suggest those who successfully display self-regulation in their everyday behaviour enjoy greater well-being. Researchers have also found that greater self-regulation is positively correlated with well-being for both men and women in comparison to those who have suppressed their feelings instead of addressing them resulting in lower well-being, greater loneliness and more negative affect. Practising a few traits and skills such as:

- Self-awareness helps with self-control, thereby making the individual remain calm and rational in tough situations and exercise discipline when needed.
- Persistence helps to keep an individual focused on the positive effect within their control while letting go of situations outside of their control.
- Adaptability a self-regulation skill makes an individual more flexible with different views and opinions. It also allows the individual to consider issues from multiple perspectives.
- Practising the art of Meditation allows one to reflect quietly and gain more control over thoughts. Any amount of meditation, such as a five-minute session can have a positive impact on self-regulation abilities.
- Engaging in positive self-talk and treating self with empathy rather than sympathy can help mitigate the emotions with positivity. Practising mindfulness helps to live in the moment. It is one of the powerful tools for cultivating a peaceful life.

There is no denying the fact that self-regulation is important to proactively evaluate and improve upon an individual's learning. Remember, self-regulation is a key trait in securely attached individuals because it allows them to influence and express their emotions. No matter what life throws at you, self-regulation is a skill that can help stay calm and focused. The better one gets at self-regulation, the less often and less intensely one will get triggered resulting in the smooth working of the nervous system. This will help the individual to focus their energy on goals rather than regulating the triggers.

(The author is an educator)

# Countering the menace of corruption



UTTAM GUPTA

Funds siphoned off from welfare schemes, meant for the benefit of the poor, is also an act of corruption and must be dealt with with a heavy hand

Setting aside the anticipatory bail granted by the Gujarat High Court to an IRS officer in a corruption case on April 17, 2023, the Supreme Court said "Corruption poses a serious threat to society and must be dealt with an iron hand as it not only leads to abysmal loss to the public exchequer but also tramples upon good governance".

The observation of the top court has catapulted to the centre stage a malady that has afflicted India for generations. The Government of India's standards of financial propriety lays down that "no authority shall exercise its powers of sanctioning expenditure to pass an order which will be directly or indirectly, to its advantage; and the expenditure from public moneys should not be incurred for the benefit of a particular person or a section of the people unless a claim for the amount could be enforced in a court of law or the expenditure is in pursuance of a recognised policy or custom".

When, a bureaucrat or politician sitting in a position of authority, takes a bribe instead of granting favour to a private businessperson in giving a government contract or approving a project proposal or foregoing tax revenue, he is violating both the conditions of financial propriety. Put simply, he is indulging in corruption.

Funds siphoned off from welfare schemes meant for the benefit of the poor, is also an act of corruption as the concerned politician/bureaucrat is using public money for self-aggrandizement. Likewise, a loan given by the manager of a public sector bank (PSB) instead of a bribe also falls in this category. An inevitable outcome of corruption is that national resources meant for the benefit of millions of persons - mostly poor - fill the coffers of a few individuals (read: dubious businesspersons and corrupt bureaucrats and politicians). While, the former suffer due to denial of even basic facilities viz. home, education, health, food, roads etc the latter make disproportionate addition to their wealth.

The money with these few persons being ill-gotten is kept 'unaccounted'. Known in common parlance as 'black money', it is not available for funding development and welfare activities. There is every chance of its being funnelled into activities such as hoarding food grain, pulses etc which exacerbates inflation adding to the miseries of the common man.

The corruption money is also used for activities such as terror funding, drug trafficking, smuggling etc. This forces the government to spend more money on defending national security thereby putting more stress on limited resources. To combat the menace, the central government is working on three fronts viz. (i) setting an example; (ii) use of technology in implementing welfare schemes and delivery of services; (iii) making decision process 'policy driven' leaving no scope for discretion.

First, all actions of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi are guided by the philosophy of what he terms "Naa khaunga, naa khane doonga". The last nine years of his government at the Centre have been free from corruption at the highest level in the political establishment. Several charges levelled by the opposition leaders about the existence of a scam have come unstuck.

Second, with maximum use of technology in running welfare schemes, it has minimized human intervention thereby hitting at the root of any financial irregularity.



UNDER THE ERSTWHILE UPA - DISPENSATION, THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WAS INFECTED WITH BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE LEADING TO POLICY PARALYSIS AND DELAYS IN GETTING APPROVALS

(The author is a policy analyst)



Using Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) on the JAM platform, lakhs of crore are being transferred to the beneficiaries every year without any leakage. Of Rs 2700,000 crore transferred since 2015, it has saved around Rs 225,000 crore which would have been siphoned off under business as usual.

However, there is a need for more caution especially regarding the identification of beneficiaries. If not correctly identified, there could be misuse on a mammoth scale. For instance, under the PM-KISAN (annual income support of Rs 6,000 is given to every land-holding farmer) during 2021-22, 24 million ineligible persons received assistance. This happened because Aadhaar wasn't used for checking their genuineness. The Centre is trying to recover the money, which is a daunting task.

The government should make use of the Aadhaar mandatory for validating the genuineness of beneficiaries under all its schemes to eliminate the scope for undeserving entries in the list enabled by greedy officials and politicians in exchange for a cut.

Before 2014, tax evasion was rampant as the machinery for tax collection was manually driven and corruption was ingrained in the taxman-access interface. Under Modi, the use of IT, artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics, has helped the government detect GST evasion of Rs 308,000 crore during July 2017 to February 2023. Between July 2017 to February 2023, alone it detected evasion

of over Rs 100,000 crore enabling it to achieve a record GST collection of Rs 1800,000 crore.

Likewise, in the direct tax area - corporate and personal income tax - a sharp focus on the 'faceless' architecture of filing returns, scrutiny and assessment co-terminus with the use of technological inputs helped in ensuring tax compliance and preventing evasion. It resulted in an unprecedented gross direct tax collection of close to Rs 2000,000 crore during 2022-23.

Under the erstwhile UPA - dispensation, the decision-making process was infected with bureaucratic red tape leading to policy paralysis and delays in getting approvals. Modi - the government has cleaned up the mess and all approvals are granted - mostly through e-mode - without promoters having to even visit ministries/departments. Projects in roads, highways, railways, defence etc worth lakhs of crore are being executed promptly without any trace of corruption. In PSBs, the infamous 'phone banking' has given way to the sanction of loans based on due diligence of the project proposal, assessment of its viability and borrower's ability to service the loan.

Modi - government's determination to shun quid pro quo arrangements is also reflected in its bold decision to sell Air India (under the previous regime, it was used to curry favour with private parties in exchange for a bribe) and keep public sector undertakings

(PSUs) at arms' length from the concerned ministries and departments. However, there are some grey areas where corruption may be subtly making its way. This has to do with how food and fertilizer subsidies are administered. Food subsidy is given to over 800 million beneficiaries through government agencies such as Food Corporation of India (FCI) which deliver coarse cereals/wheat/rice at Rs 1/2/3 per kg and claim reimbursement of the excess of cost (albeit actual) over this from the Centre. How much of the cost should be allowed to claim reimbursement?

It is here that the discretion of the bureaucrat in the agriculture ministry comes into play. There are umpteen cases of inflated payments made to vendors. A similar situation exists in fertilizers where subsidy to farmers is routed through the manufacturers and reimbursements are made to the latter on a cost-plus basis. In a host of other areas such as the pricing of natural gas, its allocation, setting power tariffs and so on, the all-powerful bureaucrat calls the shots which can swing the fortunes of individual business persons either way. Modi should try to drive the 'policy driven' concept in all such areas to minimize the scope for discretion. Even as things are looking up at the Centre, the state's record in dealing with corruption is pathetic. The latter should follow in the footsteps of the former in eradicating this menace.

# Mann ki baat: Awakening society for collective action

History will judge Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership of the social awakening against female infanticide

A healthy society demands not just socially aware people, but the mass taking up actionable agenda to achieve goals for their well-being. Parliament can enact laws, and respective agencies can work round the clock for their implementation. But it will be an irony that a law is enacted to fulfil the aspirations and demands of the people, but they are left for the government alone to implement them. Over a few decades, it was largely believed that the government solely is responsible for everything.

The child sex ratio dipped sharply in a few northern states. There were far fewer girl children than boys in the 0-6-year age group in



SUMEET BHASIN

Haryana. Even the case in South Delhi was worse. There were several other regions where the demographic bomb was ticking. The ultrasound clinics had mushroomed in such regions. The law against pre-natal sex selection existed, but sadly doctors, ultrasound clinic operators and even the people paid the least heed to the law of the land. The unholy nexus of uncouth medical professionals must have killed several million girl children in wombs solely because of gender.

It was clear that enacting a law is just one part of the task in a fight against an issue that is essentially behavioural and attitudinal. History will judge Prime Minister Narendra Modi most glow-

ingly for his leadership of the social awakening against female infanticide. 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' has been a campaign for awakening social consciousness. India has for the ages been the land where women have been worshipped. But the curse of infanticide had to be dealt firmly with the people taking the lead.

The 'Mann Ki Baat' turned 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' into a social war cry. PM Modi's lending his voice to the social cause began reaching nook and corner of the country. The gentle voice of PM Modi in the 'Mann Ki Baat' was persuasive. He would urge and nudge the people to change their attitude. There is socially no difference between boys and

girls. This was ingrained in the minds of the people. The issue was discussed regularly. The first principle of the psychology of changing attitude is to discuss the issue regularly and even at the cost of repetition.

The letterbox of the 'Mann Ki Baat' was soon flooded with letters from the people. Posting photographs with daughters on the call of PM Modi made in the monthly radio broadcast began trending on all social media platforms. The smile was back on the faces of the girls. The Society too was smiling. A tectonic shift in the attitude of the people had been achieved. It didn't take too many years for the impact to be seen in the statistics, which affirmed the reality of

the social changes.

There exist laws against people polluting rivers and water bodies. Parliament and Assemblies have enacted laws against people throwing garbage in the water bodies. But such laws have also been found to be too inadequate in achieving the aim.

In Delhi, one may come across a high wall of metal to stop people from throwing anything in the Yamuna. But the people are more enterprising to flout the law. This is abundantly clear that the principal reason for pollution in water bodies is the dumping of solid waste management and the flow of untreated sewage.

Infrastructure is indeed needed to treat the sewage. But the people too have stakes

in keeping the water bodies clean.

There is no sanctity to dumping everything in rivers, seas and water bodies in the name of religious festivals. In the Hindu way of life, maintaining the purity of the water bodies is an abiding duty of the people. This issue has been a recurring theme in 'Mann Ki Baat'. It had to be dealt with persuasion and also solutions that could be easily adapted.

PM Modi took the instance of the immersion of the idols of Lord Ganesha after the conclusion of the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi. PM Modi mentioned the case of an engineer in the 'Mann Ki Baat' who collected and combined special varieties of clay to give training in mak-

ing Ganesh idols and then immersed them in a small bucket of water. After the immersion, a Tulsi plant was sowed in the clay. This way PM Modi promoted the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives in celebrations of festivals and other walks of life.

The cleanliness campaign, launched on October 2, 2014, which has also been a recurring theme in 'Mann Ki Baat', has also seen extraordinary success, as coverage of toilets increased from 39 per cent to 67 per cent of the population with more than 2.30 lakh villages declaring themselves ODF. In awakening the social consciousness, Mann Ki Baat may be judged by posterity to have played a role of a great catalyst.

# Ukrainian drones target Sevastopol

AP ■ KIV

Russian-appointed authorities in Crimea said the military fended off a Ukrainian strike on the port of Sevastopol on Monday, while an exploding drone was also reportedly found in a forest near Moscow — attacks that come as Ukraine is believed to be preparing for a major counteroffensive.

The Moscow-appointed head of the port city of Sevastopol in Crimea, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said the military destroyed a Ukrainian sea drone that attempted to attack the harbour in the early hours and another one blew up.

He said the powerful explosions shattered windows in several apartment buildings but didn't inflict any other damage. The attack was the latest in a series of attempted strikes on Sevastopol, the main naval base in Crimea that Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

Ukrainian authorities did-

n't immediately comment on Monday's strikes. After previous attacks on Sevastopol and other areas, Ukrainian officials stopped short of openly claiming responsibility but emphasised the country's right to strike any target in response to the Russian aggression.

Russian news reports also claimed Monday that a Ukrainian exploding drone was found in a forest in a forest about 30 kilometres (about 19 miles) east of the Russian capital. While it didn't explode, the incident again underscored Ukraine's capability to reach deep inside Russia as the Ukrainian military is thought to be preparing for a spring counteroffensive to reclaim occupied areas.

Observers believe that the counteroffensive's most likely target would be the Russian-held parts of the southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. If the push is successful, it would allow Ukraine to cut the land corridor between

Russia and Crimea.

In what could be preparations for such a move, Ukrainian forces have recently established a foothold near the town of Oleshky on the eastern bank of the Dnieper River, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

Ukraine has recently received sophisticated weapons from its Western allies, and new troops freshly trained in the West, giving rise to growing anticipation of an offensive.

American-made Patriot missiles arrived in Ukraine last week and military spokesman Yuriy Ihnat said Sunday on Ukrainian television that some have already gone into service. The Russian forces, meanwhile, have continued their nearly nine-month effort to capture the Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk region.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasised the importance of defend-

ing Bakhmut in last month's interview with The Associated Press saying that its fall could allow Russia to rally international support for a deal that might require Kyiv to make unacceptable compromises.

Ukraine and Russia both have described the fighting for Bakhmut, the war's longest battle, as key to exhausting enemy forces and preventing them from pressing attacks elsewhere along the 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) front line.

On Monday, Yevgeny Prigozhin, the millionaire owner of the Wagner Group military contractor that has spearheaded the Russian offensive in Bakhmut, claimed that Ukrainian forces have been pushed into a two-square-kilometre (less than one square mile) western section of the city. His claim couldn't be independently verified.

"Our task is to grind the Ukrainian army down and prevent it from mounting a counteroffensive," Prigozhin said.

# Moscow court rejects appeal of cafe bombing suspect

AP ■ MOSCOW

A suspect in a bombing that killed a well-known Russian military blogger had her appeal rejected Monday by a court in the Russian capital.

Moscow City Court turned down Darya Trepova's appeal against her arrest on charges of involvement in the April 2 bombing that killed Vladimir Tatarsky and injured 50 others at a St. Petersburg cafe.

It upheld a lower court ruling that ordered Trepova to remain in custody for two months pending investigation.

Tatarsky, 40, an ardent supporter of the Kremlin's military action in Ukraine who filed regular reports on the fighting from the front lines, was killed as he led a discussion at a river-side cafe in the historic heart of Russia's second-largest city.

Trepova, a 26-year-old St. Petersburg resident who was seen on video presenting Tatarsky with a statuette moments before the blast, was quickly arrested. Russian media reported that Trepova told investigators she was asked to deliver the statuette but didn't know what was inside it.

Russian authorities described the bombing as an act of terrorism and blamed Ukrainian intelligence agencies for orchestrating it.

Ukrainian authorities have not directly responded to the accusation, but an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has described the bombing as part of Russia's internal turmoil.

Earlier this month, Russia's Federal Security Service, known under its Russian acronym FSB, charged that a Ukrainian citizen



whom it identified as Yuriy Denysov had gathered information about the blogger and supplied Trepova with explosives through a courier service.

The FSB claimed that Denysov acted on orders from the Ukrainian security services and left Russia the day after the bombing, which was the latest

attack inside Russia on a high-profile pro-war figure. Last year, a nationalist TV commentator was assassinated when a bomb exploded in her SUV outside Moscow.

Tatarsky was the pen name of Maxim Fomin, who had accumulated more than 560,000 followers on his Telegram messaging app channel. He had joined separatists in eastern Ukraine after a Moscow-backed insurgency erupted there in 2014 and fought on the front lines for years before turning to blogging. Military bloggers have played an increasingly prominent role in Russia amid the fighting in Ukraine, supporting the Kremlin but often exposing flaws in military strategy. The authorities have shut down independent media outlets and muzzled any criticism of the military action.

# China affirms ex-Soviet nations' sovereignty after uproar

AP ■ BEIJING

The Chinese government said Monday it respects the sovereignty of former Soviet Union republics after Beijing's ambassador to France caused an uproar in Europe by saying they aren't sovereign nations. The governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania rejected Ambassador Lu Shaye's comment to a French broadcaster. While answering a question about the status of Crimea, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014, Lu said there was no agreement to "solidify their status as a sovereign country."

Beijing declared it had a "no-limits friendship" with Moscow before its 2022 invasion of Ukraine but has tried to appear neutral, calling for a cease-fire and peace talks. China has repeated Russian justifications for the invasion.

"China respects the sovereign status of the former sovi-

et countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union," said foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning. Mao said Beijing's position is "consistent and clear" but gave no indication whether Lu's comment was considered incorrect.

The ambassador drew a parallel with the Baltic nations and other former soviet republics that declared independence from Moscow when the Soviet Union broke up in 1991.

"With regards to international law, even these ex-Soviet Union countries, they do not, they do not have the status — how to say it? — that's effective in international law, because there is no international agreement to solidify their status as a sovereign country," Lu told news channel LCI.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he doesn't recognise Ukraine's sovereignty. The Kremlin has made clear that it sees the independence of the

Baltic States and their role in NATO and the European Union as threats to Russian security. Chinese President Xi Jinping's government sees Moscow as a partner in opposing US domination of global affairs.

Beijing has said it wants to act as a peace mediator, but governments including the United States say a cease-fire would legitimize Putin's territorial gains.

"If anyone is still wondering why the Baltic States don't trust China to broker peace in Ukraine," here's a Chinese ambassador arguing that Crimea is Russian and our countries' borders have no legal basis," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said on Twitter.

The French foreign ministry noted that governments including China recognised Ukraine's borders, including Crimea, when it declared independence in 1991.

# S Korea restores Japan on trade 'white list'

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea formally restored Japan to its list of countries it gives preferential treatment in trade on Monday, three years after the neighbours downgraded each other's trade status amid a diplomatic row fuelled by historical grievances.

In announcing the move through a government gazette, South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy also said Seoul will further restrict technology and industrial exports to Russia and its ally Belarus to support the US-led pressure campaign against Moscow over the war in Ukraine.

After years of friction, Seoul and Tokyo are working to repair relations as they tighten their three-way security cooperation with Washington to counter the threat posed by North Korea. Pyongyang has used the distractions caused by the war to accelerate testing of nuclear-capable missiles.

South Korean officials expect Tokyo to restore Seoul

as a favoured trade partner too, but expect that step to take more time based on the procedures to revise Japan's export regulations.

In September 2019, South Korea dropped Japan from its "white list" of countries receiving fast-track approvals in trade, reacting to a similar move by Tokyo. Japan had also tightened export controls on key chemicals South Korean companies use to make semiconductors and displays, prompting South Korea to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization.

Seoul organized Tokyo of weaponizing trade to retaliate against South Korean court rulings that ordered Japanese companies to offer reparations to South Koreans forced into slave labor before the end of World War II, when Japan had colonized the Korean Peninsula.

The 2018 rulings irked Japan, which insists all compensation issues were settled by a 1965 treaty that normalised relations. Relations between



the US allies began to thaw in March when the government of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who took office in May 2022, announced plans to use South Korean funds to compensate the forced laborers without requiring Japanese contributions.

Yoon travelled to Tokyo to meet with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and they vowed to rebuild the countries' security and economic ties.

Yoon's push to mend ties

with Tokyo has triggered criticism from some forced labour victims and from his political rivals. They have called for direct compensation from Japanese companies that employed the forced laborers. But Yoon has defended his decision, saying closer ties with Japan are essential for dealing with a slew of regional challenges, especially North Korea's growing nuclear threat.

Following the Yoon-Kishida summit, South Korea withdrew its complaint at the

WTO against Japan as Tokyo simultaneously confirmed its removal of export controls over a set of chemicals seen as vital to South Korea's technology industry.

The Japanese restrictions had covered fluorinated polyimides, which are used in organic light-emitting diode (OLED) screens for TVs and smartphones, and photoresist and hydrogen fluoride, used for making semiconductors.

With Japan's status restored, South Korea now provides preferential treatment to 29 countries — including the United States, Britain and France — over exports of sensitive "strategic" materials that can be used for both civilian and military purposes.

South Korea divides its trade partners into two groups in managing export approvals of sensitive materials. The waiting period is usually five days for white-list nations, while other countries are required to go through case-by-case reviews that can take up to 15 days.

# Mohammad Shahabuddin takes oath as Bangladesh president

PTI ■ DHAKA

Veteran politician Mohammed Shahabuddin was sworn in as the 22nd president of Bangladesh on Monday at a state ceremony attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet colleagues.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered the oath to 73-year-old Shahabuddin at the historic Durbar Hall of Bangabhaban. Besides premier Hasina and family members of the new president, politicians, Supreme Court judges, and senior civil and military officials attended the event.

Shahabuddin succeeds Abdul Hamid whose tenure ended on Sunday. After the swearing-in ceremony, Shahabuddin signed the oath documents for the office of the president.

He was elected as president unopposed in February this year as a candidate of the ruling Awami League.

Despite being largely ornamental head of the state, the office of the president draws extra attention particularly during the general elections as he



his office, he would review the political situation and assess if he needed to play any role in minimising disputes between the political parties.

Born in 1949 and hailing from the northwestern Pabna district, Shahabuddin is a retired district judge who later served as one of the commissioners of the independent Anti-Corruption Commission.

He later joined politics and became a member of the Awami League Advisory Council, which comprises senior party leaders and technocrats, but his election to the highest office would require him to relinquish the party post.

In his early life, Shahabuddin was a leader of the Awami League's student and youth wings and took part in the 1971 Liberation War.

He was imprisoned following the 1975 assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of Prime Minister Hasina. In 1982, he was inducted into the country's judicial service.

Shahabuddin's wife Rebeka Sultana is the former joint secretary of the government. The couple has one son.

# 3 held in SA or stealing large crocodile

AP ■ CAPE TOWN

Three men have been arrested in South Africa for stealing a 2.5-metre (8-feet) long Nile crocodile worth about USD 1,300 from a farm in the North West province, police said Monday.

The men, who are all aged between 20 and 35, are believed to have used a pick-up truck to take the animal from a crocodile farm in the Hartbeesfontein area about 200 kilometres (124 miles) west of Johannesburg.

The crocodile was found tied up with rope and wire in an abandoned farmhouse. The men had covered it up with tree branches in an attempt to hide it, police said.

Police also found the pick-up truck. The men were arrested last week and are due to appear in court on Monday.

Police are investigating how they managed to get the large crocodile out of the farm, which had secure fencing, police spokeswoman Col. Adele Myburgh said. "How did they slip this animal out?" she said. "It's not a baby crocodile by any means."

# Israeli FM seeks action against arrested Jordanian lawmaker

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israel's foreign minister on Monday called on Jordan to take action to bring to justice a Jordanian lawmaker who was arrested in Israel for allegedly trying to smuggle what appears to have been dozens of guns into the West Bank.

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said Israel was still investigating the incident, in which the legislator, Imad Al-Adwan, is accused of attempting to bring in weapons and gold illegally. Cohen called it an "irresponsible, criminal act" that cannot go unpunished.

"This is a very serious incident," Cohen told Israeli news outlet YNet. "The basic demand is that he is brought to justice and that he pay a price."

In a statement, the lawmaker's brother, Amer Al-Adwan, said he was counting on Jordanian authorities to bring Imad home.

Jordan and its neighbor Israel have had tense relations over recent years, despite a nearly 30-year-old peace treaty, and the lawmaker's arrest threatened to further strain

# Yacht with 5 missing off Yemen coast

AP ■ DUBAI

A yacht carrying three Russians and two Egyptians reportedly went missing days ago off the coast of Yemen in the Red Sea. Its owner alleged on Monday that armed pirates took the vessel.

The reported disappearance of the 30 Minutes, a 19-meter (62-foot) yacht registered in Panama to a Russian based in Dubai, comes as other vessels have faced attacks from Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels amid the war tearing apart the Arab world's poorest nation. However, the Houthis did not immediately acknowledge taking the vessel and details about the ship remain scarce.

The 30 Minutes last sent location data showing that it was off Farasan Island near Jazan, Saudi Arabia, on April 19, owner Dmitriy Chuguevskiy told The Associated Press.

The vessel then disappeared, not reaching Djibouti, where it had been scheduled to arrive, he said. Chuguevskiy said the ship did not carry an Automatic Identification System transponder.

# Israeli FM seeks action against arrested Jordanian lawmaker

AP ■ DUBAI

attempt coming in from Jordan but was not expecting to find arms.

The West Bank has seen a surge in violence over the past year. Israel says the area has been flooded with illegal weapons, including guns smuggled from neighboring Jordan.

Since Israel's hard-line government took office late last year, relations with Jordan have deteriorated over Israeli settlement construction, violence in the West Bank and policies over holy sites in Jerusalem's Old City. The ties were at a nadir in 2017, when a security guard at the Israeli embassy in Jordan shot and killed two Jordanians, alleging one attacked him with a screw driver. The Israeli guard and Israel's then-ambassador were given a hero's welcome by Benjamin Netanyahu, infuriating Jordan.

Jordan controlled the West Bank and east Jerusalem before Israel captured the areas in the 1967 Mideast war, but the kingdom retains custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Muslim holy sites in the Old City.

Footage aired by Israeli media showed the alleged weapons smuggled arranged on a floor, with dozens of handguns and rifles displayed. Cohen said Israel had received intelligence of a smuggling

# Biden's 2024 campaign has been hiding in plain sight

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden's reelection campaign has been hiding in plain sight all along.

The contours of the 2024 campaign that Biden will formally launch with a video as soon as this week will look a lot like his messaging and policy moves from the past few months: Play up accomplishments from his first two years, draw a sharp contrast with Republican policies he deems extreme, and brush off worries about his age.

Biden, aides contend, has essentially been campaigning since Republicans took control of the House last year, focused on showing Americans how his administration is implementing

massive new infrastructure, technology and climate laws, and portraying Republicans as in the grip of the far right at a time when Washington is nearing a crucial fight over raising the nation's borrowing limit.

While advisers say Biden's activities and message in coming months will be largely indistinguishable from what he's been doing over the last six months, the frame of reference will inevitably shift as voters increasingly tune in to 2024 political dynamics.

"President Biden is delivering and making the strong case for reelection before, during and after any formal campaign announcement," said Democratic consultant and former Biden spokesman Scott

Mulhauser.

"Rather than throwing darts at calendars, let's focus on the President doing his job and doing it well, from an investing in America tour, an economy humming and unemployment at historic lows to a home run of a State of the Union, an expertly pulled-off Ukraine trip and more."

He added: "These wins on economic and political fronts onward are what success looks like, how incumbents win and matter far more than a campaign kick-off event."

Aides are planning for Biden's launch video to be released Tuesday, the four-year anniversary of his first successful campaign launch, but said the timing was still fluid.

It was not immediately clear whether the president, who was spending the weekend at Camp David, had as yet taped it.

He was expected to select Julie Rodriguez, a senior White House adviser, to manage his reelection campaign, according to two people familiar with deliberations.

Biden has taken his time in making official his candidacy for reelection not because he's wavered in his commitment to run, a half-dozen aides and advisers said, but because there was little incentive to do it sooner.

Incumbents — with the exception of former President Donald Trump, who filed for reelection on his Inauguration

Day — tend to hold off on announcing as long as possible. Most deemed it easier to appeal to a wider swath of the populace when they were viewed outside the lens of electoral politics.

Leaks and private reassurances last year about Biden's intention to run, aides said, were designed to reinforce to the political class that the president was all-in for a second term and to ward off any serious rivals for the nomination. That effort largely succeeded, with only self-help author Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. mounting largely symbolic challenges to Biden.

Even with Democrats giving Biden a clear path to the

nomination, Biden faces a more uncertain general election picture, with the potential for a rematch with GOP frontrunner Trump, or a contest against one of the handful of other Republicans campaigning in part on ushering in a new generation of leadership.

Republicans in Congress, meanwhile, continue to hammer Biden on government spending increases and inflation as they attempt to weaken him before the upcoming election.

Biden's decision to the launch the campaign now is largely driven by a desire to start fundraising: His last campaign raised more than USD 1 billion, and he'll need to marshal even more this time

around.

He's expected to jumpstart that effort with a gathering for top donors in Washington on Friday. The president also needs to begin building the digital and field organising operation for what aides expect to be a close general election owing to the country's polarisation, no matter who emerges as the GOP standard-bearer.

Biden's clear path to the 2024 nomination will be a markedly different experience from four years ago, when he was written off by much of the political establishment until he consolidated support as the candidate best positioned to defeat Trump. That campaign also took place under the unusual constraints associated

with the coronavirus pandemic, which sharply limited travel and in-person politicking.

This time, Biden will have to juggle the challenge of running for office with the demands of running the country. Aides and allies contend that those priorities are one and the same.

"The single best thing Joe Biden can do for his reelection is to continue to be president of United States, and, when he's out there barnstorming the country, talking about what he's delivered and what he wants to do," said Eric Schultz, a Democratic operative and spokesman for former President Barack Obama. "That's exactly what he's been doing."

# World military spending up to an all-time high

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Global military spending grew for the eighth consecutive year in 2022 to an all-time high of \$2.24 trillion, with a sharp rise in Europe, chiefly due to Russian and Ukrainian expenditure, a Swedish think tank said Monday. Spending globally increased by 3.7% in real terms, but military expenditure in Europe was up 13% — its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said in a report. Military aid to Ukraine and concerns about a heightened

threat from Russia “strongly influenced many other states’ spending decisions.”

The independent Swedish watchdog said that last year, the three largest arms spenders were the United States, China and Russia, who between them accounted for 56% of global expenditure.

The rise “is a sign that we are living in an increasingly insecure world,” said Nan Tian, a researcher with SIPRI’s Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

Several states significantly increased their military spending following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while others



announced plans to raise spending levels over periods of up to a decade. Some of the sharpest increases were seen in countries near Russia: Finland (36%), Lithuania

(27%), Sweden (12%) and Poland (11%).

Both Sweden and Finland jointly applied for NATO membership in May 2022, abandoning decades of nonalignment in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. While Finland has been admitted, Sweden’s bid to join NATO remains stalled by opposition from Turkey and Hungary.

“While the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 certainly affected military spending decisions in 2022, concerns about Russian aggression have been building for much longer,” said Lorenzo Scarazzato, a researcher with SIPRI’s Military Expenditure and Arms

Production Program.

“Many former Eastern bloc states have more than doubled their military spending since 2014, the year when Russia annexed Crimea.”

Russia also has increased its military spending. SIPRI said that grew by an estimated 9.2% in 2022, to around \$86.4 billion. That is equivalent to 4.1% of Russia’s gross domestic product in 2022, up from 3.7% the previous year.

Established in 1966, SIPRI is an international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

# Australia plans major overhaul of defences as China rises

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia needs to spend more money on defense, make its own munitions and develop the ability to strike longer-range targets as China’s military buildup challenges regional security, according to a government-commissioned review released Monday.

The Defense Strategic Review supports the so-called AUKUS partnership between Australia, United States and Britain, who in March announced an agreement to create an Australian fleet of eight submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said his government commissioned the review to assess whether Australia had the necessary defence capability, posture and preparedness to defend itself in the current strategic environment.

“We support the strategic direction and key findings set out in the review, which will strengthen our national security and ensure our readiness for future challenges,” Albanese said in a statement.

The public version of the classified review recommended Australia’s government spend more on defense than the current expenditure of 2 per cent of gross domestic product, improve the Australian Defense Force’s ability to precisely strike targets at longer ranges and make munitions domestically.

Other recommendations include improving the force’s ability to operate from Australia’s northern bases and to deepen defense partnerships with key partners in the Indo-Pacific region including India and Japan.

China’s military buildup “is now the largest and most ambitious of any country” since the end of World War II, the review said. And it “is occurring without transparency or reassurance to the Indo-Pacific region of China’s strategic intent,” the review added.

# Diplomats flee Sudan fighting as citizens struggle to escape

AP ■ KHARTOUM (SUDAN)

Foreign governments evacuated diplomats, staff and others from Sudan on Sunday as rival generals battled for a ninth day with no sign of a truce that had been declared for a major Muslim holiday.

While world powers like the US and Britain airlifted their diplomats from the capital of Khartoum, Sudanese desperately sought to flee the chaos. Many risked dangerous roads to cross the northern border into Egypt.

“My family — my mother, my siblings and my nephews — are on the road from Sudan to Cairo through Aswan,” prominent Sudanese filmmaker Amjad Abual-Ala wrote on Facebook.

Fighting raged in Omdurman, a city across the

Nile from Khartoum, residents said, despite a hoped-for ceasefire to coincide with the three-day Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr.

“We did not see such a truce,” Amin al-Tayed said from his home near state TV headquarters in Omdurman, adding that heavy gunfire and thundering explosions rocked the city.

Over 420 people, including 264 civilians, have been killed and over 3,700 wounded in fighting between the Sudanese armed forces and the powerful paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF. The RSF said the armed forces unleashed airstrikes on the upscale neighbourhood of Kafouri, north of Khartoum. There was no immediate army comment.

The ongoing violence has affected operations at the main international airport, destroying civilian planes and damaging at least one runway, and thick, black smoke rose above it. Other airports also have been knocked out of operation. European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell tweeted he had spoken with the rival commanders, urging an immediate cease-fire to protect civilians and the evacuation of EU citizens.

In other fighting, a senior military official said it repelled an RSF attack on Kober Prison in Khartoum where Sudan’s longtime ruler, Omar al-Bashir, and former officials in his movement have been held since his 2019 ouster.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said a

number of prisoners fled but al-Bashir and other high-profile inmates were in a “highly secure” area, adding that “a few prisoners” were killed or wounded.

The RSF claimed the military removed al-Bashir and other prisoners from the facility, although the statement could not be independently confirmed.

The Arqin border crossing with Egypt was crowded with about 30 passenger buses of at least 55 people each, said Suliman al-Kouni, an Egyptian student who fled northward from Khartoum with dozens of other students.

“We traveled 15 hours on land at our own risk,” al-Kouni told The Associated Press by phone. “But many of our friends are still trapped in Sudan.”

The total death toll now stands at 47, with 39 bodies exhumed over the weekend, said a statement from the Inspector General of Police, Japhet Koome, who is visiting the area.

The Kenya Red Cross Society on Sunday said 112 people had been reported missing at a tracing desk set up at Malindi, where the pastor’s main church was located.

# Kenya president says cult deaths akin to terrorism

AP ■ NAIROBI (KENYA)

Kenyan President William Ruto said Monday that the starvation deaths of dozens of followers of a pastor in the south of the country is akin to terrorism.

He said the pastor, Paul Makenzi, who is in police custody belongs to jail and not to any religion.

“Mr. Makenzi ... pretends and postures as a pastor when in fact he is a terrible criminal,” Ruto said.

Makenzi was arrested on suspicion of telling his followers to fast to death in order to meet Jesus. A group of emaciated people were rescued alive, but some of those later died. Authorities then turned their attention to dozens of apparent shallow graves on Makenzi’s land.

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stands at 47, with 39 bodies exhumed over the weekend, said a statement from the Inspector General of Police, Japhet Koome, who is visiting the area.

The Kenya Red Cross Society on Sunday said 112 people had been reported missing at a tracing desk set up at Malindi, where the pastor’s main church was located.

Ruto says he has instructed law enforcement agencies to thoroughly investigate the matter as a criminal case not linked to any religion.

Ruto, who was elected in 2022, was hyped as the country’s first evangelical Christian president and has not been shy about his faith, openly praying and weeping in churches before he was elected president.

He has nominated several pastors into parliament and

government agencies like the anticorruption commission.

Makenzi remains in custody and a court allowed investigators to hold him for two weeks as probe into the deaths of his followers continues.

Police have been exhuming bodies in shallow graves marked with crosses at his 800-acre ranch in the Shakahola area, Kilifi county.

The pastor has been arrested twice before, in 2019 and in March of this year, in relation to the deaths of children. Each time, he was released on bond, and both cases are still proceeding through the court.

Local politicians have urged the court not to release him this time, decrying the spread of cults in the Malindi area. Cults are common in Kenya, which has a largely religious society.

# Pak govt planning to delay polls: Imran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan’s ruling coalition is using the pretence of dialogue with the opposition to delay general elections and the government has not yet formally reached out to his party for talks, former premier Imran Khan has said.

In an interview with the ARY news channel, Khan, chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is yet to approach his party for negotiations.

“No one from the PDM has formally approached us yet,” Khan said.

“I fear they are using these negotiations to delay elections. They are just buying time so that elections can be delayed beyond October,” he said.

Last week, the Supreme Court asked all political parties to evolve a consensus on the date for holding simultaneous general elections to the

National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies expeditiously.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led PDM coalition rejected the apex court order, saying that talks with the PTI party could not be held under the court’s watch. “I fear they are using these negotiations to delay elections. They are just buying time so that elections can be delayed beyond October,” Khan was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

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

Khan has been pushing for snap elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provinces where his PTI ruled till recently.

The PTI dissolved the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies on January 14 and 18, respectively, in a bid to force the ruling PDM coalition in Islamabad to hold early general elections in the country.

Khan added that he gave the Central Vice Chairman of the PTI, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, the mandate to hold talks with the PDM.

He also asserted that the PTI was adamant about holding elections in Punjab, referring to the Supreme Court’s April 4 order in which it directed the government to hold polls in the province on May 14, the report said.

The Supreme Court termed as “unconstitutional” Pakistan’s election commission’s decision to postpone polls in Punjab till October 8 and fixed May 14 as the date for polls in the province.

“Talks can be held if they have a proposal on joint elections,” the PTI chief was quoted

as saying in the report.

“If they give a Supreme Court-endorsed proposal on joint and immediate polls — by dissolving their governments in May — only then we can talk,” the 70-year-old cricketer-turned-politician said, adding, “But if they are leaving it open-ended, then it is nothing but a trap.” Parliament and the judiciary have also locked horns over the holding of elections in the two provinces, as the cash-strapped government has refused to authorise the funds to meet the expenditures amidst the economic crisis facing the country.

The PTI is determined to press for polls in the provincial legislatures, but the government maintains its stance on simultaneous elections across the country. Asserting that the current caretaker setups should be removed, Khan said, “These setups have become unconstitutional now and we want genuine caretaker governments to be brought.”

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Yeoman Warders, also known as Beefeaters pose for a photo in their new uniform for King Charles III’s coronation, at the Tower of London on Monday

# Sunak pushes UK’s growth plans

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday joined a live question and answer session with a range of UK businesses as part of a new Business Connect programme, which he says will promote his economic growth priority and optimise the conditions for businesses in the country to thrive.

Over 200 of the UK’s highest-profile CEOs and business leaders, representing key growth sectors, including tech, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, gathered in London for the first Business Connect event to hear direct-

ly from Sunak.

It came as Downing Street released the latest figures to show that 1,800 jobs a month have been created since October 2022 — the month Sunak took charge in the wake of a disastrous mini-Budget which resulted in predecessor Liz Truss being deposed as Prime Minister.

“Since taking office, I’ve spoken to over 1,000 business people — because they are the innovators and change-makers at the heart of our economy, supporting jobs, attracting investment and driving growth,” said Sunak.

“Business Connect provides the next fantastic

opportunity to demonstrate how we are growing the economy. We are bringing together some of the UK’s biggest companies and investors for meaningful dialogue — and I’m a prime minister passionate about working with business to unlock opportunity and progress,” he said.

The British-Indian leader said the UK should be proud of its business credentials and pointed to the creation of 162 tech unicorns, smarter regulation and world-leading universities as the “right ingredients” to double down on growing the economy.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is to inform all that Shri Laxmi Narain Khanna was owner/ transferee of residential house No. A-183, Sector-26, Noida. Shri Laxmi Narain Khanna expired on 09/09/2021. Shri Laxmi Narain Khanna had executed and got registered a will dated 14/08/2015 for the above said property in favour of 1. Anil khanna (son) 2. Pradeep Kumar Khanna(son) 3. Sunil Khanna(grandson) On the basis of this will we, all i.e Anil Khanna 2. Pradeep Kumar Khanna 3. Sunil Khanna have requested for joint mutation/transfer of this property in our favour to Noida Authority. It any one, has any objection on transfer of this property on the basis of the will he can file the objection with in 15 days of this advertisement to housing Dept. Noida Authority, Sector-6, Noida.

Anil Khanna  
R/0 A-183, Sector-26, Noida

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Sushma Rana w/o Mr. Rajpal Singh Rana who had become owner of Unit/Portion No. C-4, Second floor (back side) without roof rights admeasuring 40 sq. yds, Property No. D-164 & D-164A, admeasuring 200 sq. yds., Khasra No. 603, 604 & 605, Village Khanpur, Tehsil Hauz Khas, (M.B. Road), Colony known as Krishna Park, D-Block, Gokul Dham Society, Devi Road, Khanpur, New Delhi-110080 through Sale Deed dated 05.11.2022. (Doc. No. 9939) from Mr. Kartar Singh (20% Share), Mr. Manish Kumar Aggarwal (20% share), Mr. Suresh Kumar (20% share), Mr. Hanish Kumar Sharma (20% share), Mr. Rahul Nagar (20% share). Now the borrower(s) intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/lien/ interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP  
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP - 201301; Contact # 0120-4269379

**Notice of loss of share certificates**  
**TVS MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED**  
Registered Office: "Chaitanya" No. 12 Khader Nawaz Khan Road Nungambakkam Chennai-600006 CIN: L35921TN1992PLC022845 Website vamotor.com Email: contactus@tvsmotor.com Ph: 044 283215

**Notice of loss of share certificates**  
NOTICE is hereby given that the following share certificate(s) issued by the company are held to have been lost or misplaced or stolen and the registered holders / the legal heirs of the registered holders thereof have applied to the company for issue of duplicate share certificate(s).

Folio No.	Certificate No.	Distinctive Nos	No. of Shares	Name of Registered Holder
S23474	270	285021-287020	4000	SHASHI TALWAR
	13344	237665345-242358485		

The public are hereby warned against purchasing or dealing in any way, with the above share certificates. Any person(s) who has/have any claim(s) in respect of the said share certificates should lodge such claim(s) with the company at its registered office at the address given above within 15 days of publication of this notice, after which no claim will be entertained and the company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificates.

Place: Chennai  
Date : 25.04.2023

For TVS Motor Company Limited  
KS Srinivasan  
Company Secretary

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
FORMNO. INC-26  
[Pursuant to Rule 30 of Companies(Incorporation) Rules 2014]  
Advertisement to be published in Newspaper for the change in Registered Office of the Company from onestate to another Before the Central Government Northern Region Bench, Delhi

In the matter of sub-section 4 of section 13 of the Companies Act 2013 and clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Rule 30 of the Companies(Incorporation) Rules 2014 AND

In the matter of FBK INFOTECHPRIVATE LIMITED having its Registered Office at Plot No 5, FirstFloor, Block - B Pocket-3, Sector-17, Dwarka, South West Delhi, Delhi-110075

Noticis hereby given to General Public that the company proposes to make the application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act 2013, seeking confirmation of alteration of Memorandum of Association of the company in term of special resolution passed at Extra ordinary General Meetingheld on Friday,07th Day of April, 2023 to enable the company to change its Registered Office from "National Capital Territory of Delhi" to "State of Haryana".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change, may deliver either on MCA portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filling investor complaint form or cause to be deliver or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and ground of opposition to the Regional Director at the Address B-2 WING, 2nd FLOOR, PARYAVARAN BHAWAN, CGO COMPLEX, NEW DELHI-110003, within 14 Days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

ADDRESS OF REGISTEREDOFFICE:  
Plot No 5, First Floor, Block - B Pocket - 3, Sector - 17, Dwarka, South West Delhi, Delhi, 110075

FOR FBK INFOTECH PRIVATE LIMITED  
SD/-  
ANAMIKA PATHAK  
DIRECTOR  
DIN: 09440082

Date : 23.04.2023  
Place : Delhi

**KSOLVES INDIA LIMITED**  
(CIN: L72900DL2014PLC269020)  
Regd. Office: 317/276, Second floor, Lane no.3, Mehrauli Road, Saldulajab, Saket, New Delhi, South Delhi - 110030, IN  
Corp. Office : Parexil Workspaces, B-4, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, B Block, Sector -63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201301  
Tel No. : +91-8962699996, E-mail : cs@ksolves.com, Website : www.ksolves.com

**Extract of the Audited Consolidated Financial Results for the Quarter & Year ended on March 31, 2023**  
(Amount in Lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter ended on		Quarter ended on		Year to date figures for the previous year ended	
	31/03/2023	31/12/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2023	31/03/2022	31/03/2022
Revenue from operations	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited
	2274.47	2055.20	1422.53	7831.16	4,706.86	
Profit before tax	958.36	823.84	595.12	3293.56	2091.43	
Profit after tax	733.64	617.60	442.04	2472.04	1589.39	
Total comprehensive income for the period	725.59	614.13	438.74	2444.98	1576.82	
Paid up equity share capital (Face value: Rs. 10 per share)	1185.60	1185.60	1185.60	1185.60	1185.60	
Total reserves (including non-controlling interests)	1052.75	719.41	482.02	1052.75	482.02	
Earnings per equity share Basic and diluted	6.19	5.21	3.73	20.85	13.41	

**Extract of the Audited Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter & Year ended on March 31, 2023**  
(Amount in Lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter ended on		Quarter ended on		Year to date figures for the previous year ended	
	31/03/2023	31/12/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2023	31/03/2022	31/03/2022
Revenue from operations	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited
	2246.21	2028.13	1358.91	7711.65	4,534.58	
Profit before tax	933.28	821.28	580.56	3299.31	2029.03	
Profit after tax	718.26	613.21	435.30	2487.03	1549.93	
Total comprehensive income for the period	710.21	609.74	432.00	2459.97	1531.38	

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of audited financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly audited financial results is available on the website of the Stock Exchange (www.bseindia.com) and www.nseindia.com and also on the Company’s website www.ksolves.com.

2. The board also approved final dividend of Rs.8 per share for the financial year 2022-23, subject to the approval of shareholders.

By order of the Board  
For Ksolves India Limited  
SD/-  
Ratan Kumar Srivastava  
Managing Director

Date : 23.04.2023  
Place : Delhi

# Sensex reclaims 60K mark, Nifty near 17,743 on gains

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex climbed over 400 points to reclaim the 60,000 mark on Monday, on strong buying in financial stocks after earnings from ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries matched street expectations.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 401.04 points or 0.67 per cent to reach the 60,000-level and settled for the day at 60,056.10. During intra-day, it hit a high of 60,101.64 and a low of 59,620.11. As many as 23 stocks in the index ended in the green and seven in the red.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 119.35 points or 0.68 per cent to close at 17,743.40. A total of 24 Nifty shares gained, while 26 declined.

"After witnessing a sluggish trend over the past few sessions, fresh buying emerged ahead of the monthly F&O expiry later this week. While the markets may still be choppy and volatile, we may see select bouts of buying going ahead," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

According to Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, strong



results from index heavyweights led domestic indices to inch higher.

"The banking sector was the top gainer up 1 per cent, followed by the realty sector. Better than expected Q4 result from ICICI Bank over the weekend and RBI's relaxation towards the HDFC Bank merger led to a rally in the banking index," Khemka said.

Among the Sensex firms, Wipro, Axis Bank, Titan, UltraTech Cement and HDFC Bank, HDFC, HCL Tech and Reliance were the gainers.

Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra and Maruti were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge went up 0.47 per cent and smallcap index rose 0.34 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, bankex went up by 1.32 per cent, financial services rose by 1.21 per cent and realty by 1.05 per cent. Besides, FMCG, commodities, energy and teck were the other gainers.

On the other hand, healthcare fell by 0.47 per cent, utilities declined 0.28 per cent and auto slipped by 0.04 per cent.

Asian markets saw mixed trends. The Nikkei 225 gained 0.10 per cent, while the Shanghai Composite and Hang Seng fell 0.78 per cent and 0.58 per cent, respectively.

# 'Credit growth likely to moderate to 10% in FY-24'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The credit growth momentum is waning in the country and the crucial non-food loans growth is expected to slip to 10 per cent in FY24 from more than 15 per cent in FY23, a Japanese brokerage said on Monday.

Ebbing inflationary pressures, especially on the wholesale side which tends to lower working capital needs, and a likely moderation in GDP growth to 5.3 per cent in FY24 were cited as the primary reasons for the lower bank credit growth expectation by Nomura.

"... we expect credit growth to moderate to 10 per cent in FY24 from 15 per cent in FY23," analysts at the brokerage said in a report, adding that the base effect will also be partly responsible for driving the number down.

They also said the rate hikes of more than 2.50 per cent by RBI in the current tightening cycle will impact credit growth through a lagged impact on borrowings, and already, there are some signs of a dent on the home loan front.



The credit growth momentum is already moderating, the brokerage said, pointing out that the number has come down to 15.4 per cent in March as compared to 16 per cent in February and 16.7 per cent in January.

"A further moderation is likely. Underlying credit momentum, as measured by the 3-month saar (seasonally adjusted annualised rate) has declined even more sharply to 9.3 per cent in March from over 20 per cent at end-2022," it said.

It can be noted that all lenders have been having a great run with high credit growth and lowest stress on the books in over a decade at present.

# FUTURE RETAIL INSOLVENCY PROCESS 48 cos selected as eligible prospective bidders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 48 companies, including Reliance Retail, Jindal Power Ltd and Adani group, are in the final list of eligible prospective resolution applicants for acquiring debt-ridden Future Retail Ltd.

The Resolution Professional of Future Retail Ltd (FRL), which is currently going through an insolvency resolution process, on Monday came out with the final list of 'Eligible Prospective Resolution Applicants'.

On April 10, FRL's RP updated a list of 49 companies, which had submitted Expressions of Interest (EoIs) after the company's lenders decided to invite fresh bids after dividing its assets into clusters.

Some of the other players who had submitted EoIs include WHSmith Travel Ltd, Sahara Enterprises, Century Copper Corp, Greentech worldwide, Harsha Vardhan Reddy, J C Flowers Asset Reconstruction Pvt Ltd, Pinnacle Air Pvt Ltd and Universal Associates.

Except Bommidala Enterprises, an Andhra



Pradesh-based manufacturer of tobacco products, all companies have been included in the final list. Bommidala Enterprises indicated that it will not be submitting a resolution plan.

Earlier this month, the Mumbai-based NCLT bench had granted FRL an extension of 90 days till July 15, 2023 for concluding the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

On March 23, 2023, creditors of FRL invited new EoIs whereby prospective buyers can bid for the debt-ridden firm "as a going concern or individual cluster or a combination of clusters of its assets", as it failed to attract a resolution plan in more than four months.

# Shopping mall operators revenue may rise 7-9% this fiscal: CRISIL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shopping mall operators are expected to earn 7-9 per cent higher revenue during this fiscal, driven by strong retail consumption and improved rentals in their properties, according to CRISIL.

"Buoyant retail sales and improved rental yields are expected to lift the revenue of mall operators by 7-9 per cent this fiscal. That would be tantamount to around 125 per cent of pre-pandemic, or fiscal 2020, revenue," it said in a statement.

The rating agency said that the growth in revenue will be on a high base of FY23.

During the last fiscal, CRISIL noted that "return to social normalcy after mobility curbs were lifted led to substantial growth in footfalls and a robust 60 per cent rise in revenue to around 116 per cent of the pre-pandemic level."

"Additionally, high occupancy levels, solid profitability backed by cost-optimisation measures and strong balance sheets will keep the credit risk profiles of mall operators healthy this fiscal," the agency said.

# ICICI Bank shares settle more than 2% higher

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of ICICI Bank settled more than 2 per cent higher on Monday after the private lender registered a 27.64 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit. The stock of the company climbed 2.31 per cent to end at ₹904.65 apiece on the BSE. On the NSE, it gained 2.22 per cent to close at ₹905.30 per piece. In volume terms, 4.20 lakh shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and more than 3.08 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

Meanwhile, the 30-share BSE Sensex benchmark ended 401.04 points or 0.67 per cent higher at 60,056.10 points on Monday. On Saturday, private lender ICICI Bank reported a 27.64 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹9,852.70 crore for the January-March quarter of 2022-23, compared to the year-ago period.

# NSE warns investors against assured return investment schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Monday asked investors not to put their money in guaranteed returns investment schemes offered by three individuals.

The advisory came after the exchange found that the three individuals — Veena (associated with Algo Master), Ankita Mishra and Vishal — were offering such schemes.

In a statement, the bourse said that these persons are not registered either as members or authorised persons with any registered member of the NSE.

Further, the exchange has asked investors not to share their trading credentials such as user ID and password with anyone.

Cautioning investors, NSE asked investors "not to subscribe to any such scheme/product offered by any person/entity offering indica-



tive/assured/guaranteed returns in the stock market as the same is prohibited by law."

"Participation in such prohibited schemes is at investors' own risk, cost and consequences as such schemes are neither approved nor endorsed by the exchange," the exchange said.

For any kind of disputes relating to such prohibited schemes, mechanisms such as benefits of investor protection under the exchange's jurisdiction, exchange dispute resolution mechanism and investor grievance redressal mechanism administered by the exchange, would not be available to investors, it added.

# HDFC Life Insurance shares end over 6% higher

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of HDFC Life Insurance ended more than 6 per cent higher on Monday after the Reserve Bank gave its nod to HDFC Bank and HDFC Ltd to raise their stake in the private insurer.

The stock of the company jumped 6.66 per cent to close at ₹547.50 apiece on the BSE. During the day, the shares rallied 8.05 per cent to hit a day high of ₹554.60 per scrip.

On the NSE, it zoomed 6.40 per cent to settle at ₹546.15 per piece.

In volume terms, 6.54 lakh shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and 2.35 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

Meanwhile, the 30-share Sensex index closed 401.04 points or 0.67 per cent up at 60,056.10 points on Monday.

# Yes Bank shares end 3% lower

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Yes Bank ended 3 per cent lower on Monday after the bank posted a 45 per cent decline in its March quarter profit.

The stock of the private lender fell 3.09 per cent to close at ₹15.70 apiece on the NSE.

On the BSE, it went lower by 3.08 per cent to settle at ₹15.72 per piece.

In volume terms, nearly 16.32 crore shares of the firm were traded on the NSE and more than 3.03 crore shares on the BSE during the day.

At the closing of the trading session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 401.04 points or 0.67 per cent higher at 60,056.10 points.

# Wheat procurement up 12% at 111 lakh tonne so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government's wheat procurement rose 12 per cent to 111 lakh tonne so far in the ongoing 2023-24 marketing year (April-March), from 99 lakh tonne in the year-ago period, according to the food ministry data.

"Wheat procurement is progressing smoothly," said a senior food ministry official.

About 11,89,237 farmers have benefited so far from the procurement operation with an expected MSP outflow of ₹23,663.63 crore, the official added.

As the wheat crop was impacted in some key growing states due to the recent untimely rains, the Centre has relaxed quality norms for procurement of wheat in five states -- Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the national nodal agency that undertakes procurement of wheat at the minimum support price along with state agencies.

The procurement is done not only to protect the interest of farmers but also to maintain a buffer stock to be used for various welfare schemes.

The government has set a procurement target of 34.2 million tonne for the 2023-24 marketing year, as against the actual procurement of 19 million tonne in 2022-23.

# BUSINESS BRIEF

## FLUID DYNAMICS LAB LAUNCHED AT SRMIST

**Kattankulathur:** In a first of its initiative in India, especially in a higher education institution - a Centre of Excellence for Electronics Cooling and Computational Fluid Dynamics Lab was dedicated at the Department of Mechanical Engineering at SRM Institute of Science and Technology in Kattankulathur on Wednesday. Skill training for students, research and development, professional and open electives, a two-year full-time specialisation in electronics cooling, and high-salary placements are the objectives of the new lab. The Lab is equipped with 30 high-end computer systems, and training in electronics cooling would be initially offered to all students. While 50 per cent of the training would be provided by SRM faculty, the rest of the training will be offered by the industry's finest professionals and domain experts who have specialised in electronics cooling.



## VIT-AP SCHOOL OF BUSINESS HOLDS VLAUNCH FINALE

**Amravati:** VIT-AP University's School of Business (VSB) in Collaboration with VIT-AP TBI Foundation (VTBIF), organised the finale of VLaunch Pad, a national level business plan competition, to raise awareness on the importance of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship among students. A total of 443 teams registered across nation under four tracks related to UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in areas of AgriTech, Healthcare & Wellness, Automation and DeepTech. Out of which, 50 teams were chosen to pitch their business plan at the grand finale. First, second, and third prizes for the four tracks total cash amounting to ₹1,80,000 were awarded to the winners.



## VIJAY MEHTA APPOINTED ANMI'S 30TH PRESIDENT

**Mumbai:** ANMI, the largest pan-India industry body representing market intermediaries and stock brokers, is pleased to announce Vijay Mehta as its 30th president. He takes over from the outgoing president Kamlesh Shah, who skillfully strengthened the organisation and elevated it to unprecedented levels of success. "I am humbled and honored by the trust placed in me by the esteemed members of this organisation. In the current times of rapid changes and challenges, I believe it is imperative to focus on innovation and collaboration to achieve our collective goals. I look forward to working closely with all members to promote the growth and development of the industry, enhance compliance practices, and create a conducive environment for the capital market to thrive," Mehta said.



# Rupee gains 15 paise to close at 81.91 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 15 paise to close at 81.91 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday as a firm trend in domestic equities and easing crude oil price boosted investor sentiments.

However, selling pressure from foreign institutional investors may weigh on the rupee at higher levels.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.08 against the US currency and finally closed at 81.91 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of



15 paise over its previous close.

During the session, the rupee touched a high of 81.88 and a low of 82.09 against the dollar.

The rupee on Friday settled at 82.06 against the US dollar.

The rupee appreciated on Monday on strong domestic equities and a soft US dollar. Weak trend in crude oil price also supported the rupee. However, FII outflows capped sharp gains, Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas - said.

# Gold declines ₹345; silver plunges ₹675

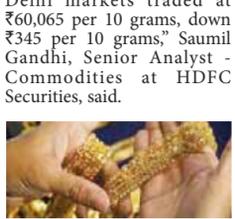
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined ₹345 to ₹60,065 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a fall in the precious metal prices overseas, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had ended at ₹60,410 per 10 grams.

Silver also plunged ₹675 to ₹74,400 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹60,065 per 10 grams, down ₹345 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.



# Indusind Bank Q4 net profit rises 46% on lower provisions, strong core income

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lender Indusind Bank on Monday reported a 46 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at ₹2,043 crore on a dip in provisions and stronger core income.

The Hinduja-promoted bank's core net interest income rose 17 per cent to ₹4,669 crore on a 21 per cent loan growth and a 0.08 per cent expansion in the net interest margin to 4.28 per cent.

Its other income came at ₹2,154 crore, up by 13 per cent when compared to the year-ago period.

A 30 per cent dip in provisions and contingencies at ₹1,030 crore during the quarter led to the handsome profit growth during the quarter.

On the asset quality front, the gross non-performing



assets ratio improved to 1.98 per cent as against 2.27 per cent in the year-ago period.

Its managing director and chief executive Sumant Kathpalia told reporters that the bank aspires to contain the credit costs between 1.10-1.30 per cent going forward.

The NIMs will be between 4.15-4.25 per cent, he said. The bank will continue to keep the unsecured book under 5 per cent of the overall book and will be cautious in the segment, Kathpalia said.

# ADB: Committed \$20 bn in 2022 for Asia-Pacific

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Multi-lateral funding agency ADB on Monday said it committed \$20.5 billion from its own resources in 2022 to help Asia and the Pacific continue its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic despite fresh economic headwinds and crises.

The financial and operational results published in ADB's Annual Report 2022 pointed how the bank combined finance and knowledge, and leveraged partnerships to help the region cope with economic shocks exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a worsening food crisis, and extreme weather events.

"Our support in 2022 helped our developing member countries (DMCs) navigate the immediate impacts of these crises while bolstering their longer-term resilience in critical areas such as climate change and food security," said ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa.



The \$20.5 billion comprised loans and guarantees, grants, equity investments, and technical assistance provided to governments and the private sector. ADB mobilized an additional \$11.4 billion in co-financing, it said.

ADB committed \$6.7 billion in financing for climate mitigation and adaptation in 2022, making progress toward its ambition of providing \$100 billion in cumulative climate financing during 2019-2030.

To address the region's worsening food crisis, it said, ADB provided \$3.7 billion under its \$14 billion food security programme, delivering essential food relief for people most in need and strengthening food production systems.

# Tata Motors ties up with Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors on Monday said it has tied up with Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar (KPKB).

The collaboration will allow the automaker to offer its vehicles at special rates to more than 34 lakh police personnel across the country, Tata Motors said in a statement.

Currently, KPKB has 119 Master Canteens which act as distribution centres and 1,778 subsidiary canteens which sell products to the troops and families, serving more than 34 lakh personnel from central and state police departments. The entity caters to serving and retired personnel of various organisations like Railway Protection Force (RPF), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Special Protection Group (SPG), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), National Investigation Agency (NIA), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

# Ebixcash, Survival Technologies get Sebi's go-ahead to float IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ebixcash Ltd, the Indian subsidiary of Nasdaq listed Ebix Inc, and speciality chemical manufacturer Survival Technologies have received Sebi's go-ahead to raise funds totalling ₹7,000-crore through initial public offerings.

These companies had filed preliminary IPO papers with the regulator between March 2022 and December 2022. They obtained its observation letters on April 10, an update with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

In Sebi's parlance, its observation implies its go-ahead to launch the initial share-sale.

# Coca-Cola expands availability to over 3 lakh stores in India in Q1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Soft drinks major Coca-Cola on Monday said it has increased availability to over 3 lakh stores in India in the first quarter, driving approximately 3 billion transactions at affordable price points.

Ahead of the summer season, the company also added 40,000 coolers. The Coca-Cola company said in its global earnings statement.

"During the first quarter,



home entry packs," it said. India is the fifth-largest market for Coca-Cola globally. "The company also increased household penetration via targeted promotions on large packages for the at-home channel," it said. Coca-Cola said the company along with its bottling partners "continues to raise the bar in India in integrated execution" to deliver value for its customers and consumers".

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# Shigeki Iwama Honda India Power Products new president

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda India Power Products (HIPP) Ltd on Monday announced the appointment of Shigeki Iwama as its President.

Iwama, who was the President at Honda Motor Europe's Central Europe branch (Austria) from 2020 to 2023, succeeds Takahiro Ueda to steer the company in its next phase of growth, the company said in a statement.

# NAPOLI ON BRINK OF SCUDETTO

AP ■ NAPLES

Giacomo Raspadori fired Napoli to the brink of their first Serie A title in over three decades on Sunday with his stoppage-time winner in a 1-0 triumph at Juventus which was packed with late drama.

Italy international Raspadori was left completely unmarked to lash home a volley from Eljif Elmas's cross in the 93rd minute of a pulsating encounter in Turin, pushing Napoli 17 points ahead of second-placed Lazio, who lost at home to Torino on Saturday.

Raspadori's late winner means that Napoli, who were knocked out of the Champions League by AC Milan on Tuesday, can win Serie A for the first time since 1990 next weekend if they beat Salernitana and Lazio fail to win at Inter Milan.

"It was a very important goal, but we still have matches to win. Today gave us a great hand as we came from disappointment in the Champions League," said Raspadori.

"We only have one thing on our minds, get three points against Salernitana."

Juve stay third, where they rose to on Thursday following the decision to revoke their 15-point penalty for illicit transfer activity, after their third straight league defeat.

However they await a new ruling from the Italian Football Federation's (FIGC) appeals court to see if they will be handed a new points penalty, a decision which will have a big impact in Serie A's race for the Champions League.

"We played well but we conceded a really idiotic goal," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"It's the 93rd minute you have to have bodies into the box to defend."

Juve thought they had snatched the points for themselves when substitute Angel Di Maria netted a brilliant solo



effort with eight minutes remaining, only for referee Michael Fabbri to then rule it out for a foul on Stanislav Lobotka which Juve were convinced was a good tackle.

By that point Victor Osimhen should have already put Napoli ahead through one of the three golden chances he missed midway through the second half.

First he clipped the outside of the post in the 70th minute following great work from Elmas and then headed a great opportunity straight at Wojciech Szczesny from the subsequent corner.

The away fans then had their heads in their hands three minutes later when Osimhen was brilliantly fed by Giovanni Di Lorenzo but could only smash his close-range finish over the bar.

However after Di Maria had another goal chalked off for the ball going out of play, and Osimhen miscontrolled when clean through on goal, Raspadori popped up to take Napoli to potentially one match from fulfilling the dream of a generation of fans.



## We'll fight to derail Man City's treble bid: Ten Hag

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Erik ten Hag vowed Manchester United would "give everything" to prevent Manchester City from matching his club's treasured treble after they beat Brighton to set up an FA Cup final against their fierce rivals.

United won 7-6 on penalties at Wembley on Sunday after the game finished goalless, with defender Victor Lindelof scoring the decisive spot-kick.

It went some way to banishing the agony of their shocking Europa League performance in midweek, when they lost 3-0 to Sevilla in the quarter-finals to lose 5-2 on aggregate.

But they will have to find more of a cutting edge in the FA Cup final on June 3 if they are to beat Pep Guardiola's City, who are targeting the treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup.

City are favourites to win all three of the trophies this season after moving up through the gears in recent weeks.

United were on course for three trophies of their own before Thursday's blowout in Spain, but they are still chasing a domestic double after winning the League Cup in February to end a six-year silverware drought.

United boss Ten Hag, speaking after the nail-biting Wembley shootout, praised his team's ability to bounce back.

"First we are physical, strong, we are mentally strong, so we showed the character and personality necessary... we were determined to win this game," he said.

But the Dutch boss said his men must learn to change the script during tough matches — they have suffered a number of punishing defeats this season, including a 6-3 defeat at City and a 7-0 reverse at Liverpool.

"What we have proved is that we can deal with setbacks, we can bounce back between games," he said.

"But now what we have to improve is to bounce back in a game in difficult situations or occasions, away stadiums — it doesn't matter what, we have to show personality."

United remain the only English club to have won the treble, completing the feat under former manager Alex Ferguson in 1999.

They stopped Liverpool from winning all three trophies in 1977, winning the FA Cup final that year. Ten Hag joked that he would not reveal the "key" to beating City, who lost 2-1 at Old Trafford in January.

"I won't tell you," he said. "I'll keep that for myself."

## Spalletti urges calm as Napoli ready for title party

AP ■ NAPLES

Luciano Spalletti said it isn't time for Napoli to start celebrating despite a last-gasp 1-0 triumph at Juventus leaving his team needing potentially one more win to claim a historic Serie A title.

If Napoli beat regional rivals Salernitana on Saturday they will need Inter Milan to avoid home defeat to Lazio on Sunday to be crowned champions for the first time since 1990.

"We need to wait before we pop any bottles, and hearts, because we still have a little way to go," said Spalletti to DAZN.

"They played really well and it wasn't easy to do that so soon after being knocked out of the Champions League. I don't think we could have done any more tonight."

Barring a nightmare collapse in the final seven games of the season Napoli



will win the league, the crowning glory of Spalletti's career which has been a long road from lower league football as a player to the summit of the Italian game.

The Scudetto would be his first league title since the two he won in Russia with Zenit Saint Petersburg in 2010 and 2012 and his first trophy in a major league since an Italian Cup with Roma in 2008.

The 64-year-old has long been considered a capable coach who doesn't have the winning mentality, who gets his teams playing great football but who ultimately achieves little.

"It's obviously very satisfying to be here," added Spalletti. "It has been a tougher road here for me than for others who began from a higher level, those who earned respect from their playing careers and had the opportunity to lead a top team right from the start."

## Balbirnie helps Ireland bounce back in SL Test



AP ■ GALLE

A career-best 95 by Andy Balbirnie helped Ireland reach a strong 319 for four at stumps on day one of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle on Monday.

In a strong comeback after a heavy innings defeat in the first Test, at the close of play Ireland's Lorcan Tucker was unbeaten on 78 and Curtis Campher was not

out 27. Having made three changes, Ireland began nervously as Peter Moor departed for five and Sri Lanka's first Test hero Prabath Jayasuriya removed James McCollum for 10.

But captain Balbirnie held firm in hot and humid conditions, grinding out a 115-run partnership with the returning Paul Stirling after Harry Tector fell to Jayasuriya for 18.

It was the highest partnership for Ireland in their brief Test history — this is only their sixth match — surpassing a 114-run stand from their inaugural Test in 2018.

Stirling, who had missed the first Test, exhibited his experience punishing loose balls as he reached his maiden half-century in Test cricket off 64 balls.

But his promising knock was cut short when he had to retire hurt with cramps. His 74 came off 133 balls with six fours and three sixes.

Balbirnie, meanwhile, raced to his third half-century off just 43 balls with 10 boundaries but was sedate after the milestone as he built the crucial partnership with Stirling.

Balbirnie missed out on the chance to become only the third Irishman to score a Test century, caught after a wild paddle sweep off Kusal Mendis for 95, beating his previous best of 82.

Tucker was then caught bat-pad by Mendis off Jayasuriya but the appeal was turned down and skipper Dimuth Karunaratne chose not to review.

This is now Ireland's second-highest total in Test cricket behind the 339 all out against Pakistan in 2018.

Ireland are yet to win a game in the five-day format since obtaining Test status in 2017, losing all five of their outings so far including to Bangladesh in early April.

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## Marseille reclaim 2nd spot after late Lyon own goal

AP ■ PARIS

Marseille climbed back into second place in Ligue 1 on Sunday after a 2-1 win at Lyon following a farcical own goal by Malo Gusto with the final kick of the game.

Cengiz Under put Marseille in front on the stroke of half-time before Alexandre Lacazette brought Lyon level midway through the second half with his 20th league goal of the season.

Lyon were punished for their failure to deal with a cross deep into added time as Sinaly Diomande hit Chelsea loanee Gusto with his attempted clearance and the ball ricocheted into the net.

Marseille's first league win in Lyon since 2007 sent them a point clear of third-placed Lens again and snapped their opponents' seven-game unbeaten streak.

"I hope it's a turning point but there's still a lot of points to play for between now and the end of the season," said Marseille coach Igor Tudor.

"It's a really valuable win but we're still far from our objective. This goal in the final second is why people love football."

Only the top two in Ligue 1 qualify automatically for the Champions League, with the team finishing third entering in the third qualifying round.

However, third place will gain direct entry to the group stage if the winner of this



son's Europa League also qualifies for the continent's elite club competition via their domestic championship.

Lyon had clawed to within five points of the European places following a run of just one defeat in 12 outings, but they were undone by their defensive frailties against Marseille. Habib Diallo scored twice in a 2-0 win away to Reims to haul Strasbourg out of the relegation zone, while French Cup finalists Toulouse won 1-0 at Lorient.

## Becker keeps Union on CL course

AP ■ BAYERN

Union Berlin remained on course for a debut Champions League berth after a second-half goal from Sheraldo Becker gave his side a 1-0 win at Borussia Moenchengladbach on Sunday.

Becker's ninth league goal of the season, a volley after a looping cross from Jerome Roussillon, snared all three points for the visitors, sending them into third place.

Union manager Urs Fischer praised his side's "disciplined performance" saying "there wasn't a phase in the game where we eased up."

"When the whistle went, we were the deserved winners."

Freiburg's earlier win over Schalke meant the Black Forest side had overtaken Union into third before kickoff.

With RB Leipzig and Bayer Leverkusen also hot on their trail, Union endured a



poor first half before upping the intensity in the second, Becker slamming in after 60 minutes. With 31 goals against, Union have conceded the fewest of any side in the Bundesliga this season.

Union, who are only in their fourth year in the top division, are now on course

for a remarkable maiden Champions League appearance. A first-half brace from Michael Gregoritsch helped lift Freiburg up to fourth after a 4-0 home victory against struggling Schalke.

Like Union, Freiburg have never played in the Champions League.

# 'I'M NOT NADAL'S REPLACEMENT: ALCARAZ

AP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz insisted on Sunday that he is not Rafael Nadal's "replacement" as the teenager comfortably defended his Barcelona title, bolstering his bid to succeed his compatriot as French Open champion.

The 19-year-old brushed aside Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 6-4 to add the Barcelona trophy to wins in Buenos Aires and Indian Wells in 2023. He now has nine career titles.

With 14-time French Open champion Nadal sidelined since January with a hip injury and world number one and two-time Roland Garros winner Novak Djokovic struggling with an elbow problem, Alcaraz reinforced his credentials as a major contender to add the clay-court Grand Slam title to the US Open he captured

last year. However, he was quick to dampen speculation that he is the French Open champion-in-waiting, just five weeks out from the second major of the year in Paris.

"I don't want to be anyone's replacement," said world number two Alcaraz when confronted with his status as heir apparent to Nadal who turns 37 in June.

Nadal hasn't played since his second round exit at the Australian Open and has missed Masters events at Indian Wells, Miami and Monte Carlo as well as sitting out Barcelona for a second successive year.

"In the two years that Rafa hasn't been here, I've been lucky or, let's say, I've won the title," said Alcaraz who defended his Barcelona title without dropping a set.

His win on Sunday was his

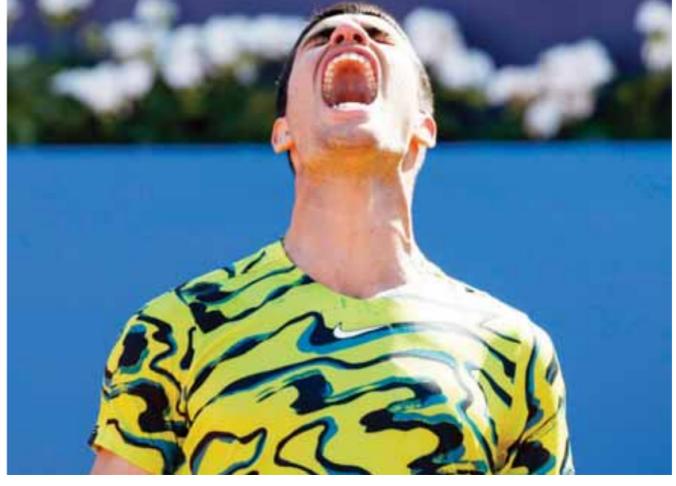
fourth in four meetings against fifth-ranked Tsitsipas.

"I've always wanted to play against the best, it's a shame that we haven't been able to enjoy Rafa these last two years," added Alcaraz.

"Let's hope he continues to play for a long time and that we can enjoy his tennis, but obviously we are not here to take over from anyone, but to build our own history."

Alcaraz's caution is justified. Despite Nadal's continuing injury woes, he boasts a stunning win-loss record at the French Open of 112 wins against just three losses since his title-winning 2005 debut.

Two of those defeats came against Djokovic who shares the men's record of 22 majors with Nadal.



tory in January. Despite concerns over his elbow, he knows that traditionally he improves as the clay season progresses — his record shows two Monte Carlo titles, three at Madrid and six in Rome, the last significant event before Roland Garros.

Djokovic has successfully bounced back from elbow worries in the past — in February 2018, he needed surgery on the injury but still won Wimbledon and the US Open later that year.

Both Nadal and Djokovic are sitting out the Madrid Masters where Alcaraz is the defending champion.

"Roland Garros is a clear short-term objective," added Alcaraz.

"It's a tournament I really want to win, but now we are focused on Madrid and then Rome. Winning the tournament here in Barcelona

gives me extra confidence for what's to come."

Holger Rune, like Alcaraz also just 19, defended his Munich title on Sunday but unlike the Spaniard, had to battle back from the brink of defeat.

Plagued by a shoulder injury, which needed a medical time-out, the Dane came back from 5-2 down in the third set and saved four match points to see off Botich van de Zandschulp 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (7/3) in a rematch of last year's final.

"It is the last match and the last push, so you try to find a way," said Rune who heads to Madrid having never previously played in the tournament.

Also heading to Madrid with confidence is women's world number one Iga Swiatek, the reigning US and French Open champion.

# DC BEAT SRH BY 7 RUNS

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Washington Sundar's all-round effort went in vain as Sunrisers Hyderabad made heavy weather of a below-par chase to go down to Delhi Capitals by seven runs, their third defeat in a row in the IPL, here on Monday.

The offspin all-rounder Sundar (4-0-28-3) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (4-0-11-2) exposed the batting frailties of Delhi Capitals' in the first half of the game to restrict them to 144/9 after David Warner opted to bat.

But an inexplicable batting approach in which SRH never looked to dominate led to their downfall as they were restricted to 137/6.

Having lost half of their side for 85 runs in 14.1 overs, SRH's recovery was led by Heinrich Klaasen (31; 19b, 3x4, 1x6) and Sundar who came up with 15-ball 24 not out (3x4s).

But it proved not enough as Anrich Nortje (4-0-33-2) dismissed his South African teammate, before Mukesh Kumar bowled a terrific last over to defend 13 runs to hand Delhi a narrow yet thrilling second consecutive win of the season.

Delhi, who began the season with a five-match losing streak, however stayed at the bottom of the table with four points.

Kolkata Knight Riders and SRH, who too have four points, remained ahead on net run-rate.

Harry Brook's largely disappointing IPL debut season extended further and Mayank Agarwal (49) failed to make the most of two lifelines.

Delhi Capitals gradually strengthened their grip on the game by taking four wickets -- Agarwal, Rahul Tripathi (15), Abhishek Sharma (5) and Aiden

Markam (3) in quick succession in the middle overs, and allowing a mere three fours between overs 5 to 15 which highlighted SRH's plight.

Agarwal got an early lifeline when Mitchell Marsh could not hold onto a tough chance on his right, at first slip off Ishant Sharma in the opening over.

The right-hander got a second lifeline on 47 when a flick shot off Marsh landed close to Mukesh at short fine leg, but he soon ran out of luck.

Axar Patel deceived the batter in flight, only to hit it straight to Aman Khan in the 12th over.

Agarwal made 49 from 39 balls with seven fours, adding 31 and 38 runs with Brook and Tripathi, for the first and second wickets respectively, but never looked on top of the proceedings.

The dismissal of Agarwal had Delhi's tails up in the 12th over, and their impact substitute Ishant dealt a severe blow getting SRH's impact player Tripathi caught behind for a 21-ball 15.

SRH's slide continued with Abhishek (5) hitting one straight back to Kuldeep Yadav in the 14th over and in the next, Axar had Markam chopping one on to leave the home side reeling at 86/5.

With 51 needed from last four overs, Klaasen and Sundar revived SRH with a 26-ball 41-run stand for the sixth wicket, but their effort came too late.

Earlier, Sundar ended his six-match wicketless run to take three wickets in five balls to break the back of Delhi Capitals' batting line-up after they opted to bat.

Then Bhuvneshwar came up with a parsimonious spell of 4-0-11-2, which included the key wickets of Phil Salt (0) and Axar (34) to rattle Delhi further.



Delhi Capitals slipped from 57 for 2 to 62 for 5 after the powerplay, and had their backs firmly pressed against the wall. Patel (34) and Manish Pandey (34) saved some blushes for Delhi, who remained at the bottom of the points table. The pair did well to add 69 runs for the sixth wicket taking Delhi Capitals past the 100-run mark and prevented a total collapse. Patel hit a run-a-ball 34 with four hits to the fence while Pandey was run out following a brilliant throw from deep mid-wicket by Sundar soon after, for a 27-ball 34 (2x4s). The tone was set earlier by Bhuvaneshwar who struck on

### POINTS TABLE

	TEAM	M	W	L	PTS
1	CSK	7	5	2	10
2	RR	7	4	3	8
3	LSG	7	4	3	8
4	GT	6	4	2	8
5	RCB	7	4	3	8
6	PBKS	7	4	3	8
7	MI	6	3	3	6
8	KKR	7	2	5	4
9	SRH	7	2	5	4
10	DC	7	2	5	4

the third delivery to get Phil Salt caught behind by Klaasen and kept David Warner silent for the majority of his opening spell.

The Delhi captain, who broke the shackles to get a four and a six off Sundar in the fourth over, perished right after the powerplay with the spin bowling all-rounder running through the middle-order in the eighth over.

Warner, who perished for a 20-ball 21, was caught at deep square leg by Brook on the second ball while trying to sweep. Delhi sunk further as comeback batter Sarfaraz Khan (10) was the next to fall to the sweep shot, on the fourth delivery from Sundar, caught by Bhuvneshwar at deep backward square leg.

Aman struck a first-ball four but got a top edge off Sundar on the final delivery.

DC's No 3 Marsh began with four boundaries off Marco Jansen in the second over, which got them 19 runs but he was deceived by a slower delivery from T Natarajan, who had the batter trapped leg-before for a 15-ball 25 (4x4s).



Mumbai vs Gujarat  
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# MI look to sort bowling woes against Titans

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Their three-game winning streak snapped after a loss to Punjab Kings, five-time champions Mumbai Indians will look to address their poor death over bowling when they take on a resurgent Gujarat Titans in their IPL match here on Tuesday.

After a familiar poor start, MI enjoyed a hat-trick of wins but their impressive run was cut short by Punjab Kings with a 13-run win on Saturday.

Mumbai were let down by their death over bowling as they conceded 96 runs in the final five overs to allow PBKS post 214 for 8, and they will have to sort out their bowling ahead of the GT clash.

It was the pace quartet of Arjun Tendulkar, Jason Behrendorff, Cameron Green and Jofra Archer who were put under the pump as all of them conceded more than 40 runs in their quota of overs.

The experienced Piyush Chawla and his spin bowling colleague Hrithik Shokeen, however, have been on the money as they restricted the flow of runs, with the former snapping two wickets as well.

MI's batting unit has looked formidable with the top and middle order being among runs. While Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan have given a good start to the team on most occasions, Suryakumar Yadav's return to form is a big positive for MI, who have been served well by the overseas duo of Cameron Green and Tim David.

In fact, Green and Suryakumar had almost won the match against Punjab Kings with a 36-ball 75-run stand before being done in by Arshdeep Singh's magical overs at the death.

Things are not going to be

any easier for the MI batters as the Titans too possess a strong bowling attack. Criticised for not being able to defend totals this season, GT showed how to do it with a master class at the death overs to strangle Lucknow Super Giants' chase in their previous match.

The star of GT bowling was comeback man Mohit Sharma, who walked away with the player of the match award after using his variations to telling effect against the Lucknow side.

GT were in a dire situation with LSG cruising at 105 for 1 in 14 overs while chasing 136 but the bowlers, led by Mohit, denied them as he defended 12 runs in the final over.

While Mohit has been a revelation, veteran Mohammed Shami too has been among the wickets. However, skipper Hardik Pandya hasn't really fired with the ball, having picked up only one wicket so far.

Led by Rashid Khan, Gujarat's spin department looks potent with fellow Afghan wrist spinner Noor Ahmad and Jayant Thakur delivering under pressure against LSG.

If Jayant conceded just seven in his last two overs, Noor took two wickets for just five runs in his final two overs to set up the win for GT the other day.

GT batters have chased down totals but they have been sometimes guilty of not being able to push the score in middle overs.

While Wriddhiman Saha and Shubman Gill have scored runs at the top and Hardik top-scored in their last match, GT were about 10-15 runs short against LSG, mainly due to their slow batting in middle overs, something the team will need to address.

# They were trying to give me farewell: Dhoni about Kolkata crowd



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Mahendra Singh Dhoni believes the Kolkata crowd probably wanted to give him a fitting "farewell" as yellow fever gripped the iconic Eden Gardens during their IPL match here, with speculations rife that the talismanic former India skipper will draw curtains to his illustrious cricketing career after the ongoing edition.

Dhoni said the Eden Gardens will witness the familiar purple hue in Kolkata Knight Riders' next IPL game, after the crowd on Sunday turned in huge numbers wearing Chennai Super Kings' yellow jersey as a mark of respect towards the iconic stumper-batter, in what could be his last appearance on the hallowed turf.

Having first stepped on this iconic ground as a teenager, who played Ranji Trophy for Bihar, Kolkata's favourite son-in-law has a manic fan base as one saw

Eden Gardens filled with yellow jersey, anticipating that they might not see the special man again.

"I will just say thanks for the support, they came in big numbers. Most of these guys will come in a KKR jersey next time. They are trying to give me a farewell, so thanks a lot to the crowd," Dhoni kept it open-ended even as he took a picture with all groundsman, one last time.

CSK out-batted KKR by 49 runs in a high-scoring IPL match, and Dhoni was all praise for his bowlers as they executed the plans well despite boundary being short on one side.

"Fast bowlers are doing their job, so are spinners in the middle. The wicket was short on one side so we needed to get early wickets and keep the pressure. They have plenty of power hitters, so we had to give the respect to the opposition."

CSK is hamstrung by

injuries to first team players like Ben Stokes and Deepak Chahar but that's the least in Dhoni's mind.

"I have a clear funda. If someone is injured, he can't do anything. You just move on and motivate the youngsters to perform. We have been fortunate that all the guys coming in are performing," he said.

Ajinkya Rahane, who slammed a 29-ball 71-run innings, has got a new-found rhythm in T20 cricket after joining CSK and Dhoni feels that he has been given complete freedom to operate in the manner he wants to. The results are there for all to see.

"We realise the potential of someone when we allow him to bat the way he bats. We give him the freedom, give him the best position. In a team environment, someone has to sacrifice his slot to allow others to get more comfortable, and allow the team to succeed," he explained.

# CSK gave me opportunity to express myself: Rahane

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Ajinkya Rahane has credited talisman MS Dhoni's leadership for his transformation at Chennai Super Kings as the veteran Indian batter continued to wow fans with his never-seen-before power hitting in this season's Indian Premier League.

Rahane slammed his second half-century of the season, an eye-popping 29-ball 71 not out, to lead CSK's 49-run rout of KKR in their IPL match here on Sunday.

"The only thing I tell you... I really enjoyed my knock, really happy that we won this match," Rahane said at the post-match press conference.

Giving credit to Dhoni, Rahane said he just needed an



opportunity, something the World Cup-winning skipper gave him to rediscover his form.

"You get a chance to learn many things when you play under Mahi Bhai (MS Dhoni). As a batter and cricketer, you always want to grow," he said.

"The way the format is evolving, I feel as an individual you have to keep growing and developing your skills."

Rahane has 209 runs from five innings with an average of 52.25 this season. And his tournament strike-rate — 199.04 — is the highest among specialist batters.

"My preparation has always been good. I always tried to improve myself, develop one or two new shots."

"Now I'm able to show my shots because of my preparation so far and the opportunity given by CSK," said Rahane.

# SCG unveils Tendulkar gate on his 50th birthday

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Honouring Sachin Tendulkar on his 50th birthday, a gate named after Indian batting legend was unveiled at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground here on Monday.

Tendulkar, who turned 50 on Monday, scored 785 runs, including three centuries with a highest score of 241 not out (in 2004) in five Tests at the SCG, which he described as his favourite cricket ground outside India.

Tendulkar scored those runs at an incredible average of 157.

"The Sydney Cricket Ground has been my favourite ground away from India. I have had some great memories at the SCG right from my first tour of Australia in 1991-92," Tendulkar said in a statement issued

by the SCG. Another gate in the name of Brian Lara was also unveiled to mark 30 years since the West Indian legend's innings of 277 at the SCG.

The gates were unveiled by SCG and Venues NSW Chairman Rod McGeoch and CEO Kerrie Mather, as well as Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley.

All visiting cricket players will take to the field through the Lara-Tendulkar Gates, situated between the Members Pavilion's away dressing room and the Noble Bradman Messenger Stand.

A plaque was also erected, describing the Lara-Tendulkar Gates, the achievements of the two legends and their statistics at the SCG.

"It is a great honour to have the



gates used by all visiting cricketers to access the field of play at the SCG named after me and my good friend Brian," Tendulkar said.

"I would like to thank the team at the SCG and Cricket Australia and for this kind gesture. I look forward to visiting the SCG soon."

Tendulkar and Lara thus joined Donald Bradman, Alan Davidson and Arthur Morris by having a set of gates named in their honour at the SCG.

The Australian cricket team enters the field via the Don Bradman Gates between the Members and Ladies Pavilions, while the Arthur Morris and Alan Davidson Gates front Driver Avenue.

A special stand will be unveiled at the Sharjah cricket stadium in Tendulkar's honour as well.

# Tendulkar was role model for all: Kaif

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sachin Tendulkar not just inspired many with his batting, but he was also a 'role model' off-the-field, former India middle-order batter Mohammad Kaif said.

As well wishes poured in from all around the world for Tendulkar on his 50th birthday on Monday, Kaif recalled a small story how the Little Master wowed him with his meticulous approach, way back in 2002.

"I remember when I made my ODI debut in Kanpur, there was a sports day celebration at school and someone asked me

to get a message from Sachin Tendulkar," Kaif said. Kaif requested the cricket icon to write "two lines" for the children, and in turn he came with a 15-line message.

"Back in those days, you did not have a mobile phone with you, that you could record and send across anything. So, he wrote a letter himself," Kaif continued.

"I told him, 'Paaji you just need to write two lines', but he went on to write as many as 15 lines to wish the school kids."

"This highlighted the fact that if you ask him to do even a small favour, he would do it in



a proper way," Kaif added.

"He was a great player but an equally humble person. We say that when a tree starts bearing fruits, it bends down. Sachin saab has been like that for me in my career," Kaif, who is commenting for Star Sports in the ongoing IPL, said.

"We all were lucky to have got to play with him and we learned a lot from him. He was a role model for everyone; not just me, but for (MS) Dhoni, (Virat) Kohli, Rohit Sharma and they all take his name.

"India was lucky to have unearthed such a great player and I want to thank him," Kaif signed off.

# Impact player rule allows me, Faf to take care of our primary skills: Harshal

IANS ■ BENGALURU

In Royal Challengers Bangalore's seven-run win over Rajasthan Royals at the M Chinnayya Stadium on Sunday, fast bowler Harshal Patel was used as an impact player as he was unable to bat due to an injury and came in during bowling innings when Faf du Plessis, after striking 62 with the bat, did not feature as a fielder. Harshal believes the impact player rule has been helpful for Bangalore in using him and du Plessis in their primary roles in the playing eleven. "The way we've been

able to use Faf as a batter and myself as a bowler in this game has been really good for us."

"Both of us are carrying injuries which don't allow us to execute one of our skills: for him, it's fielding; for me, it's batting. The Impact (player) rule allows us to just go out and take care of our primary skills," he said after the game ended. In a successful defence of 189, Bangalore were able to enforce a slowdown from overs 10-16, giving away only 37 runs as Rajasthan could make only 182/6. Harshal led Bangalore's charge in the middle overs, picking 3/32 while left-

arm pacer David Willey shone with 1/26 in his four overs.

"I think the trend that we've seen here in the last few games is when the ball is hard and new it is a little easier to score runs but when the ball loses its shine and hardness, it becomes difficult to get the ball away."

"So even before we went into the field, the conversation was, even if they have a very good partnership up front, we're going to try and bowl back-to-back dot balls and be as aggressive as we can because we know how difficult it becomes in the latter half of the innings," added Harshal.