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PM MODI'S SPECIAL BOND WITH J&K

WORLD 8
EU BECOMING MILITARISED NOW, LIKE NATO: LAVROV

MONEY 10
STOCK MARKETS RISE FOR THIRD STRAIGHT SESSION

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY APRIL 27, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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CSK TO FACE ROYALS IN IPL 2023 TODAY
11 SPORT

CAPSULE

MODI TO ATTEND QUAD MEET IN OZ ON MAY 24
New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will join US President Joe Biden and his counterparts from Australia and Japan at a summit of the Quad leaders in Sydney on May 24.

CABBY HELD FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT ON 6-YEAR-OLD
New Delhi: A six-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by her cab driver while driving her from school. The accused driver, Jaitpur resident Mohd Azhar (30), has been arrested.

US N-SUBS IN S KOREA 1ST TIME IN 40 YEARS
Washington: Presidents Joe Biden and Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday will sign an agreement that includes plans to have US nuclear-armed submarines dock in South Korea for the first time in more than 40 years. P9

157 new nursing colleges, medical devices policy get Cabinet approval

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the establishment of 157 nursing colleges at a cost of ₹1,570 crore in co-location with existing medical colleges. These new colleges will be producing 15,700 nursing graduates per year. The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also approved National Medical Devices Policy with an aim to increase domestic production and reduce imports of such equipment.

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10 cops killed in Naxal IED blast in Dantewada

PM condemns attack; Shah talks to CM, offers all help

PNS ■ DANTEWADA/NEW DELHI

In the biggest strike by the Maoists in Chhattisgarh in the last two years, ten police personnel and a civilian driver were killed after Naxals blew up a vehicle which was part of a convoy carrying security personnel in Aranpur police station area in Dantewada district between 1 pm and 1.30 pm on Wednesday, an official said.

The blast, carried out using an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) containing an estimated 40 kg of explosive material, took place when a team of the State police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has condemned the attack. "Their sacrifice will always be remembered. My condolences to the bereaved families," Modi tweeted.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Baghel following the incident. "Anguished by the cowardly attack on the Chhattisgarh police at Dantewada. Have



Security personnel at the Maoist blast site in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Wednesday

PTI

spoken to Chhattisgarh's Chief Minister and assured all possible assistance to the state government. My condolences to the bereaved family members of the martyred Jawans," Shah tweeted.

DRG personnel are mostly recruited from the local tribal population and trained to combat Maoists. Sometimes surrendered Maoists are also recruited in the DRG. The area where the blast took place is around 450 km from Raipur.

The Multi-Utility Vehicle (MUV) had been rented by the security personnel. Reinforcement was rushed to the spot and the bodies of the

deceased were brought to Dantewada, the IGP said.

Security personnel have launched a search operation in the area, he added. Another senior police official posted in Dantewada said that around 200 security personnel had set out from Dantewada district headquarters on Tuesday night after getting information about the presence of Maoists belonging to the Darbha division in the area.

On Wednesday morning, there was an exchange of fire between the patrolling team and Naxals near Nahadi village, around seven km from Aranpur, following which two

suspected Naxals were held, he said on the condition of anonymity.

Subsequently, security personnel were returning to their base in a convoy of vehicles, he said. There was a gap of around 100-150 metres between vehicles, and the Naxals targeted the second vehicle in the convoy, he said. After the blast, the security personnel in the leading and following vehicles took positions and opened fire on both sides of the jungle.

Visuals from the spot showed a huge crater across the road at the blast site, almost 10-feet deep.

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250 Indians stranded in Sudan reach home

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/PANAMA CITY

First flight carrying 250 Indian nationals evacuated from war-torn Sudan landed in Delhi on Wednesday night. The IAF C-17 transport aircraft had left for Jeddah on Wednesday evening from the Hindon airbase, Ghaziabad to bring back Indians from there to Delhi.

Having launched "Operation Kaveri" to evacuate its nationals from strife-torn Sudan, India on Wednesday brought out over 250 citizens in two military transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, after a naval ship rescued another 278 citizens from the strife-torn country. The total number of Indians evacuated so far from Sudan stands at around 530, according to official data.

Moreover, stepping up the tempo of evacuation, an Indian Navy ship INS Teg is now stationed at Port Sudan to bring back Indians from there to Jeddah. INS Sumedha has already disembarked 278 Indians from there to Jeddah.



Indians evacuated from violence-hit Sudan under Operation Kaveri on their arrival at the IGI Airport in New Delhi on Wednesday night

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Another ship INS Tarkash is in the vicinity to take part in the operations there, they added.

India has set up a transit facility at Jeddah and all the Indians have been taken to the Saudi Arabian city after their evacuation from Sudan. Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan reached Jeddah to oversee the evacuation mission. The first batch of 278 Indians was evacuated by Indian Navy's ship INS Sumedha on Tuesday.

Hours later, the first C130J transport aircraft of the IAF landed at Port Sudan to bring back more Indians. It was followed by evacuation by another C130J. From Jeddah, India is set to bring back the Indians home in military transport aircraft of the IAF.

According to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, the first C-130J aircraft brought to Jeddah 121 passengers, the second plane evacuated 135.

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AAP's Shelly, Aaley get 2nd term as MCD Mayor, Deputy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP's Shelly Oberoi became the Mayor of Delhi for the second consecutive term after BJP's mayoral candidate Shikha Rai withdrew her nomination as soon as the House met for the mayoral polls on Wednesday. BJP's candidate for the Deputy Mayor's post Soni Pandey, too, withdrew her nomination minutes before the voting process began, paving the way for a second term as Deputy Mayor for AAP's Aaley Mohammad Iqbal.

Rai told the House that she took the step because the election to the standing committee — the apex decision-making body of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) — has not been conducted.

The AAP claimed that the BJP candidates withdrew their nominations "minutes before voting, fearing defeat".

The mayoral election in Delhi was supposed to be a direct contest between incumbent Oberoi and Rai. The AAP is the ruling party in the MCD.

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AAP Mayor candidate Shelly Oberoi and Deputy Mayor candidate Aaley Mohammad Iqbal flash the victory sign after the mayoral elections, at Civic Centre in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjana Dhillon | Pioneer

Gunman enters classroom in Bengal; DSP pins him down

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Two opposite sides of itself on two successive days. While on Tuesday several policemen were seen fleeing for their lives after a mob attacked Kaliaganj Police Station and set it ablaze, on Wednesday a brave officer put his life at risk and saved the lives of scores of students taken hostage by heavily-armed man at Muchia Anchal Chandra Mohan High School at Old Malda.

A scene, that usually plays out in the US, unfolded in West Bengal on Wednesday afternoon when a man, later identified by locals as Raju Vallabh, carrying two loaded 9 mm pistols, two bottles of petrol bombs and two knives, entered a packed classroom and took its students hostage.

He threatened to blow himself up if action was not taken on his complaints that he had been bringing to the notice of authorities in writing, including the State secretariat. "Even as he was reading



A gunman barges into a classroom of a high school in West Bengal's Malda district on Wednesday

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out his grievances, while keeping his loaded guns pointed at the students in the classroom and the policemen standing outside it, DSP Azharuddin Khan leapt inside the room and in a flash seized the gun and overpowered man without caring for his life," locals praising the brave officer said.

The students were immediately taken out of the classroom to safety. "The situation has been taken under control and we have arrested the person," the SP said.

The Bengali teacher who was present in the class said, "There were 80 students of combined Class VII A and B sections in the room. Suddenly the gunman entered the room

and pointed the gun at me, told me to go out and ordered the students not to create trouble. Fortunately, police came and the students were rescued."

Sources said that the man had mental issues and he was reportedly disturbed ever since his wife, a local BJP panchayat member who had won on a BJP ticket, had joined the TMC. However, the man alleged, "My wife was kidnapped by powerful people and repeated letters yielded no result ... so I have thought about blowing myself up along with many others."

Bomb hoax at DPS

New Delhi: Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, Delhi, received a bomb threat early on Wednesday morning via email. This is the second school in the national Capital to get a bomb threat in a fortnight. No suspicious object was found during an intensive search on the premises of the school, police said. See P3

SC relaxes ban on activities in eco-sensitive zone of forests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday modified its 2022 order which directed that each protected forest such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries must have an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of one kilometre.

The court was hearing a plea filed by the Central Government contending that if the directions are not modified a severe hardship would be caused to the millions of people living in ESZ.

Continued on Page 2

War on graft to go on even if my rivals join hands: Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Wednesday that his government's action against corruption has made some people angry but he will not turn back in this fight against graft and nepotism, however big an alliance his rivals form against him.

Those angry and making noise want to "destroy" the honest system his government has created in the last nine years, the Prime Minister said in his address at a Republic TV programme, but they will not succeed in their "conspiracies" because their fight is not with him but against the common people.

His remarks came amid a renewed push in the opposition ranks to join hands against the ruling BJP in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The Congress and a host of regional parties have accused his government of using probe agencies to target their leaders and also of "weakening" democratic institutions.

Modi said his government's use of technology has weeded out leakage in government schemes and other expenditures to the tunes of tens of thousands of crores of rupees, stopping the source of corruption for some people. What else will they do if not abuse him, he said.

Noting that his government's use of JAM (Jan Dhan

bank accounts, Aadhaar and mobile phones) axed 10 crore fake beneficiaries of various welfare schemes, the prime minister accused the previous Congress government of sending money to people who did not exist and whose number was bigger than the combined population of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana. This was a source of corruption and has been stopped now, he added.

There are no half measures and isolated approach in the fight against corruption now, he said, asserting that an integrated and institutionalised mechanism is in place.

"However big an alliance they make, let all corrupt people, all 'parivarvadi' come on a dais, Modi is not going to turn back from his path. I have pledged to rid the country of corruption and nepotism and this will continue. I seek your blessings," he told the audience.

His government has stopped the means for some people to make money through corruption, making them angry, Modi said. His rivals would have succeeded in destroying him if their fight was only with him but they are against the common people of this country, he added.

Modi also said he risked his "political capital" during the Covid-19 outbreak when he chose the path of self-reliance for manufacturing vaccines against the virus when many supported import of jabs.

Continued on Page 2

Mann Ki Baat has won people's trust: Aamir

Shah: Modi turns every challenge into opportunity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has built a trusted relationship with citizens with his "Mann Ki Baat", said actor Aamir Khan on Wednesday, calling the monthly radio programme "a people's movement". "People want to believe in him (Modi) and follow him. They trust him and he has built this relationship with the public. Trust does not come automatically, it has to be earned. And clearly he has earned it,"

Aamir said at a panel discussion called "Awahan Se Jan Andolan".

Aamir was in Delhi to attend the "National Conclave on Mann Ki Baat @100", a day-long programme inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar with Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur as the guest of honour, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah as a speaker.

Shah said PM Modi turns every challenge into an opportunity, a trait which he used to successfully wade the country through the Covid-19 pandemic with the active cooperation of 130 crore Indians.

"Many foreigners asked me what is the secret behind India's success in tackling the Covid-

19 pandemic. I will tell you the secret today. Modi is such a leader who turns every challenge into an opportunity. I have seen this since the Gujarat earthquake in 2001."

He said on an average, 23 crore people listen to the every episode while 100 crore people have tuned into the programme at least once. The Home Minister also released a ₹5 postage stamp and a ₹100 coin to commemorate the 100 episode of the Mann Ki Baat.

Aamir said Modi is invested in the "Mann Ki Baat" programme at a personal level.

The 100th episode of the monthly radio programme is scheduled for April 30. PM Modi started the monthly radio programme in 2014.

Continued on Page 2



Bollywood actors Aamir Khan and Raveena Tandon with music composer Ricky Kej during the inauguration of a national conclave on 'Mann Ki Baat @100', in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

UP CIVIC POLLS

BJP gives tickets to 367 Muslims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With an eye on the Muslim vote bank, the Bharatiya Janata Party has given over 367 tickets to Muslim candidates in the urban local bodies elections...

Pasmanda community, has been inducted as a minister of state. In the first phase of election, to be held on May 4, the BJP has given tickets to over 200 Muslims while in the second phase of election on May 11, 167 Muslims will contest elections on BJP's 'kamal' (lotus) election symbol...

chairpersons and 18 nagar panchayat members. Mehnaz Jahan from Tando and Mushrat Mujib from Rampur nagar palika parishad are the party candidates.

In the 100-member Vidhan Parishad, there are four Muslim MLCs and all of them are from BJP. The SP, BSP and Congress which call themselves as the protectors of Muslims have not given tickets to Muslims in the Upper House of the state legislature...

Modi pays last tribute to Badal, terms demise as 'personal loss'

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid floral tributes to five-time Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal at the Shiromani Akali Dal office here.



in Muktsar where cremation will take place Thursday afternoon. Modi had on Tuesday described the demise of Badal as a "personal loss" and said he was a colossal figure of Indian politics who contributed greatly to the nation.

RSS: Parkash Singh Badal carved special place in public life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The RSS on Wednesday condoled the demise of Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch Parkash Singh Badal and said that he will be fondly remembered for a long time for his qualities.

IT notice to mafia-politician Mukhtar Ansari seeks benami assets' details

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his family face further trouble as the Lucknow unit of the Income Tax Department has served notice on him seeking details of 'benami properties' procured by him and his associates in other persons' names.



The Income Tax Department came to know during investigation that Ganesh Dutt Mishra's annual income was very less and he could not pay this much amount.

it has also come to light that Mohd Suhaib Mujahid is also a shareholder-cum-director in the company. Sources in the Income Tax Department confirmed that the company's name also figured in the Mukhtar Ansari's ambulance case...

AAP's Shelly, Aaley get 2nd term as MCD...

Later, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal met with the newly-elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor and also tweeted a congratulatory message to them. Kejriwal tweeted, "Congratulations Shelly and Aley on again becoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor, this time unopposed. Best wishes to both. People have huge expectations from us. Work hard to meet their expectations."

157 new nursing colleges...

From Page 1

Addressing the media, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the new 157 nursing colleges' aim is to provide quality, affordable and equitable nursing education in the country and enhance the number of nursing professionals.

nologies will also be explored in these Nursing colleges and will be adopted as per relevancy to ensure energy efficiency and reduction in carbon footprint," said Mandaviya.

Haryana Police arrests 5 for selling illegal weapons

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Haryana Police has arrested five persons, three from Gurugram and two from Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh who were allegedly involved in manufacturing, selling and buying illegal weapons, police said.

and Narender Sharma, Mohit, Uday and Mukesh were arrested from Gurugram on different occasions while Ravi, who supplied the illegal weapon to the trio was arrested from Aligarh on Mohit's disclosure statement.

Ravi's disclosure statement police nabbed Narender, a Gun manufacturer kingpin, who was running an illegal factory in his house in UP's Aligarh.

All the suspects were involved in the illegal arms trade. The police team of Sector-50 police station from Gurugram with the help of the Aligarh Police raided the illegal arms manufacturing factory running at Narender's house and nabbed him," Nitish Aggarwal, DCP (east) said.

A case has been registered in this connection against the accused in the concerned Aligarh police station and the Sector-50 police station in Gurugram. Further investigation into the case is underway so that the names of others involved in this network can be unearthed," he said.

Mann Ki Baat...

From Page 1

"It's a very important piece of communication that the leader of the country does with the people, discussing important issues, putting forward thoughts, giving suggestions, leading..."

"That is how you lead by communication. You tell your people what you're looking at, how you're seeing the future, how you want your support in that. (It's an) important communication that happens in 'Mann Ki Baat'," Khan said. Asked if Modi only talks about his "mann ki baat" (what he wants to talk about) in the radio programme, the Bollywood star said, "I think it's his prerogative because he's doing it... It is his method of hearing what the people have to say connecting with people across the country. I think it's a very important initiative."

take people into confidence about what he is planning so that the people also know how they should conduct themselves. They get a vision, they get a direction to follow. And that is something which is a huge concept and is actually the start of a huge people's movement."

The Government argued that it has already issued guidelines for declaration of ESZs on February 9, 2011, around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries which were framed after consulting the National Board for Wildlife and hence, was seeking the modification of the June 3 last year court order on demarcation of such zones.

250...

From Page 1 "A second C-130 flight reaches Jeddah bringing 135 passengers from Sudan. #OperationKaveri moving steadily forward," he tweeted.

War on graft to go on...

He took a jibe at those who lobbied for imports and wondered under whose pressure they did so. "I risked my political capital in a big way. I did it only for the country," he said, adding that he could have emptied the treasury by opting for imports but did not choose such a path.

Sudan is witnessing fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last 12 days that has reportedly left around 400 people dead. More than 3,000 Indians are living in Sudan. India stepped up its efforts to evacuate the Indians from Sudan as a 72-hour truce was agreed to between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) following intense negotiations.

10 cops killed...

The MUV was completely destroyed while bodies covered with plastic sheets were also seen in the video. During a search of the spot, around 150 metre-long wire connected to the trigger of the command IED was recovered.

Jeddah and naval ship INS Suredha at Port Sudan as part of its contingency plans to evacuate the Indians. Apart from the Sudanese authorities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Indian embassy in Sudan are in regular touch with the UN, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and US among others.

DJB ex-CEO gets notice for usurping land of heritage site

RAJESH KUMAR/RAKESH KUMAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI



The Vigilance Directorate of the Delhi Government has issued a show cause notice to 2007-batch IAS officer and the then CEO of Delhi Jal Board, Udit Prakash Rai for alleged misconduct in demolition of a heritage site in the Lajpat Nagar area, construction of residential accommodation and their illegal allotments. The vigilance department has asked him to submit his reply within two weeks.

The demolished site, "Mahal as well as Gateway" are listed monuments of the "List of Mohammedan & Hindu Monuments" as compiled by the Archaeological Survey of

India (ASI). The Mahal (Palace), located at Bhagola village (old location name) having current location near DTC Bus Terminal, Lal Vihar, Shiv Mandir Road, Lajpat Nagar (East of Lajpat Nagar-1),

belongs to Pathan Period, and is constructed of brick masonry and red sandstone. The main feature of the structure is a three-arched dalan on the north and south, each of which is flanked by two compart-

ments at either wing. "The roof of the (South)-southern dalan together with the red stone chhajja, has now disappeared," the show cause notice highlighted. The original name of the village Bhagola is Khizrabad which is supposed by Sayyid Ahmad Khan to have been the city of Khizr Khan, the first of the Sayyid Kings, founded by him about the year 1418 A.D. No remains of this city are now in existence except the palace under notice, which might possibly have been connected with it.

Instead of handing over the site to Art, Culture and Languages Department of Delhi government for declaring the monument as protected monument in terms of the Delhi Ancient And Historical Monuments Act, 2004, CEO DJB has taken steps to get this area allotted to him as his residence with the connivance of staff, reads the show cause notice served to Rai. In January, a joint inspection was conducted on the site that revealed the violations of the ancient monument and only one structure, the gateway could be identified on the site and the Mahal was missing.

The "Mahal of Pathan period" was allegedly demolished as per the directions of Udit Prakash Rai, CEO (DJB) with the help of DJB engineers Virender Kumar, Chief Engineer (W) Project-I, Deepak Srivastava, ACE (C)-I, Rajiv Sharma, EE (C) Dr-II, Anoop Goyal, AE (C) and Lalit Gulyani, JE (C) C/O EE (EAP) II. In its show cause notice, the vigilance department said that demolition of

part of the entire structure of "Mahal of Pathan Period" was, in violation of GNCTD notification dated 25/02/2020 and Notification of Govt, of India dated 09.02.2004, wherein violation of the Delhi Building Bye-Laws, 1983.

"Udit Prakash Rai, was well aware of the fact that there exists a Historical Monument which belongs to Pathan period and is mentioned at SI. No. 17, Vol. IV in the "List of Mohammedan and Hindu Monuments" in Delhi prepared & compiled by Archeological Survey of India in the first quarter of 20th Century," it said.

The notice further said that violation of the of General Pool Residential accommodation by occupying a bungalow of size about 5500 sq. m. which is having size of more than 94 houses of Type V(A) each having size of 106 sq. m. and a multiple of 94x in case multi-storied are constructed on that plot.

And a built up area of approx. 700 Sq. meters. Even in cost of Rs. 4 Crores, more than 20 Types VA houses would have been constructed even @Rs.2000/sq. ft.

Rai was eligible only for Type-V accommodation with a unit area of 144 Square Meters only but he was provided a 670 sq mt house with an open area of 5,500 sq m on the demolished heritage site excluding the servant quarter and constructed at a cost of Rs 2.88 crore.

Ceiling of CM's house built in 1942 collapsed thrice, says AAP

Posts videos of debris on floor as BJP, Cong accuse CM of extravagance

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A political row has erupted between the AAP and the BJP-Congress over Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence getting a face-lift at a reported cost of Rs 45 crore. While the BJP and the Congress accused him of extravagant hypocrisy, the AAP rebutted them with videos of crumbling ceilings in the CM's official bungalow. AAP MLA Naresh Balyan also shared a video in which debris from a

broken roof could be seen lying on the floor of the bedroom of the CM's residence. Accusing the BJP of diverting attention from key issues the AAP said that the CM's official residence was built in 1942 and the roof had collapsed thrice. Following the roof collapse incidents, the Public Works Department suggested a new house be built and this was done, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said at a press conference. "The house has been rebuilt at an expenditure of Rs 30 crore," he said. "There have been attempts to divert attention from key issues such as the Pulwama attack and the Adani matter by discussing the chief minister's residence. It was an 80-year-old house constructed in 1942. There had been not one but three instances of the roof col-

lapsing," he said. In one, the roof of the room Kejriwal's parents stay in collapsed; in another, it was the chief minister's bedroom; and in the third, the ceiling of the room he meets people in gave way. Singh also hit out at Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena. He said Saxena's house only underwent repairs and Rs 15 crore was spent. "Former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani's aircraft cost Rs 191 crore while Rs 65 crore was spent on buying an aircraft for Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan," he claimed. Earlier addressing a press conference, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said Kejriwal, who leads the AAP, had betrayed his promise of promoting honesty and simplicity when he entered politics.

Need initial probe before filing FIR against WFI chief: Delhi Police to SC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that some kind of preliminary probe was needed before it can proceed with the registration of an FIR over sexual harassment allegations levelled by seven women wrestlers against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Delhi Police, that if the top court felt that an FIR was to be lodged straightaway then it may be done. "However, the police felt there are some issues which needed preliminary inquiry before the registration of the FIR," the top law officer said. "You know Solicitor we also don't do something without hearing the other side and unless we have some material. Please furnish the material which you have on Friday...We took it up as this involves a minor etc," the CJ said. The law officer said let an impression be not created that the FIR has not been registered despite the court asking for it. The bench took note of the submissions of Mehta, and said Delhi Police may put forth their views on registration of the FIR on April 28 when the plea of wrestlers will be heard. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the wrestlers, said he would be filing some additional material on the matter. The top court on Tuesday issued notices to the Delhi Police and others on a plea by the seven women wrestlers, saying the matter is "serious" and requires its consideration. Several national award winning wrestlers have been protesting at Jantar Mantar here demanding the government make public the findings of an oversight panel that investigated the sexual harassment allegations against Singh, also a BJP MP.

Protesting wrestlers want to meet Modi

Wrestlers have turned protest site into their training centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday expressed their desire to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The wrestlers said that after meeting them, the prime minister would be able to understand their pain. The top wrestlers have turned the protest site into their training centre on the fourth day of their protest. The grapplers were seen doing wrestling exercises. Vinesh was training with Sangita Phogat,



Wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik at a press conference during their protest at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Ranjan Dimri Pioneer

whereas Sakshi was helped by her husband Satyawart Kadian, the Arjuna awardee wrestler. Meanwhile, a physio was assisting Bajrang on the mat, before the Olympic bronze medallist

did some stretching. Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik and Olympic champion shooter Abhinav Bindra extended their support to protesting wrestlers.

DU prepares Panchang

New Delhi: In a first, Delhi University has prepared a Panchang — ancient Indian knowledge system-based almanac — for the revival and propagation of India's intellectual heritage. The official said the Panchang is more advanced than the Western calendar and will help in the "dissemination of ancient Indian knowledge". Panchang is the annual compilation of planetary moments. In simple terms, "Panchanga" means the day, nakshatra (star), tithi, yoga and karana every day, the official said. The Panchang will be launched on April 28.

Chairman of the Value Addition Courses Committee of DU, Niranjan Kumar said, "DU is releasing a Panchang for the dissemination of ancient Indian knowledge. Much more detailed and informative than the Western calendar, the Panchang contains all festivals and other important dates as well as tithi, vaar, karan, nakshatra and yog." He noted the Panchang will be a useful first step in introducing students to the rich corpus of Indian knowledge tradition. "Unfortunately, it is disappearing from our homes and the minds of the

youth. In such a situation. The historic centenary almanac will be provided free of cost to every person coming to the programme," he added. The Value Addition Courses Committee of the DU, in the centenary year of the university, is organising a programme on 'Panchang and Indian Knowledge Tradition' at 3 pm on April 28 at the Convention Hall of the varsity. A special lecture on important topics like the significance of the Panchang and the precision of mathematical calculations found therein is also scheduled to be organised.

Bomb hoax at Mathura Road DPS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, received a bomb threat early on Wednesday morning. Information about a bomb being placed in the school was received through email. This is the second school in the national capital which received a bomb threat in the past 15 days. According to police, no suspicious object was found during an intensive search on the premises of the Delhi Public School in Mathura Road.



Delhi Police at the DPS Mathura Road after the school received a bomb threat via email, at Nizamuddin area in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Ranjan Dimri Pioneer

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Rajesh Deo, after reviewing the situation, said the bomb threat was received on the official email of the school administration and the police were informed around 8 am. Local police personnel, a bomb disposal squad, a dog squad and a SWAT team were immediately sent to the spot, he said. "It was a challenge... All the buildings on the

school premises were checked and no suspicious object was found. The situation is normal. We also searched the outline areas of the school premises," the police officer added. As the news of the bomb threat spread, panic-stricken parents gathered outside the school and took their children

home. The school was evacuated and the fire department was informed about the threat around 8 am. A fire tender was rushed to the spot, officials said. The Indian School in Delhi's Sadiq Nagar had received bomb threats twice - in April this year and in November 2022.

MCD planning to set up stray dog shelters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is considering to set up stray dog shelters amid an increase in dog bite incidents in the national capital. According to MCD, 75 per cent of the canines have been immunised against rabies and sterilised. A proposal in this regard is in the nascent stage but several meetings are underway. The aim is to ensure 100 per cent sterilisation of stray dogs in the city. Officials said that after being sterilised and immunised against rabies, the canines are released in the same area from where they had been picked up. "There has been an increase in dog bite incidents in the national capital in the past six months. People are very upset with the menace of dogs. We are looking into preparing a policy in this regard. We have

held several meetings and are considering building shelters for these dogs," officials said. However, the plan is being opposed by some "animal lovers", according to another MCD official. "There is opposition to the plan but we are hopeful that we would be able to find a way to end the menace of stray dogs," he added. As per the data provided by the MCD, the civic authorities sterilised nearly 7,000 stray dogs in January and February and more dogs are being picked up daily for sterilisation and then released back to the same area. Recently, a stray dog was thrashed to death by a group of people in central Delhi's Karol Bagh area. The canine had attacked and bitten several residents of the area in the past. On Monday, a 14-year-old boy was injured in a stray dog attack in southwest Delhi's Rangpuri.

Marriott Hotel staff harassed, held me hostage, says woman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 55-year-old woman, who works as a legal advisor for a women business organisation, has accused the staff of JW Marriott Hotel in Aerocity of holding her hostage for hours and harassing her when she complained of poor services and sought time to settle the hotel bill. The hotel has denied all allegations as baseless. "The JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity strongly refutes the allegations made against the hotel in the

concerned matter and are cooperating with the relevant authorities in their investigation," a spokesperson from JW Marriott told PTI. The spokesperson further said, "We operate with the highest levels of integrity, ethics and values that extend to all our partners, associates and guests. Given the matter is currently being handled by the police, we are unable to provide any further information." The woman, who doesn't want to be named, said in her complaint to police that the hotel staff verbally berated

her and held her captive under the watch of two male employees, who constantly followed her in the hotel. "Even when I went to the lavatory, they kept waiting outside," she wrote in her complaint, based on which the Indra Gandhi International (IGI) Airport Police Station lodged an FIR. According to the FIR, written in Hindi, the dispute arose over payment of a bill for an event held on December 26, 2022 for which the organisation had booked 94 rooms and halls in the hotel.

Bridge on Barapulla drain to shut for 20 days

New Delhi: The carriageway going towards Nizamuddin station of the bridge over the Barapulla drain will remain closed for 20 days from April 28 for repairs, the Delhi Traffic Police said on Wednesday. Commuters are advised to take specified routes from April 28 to ensure smooth traffic management in the area, it said. The police have also advised the

commuters to follow directions of its personnel in the area to avoid inconvenience. The commuters coming from Neela Gumbad to reach Hazrat Nizamuddin station via Nikku Chowk and the Rajdoot traffic signal will have to take opposite carriageway from the left turn near Preet Palace hotel, according to the advisory. "The commuters coming from the

Nizamuddin railway station to reach Neela Gumbad will have to take a right turn from the traffic signal near Nizamuddin police post on the drain first to reach the Mathura Road T-point and then turn right in the service road towards Neela Gumbad and then take main carriageway of Mathura Road towards Neela Gumbad from the traffic signal," it said. SR

5 held for cheating, siphoning ₹2.38 cr insurance money

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have arrested five people, including two former employees of a leading insurance firm, for allegedly cheating 22 policy holders and withdrawing Rs 2.38 crore that remained with the insurer unclaimed either as surrendered amount or after maturity. A senior police official said one of the accused, Rohit Kumar Aggarwal (28), who worked with Max Life Insurance as a senior executive, had access to the company data. Aggarwal used to identify the policy holders whose surrendered and maturity amount remained unclaimed with the company for an

unusually long time. He would give the details of the target policy holders to Sujet Kumar Mishra (41), who too was an employee of the insurance firm. Mishra would pass on the information to Chandan Jain (41), who would give the details to Prem Parkash (37) to open new bank accounts in the name of these policy holders. Vikas (30), the fifth accused, worked at an Aadhaar Centre and he helped the gang in updating Aadhaar details in the new bank accounts. Officials said the case has exposed the vulnerability of the process of updating personal details at Aadhaar centres for misuse. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations) Prashant

Gautam said Prakash would lure poor people, mostly those from slum clusters near Rana Pratap Bagh, and take them to an Aadhaar centre to get their names and addresses changed to the names and addresses of the policy holders. "Vikas, who worked at the Aadhaar centre at SBI, Gujranwala Town, got these changes updated without taking any relevant documents after taking Rs 1,000-1,500 per case. "Thereafter, these people applied for PAN cards and voter cards on the basis of the updated Aadhaar. After getting PAN and voter cards, their bank accounts were opened. Many of these accounts were opened digitally using e-Aadhaar authentication

process," Gautam said. He said Prakash would give cheque or passbooks of the bank accounts displaying the names of the policy holders to Jain, who passed on these documents to Aggarwal through Mishra. Aggarwal, who at the time was an employee of the insurance firm, would process the documentation and send them from his official email Id to the data entry team to initiate the refund process. The refund was received in the new bank accounts opened by Prakash and his associates, the DCP said. Most of the amount was then transferred to the bank accounts opened in the name of Rinku Sales, whose proprietor was Prakash, having the address of Kabir Nagar, Rana Pratap Bagh,

Delhi. From these bank accounts, the accused would withdraw the amount, the official said. "The bank accounts of Rinku Sales were operated by Jain from whose possession, the SIM card linked with the account number, debit cards and cheque books have been recovered," Gautam said. Police said they exposed the whole operation by the five men after receiving a complaint by Max Life Insurance Corporation, which alleged nearly Rs 51 lakh related to surrendered and maturity amount of two of its policy holders had been fraudulently received by unknown persons. The company later found that one of its policy holders

had died on March 13, 2018, and no request for withdrawal of money was made on his behalf. After examining the documents and information shared by the company and it was revealed that nearly Rs 2.38 crore — from 37 policies of 22 policy holders — was refunded fraudulently, police said. Gautam said the accused opened accounts in several banks in the name of policy holders. Many of these accounts were opened digitally using the e-Aadhaar authentication process, the official added. The DCP said they first arrested Prem Prakash. Police first tried to locate the address of Rinku Sales but could not find it at the given Kabir Nagar address.

NCR PULSE

KEJRIWAL MEETS SISODIA'S SICK WIFE IN HOSP
New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday met the ailing wife of his former deputy Manish Sisodia at a private hospital. Seema Sisodia, 49, is suffering from an autoimmune disorder, multiple sclerosis, and was admitted to the neurology department of Indraprastha Apollo Hospital on Tuesday. "I am returning after meeting Seema Bhabhi (Manish ji's wife) in the hospital. She is admitted in the hospital since yesterday. She has multiple sclerosis. It is a very serious disease. I pray to God for her good health," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

LG OK'S 244 ADDITIONAL POSTS OF PRINCIPALS
New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has approved the creation of 244 additional posts of Principals in the government run schools. "While approving the revival of above mentioned 126 posts, the LG had asked the Education Department to submit a proposal for creation of additional 244 posts of Principals, after getting a comprehensive study conducted by the AR Department, in consultation with the Services Department," reads the statement issued by Raj Niwas. The LG had also directed that suitable financial provisions be made and ensured for these 244 posts in the Level-12 of the Pay Matrix. These posts will now be sent to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for being filled as per their prescribed recruitment.

DELHI ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD TO BE SET UP
New Delhi: Delhi's Development Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday announced the setting up of the Delhi Animal Welfare Board for betterment of animals. The decision was taken after a high level review meeting with the officials of the Animal Husbandry Department at the Delhi Secretariat. "In this Animal Welfare Board of 27 members divided under 19 categories, MLAs, people actively working in animal welfare work in the state, high officials of the concerned department, and representatives from SPCA, gaushalas and Animal Welfare Board of India have been included," Rai said.

MEET WITH MLA DRIVE: BHARATI MEETS KONDLI MLA
New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board Vice Chairman Somnath Bharti held a meeting with KonDLI MLA Kuldeep Kumar at DJB Headquarters on Tuesday in the presence of senior officials of Delhi Jal Board. The meeting was held under the special campaign "Meet with MLA" launched by the DJB Vice Chairman under the guidance of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Centre urges SC to leave same-sex marriage issue to Parliament

Very heart of the Special Marriage Act is recognition of marriage between a conventional man and conventional woman, says Solicitor General Tushar Mehta

The Centre on Wednesday reiterated to Supreme Court to consider leaving questions raised in the pleas seeking legal sanction for same sex marriages to Parliament, saying the court is dealing with a 'very complex' subject having a very 'profound social impact'...

recognition squarely falls within the domain of legislative policy decisions, Mehta said the 'very heart' of the Special Marriage Act is the recognition of marriage between a conventional man and conventional woman...

Dobbs case which had held there is no constitutional right to abortion. It expressed strong reservation to the Centre making a reference to the verdict in support of the contention that judiciary should not venture into the domain of the legislature...



Your lordships are dealing with a very, very complex subject having a very, very profound social impact. I would earnestly reiterate my request if your lordships can consider leaving all these questions to Parliament...

going to be a humongous exercise. I understand the difference between gender and sex, sexuality and gender etc. We are not going into it. But all laws, whether it is criminal law, civil law, any other law, law giving protection to women etc., they define man and woman in the conventional sense.

and hence the court can now read in certain provisions to grant marriage right to same-sex partners. Mehta extensively referred to the parliamentary debates for legislating the Special Marriage Act and said the law-makers were 'quite aware' of homosexuality and with a clear intent, had decided not to venture into it.

man and conventional woman. No one is sitting on value judgement whether this is good, this is bad. This should be done. There is no stigma attached. The Parliament has accepted their right of choice, their right of sexual preference, the right of autonomy and privacy that is the right of intimate relationship in which your lordships said something happening between two consenting adults in privacy.

Ongoing fight will not impact India, Sudan ties: Envoy

India, they came to Sudan 100 years ago, and they are staying there and now they are Sudanese, he said. I have been working closely 24 hours a day and we really did a good job in coordinating cooperation, providing necessary permits for aircraft, for ships to fly and to land in Sudan and to bring back Indian citizens...

There are no signs of serious negotiations on ending the fight for power from two warring factions amidst ceasefire which is partially holding, according to UN envoy to Sudan Volker Perthes. Similarly, the Sudanese envoy said there are still violations from rebel side but the current ceasefire is maintained better than the earlier ones.

NHAI engineer, wife booked in DA case by CBI

The CBI has booked National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) Superintendent Engineer Akil Ahmad and his wife Rafia Ahmad for allegedly possessing disproportionate assets to the tune of Rs 4.1 crore. The duo has been booked under Section 109 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) relating to abetment of offence and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act relating to criminal misconduct.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways as Assistant Engineer (Civil) and was promoted as Superintending Engineer (Civil) on April 2, 2016 and served as GM (Tech) on deputation from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2022. During the check period from March 1, 2016 to December 31, 2021, Ahmad had intentionally enriched himself illicitly with both movable and immovable assets by corrupt and illegal means, reads the FIR.

PM to attend Quad meet in Oz on May 24

With China flexing its muscle in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region, Australia will host the third in-person Quad summit in Sydney on May 24. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will take part in the high-profile and review the entire gamut of issues related to the Indo-Pacific.



announce that Australia will be hosting the Quad Leaders' Summit for the first time on May 24 in Sydney. Hosting our Quad partners in Sydney next month will be an opportunity for Australia to help shape the region we all want to live in, Albanese tweeted. The hosting of this Quad leaders' meeting at the Sydney Opera House, Australia's most recognisable building, will be a chance for us to work cooperatively with the United States, Japan and India.

always better off when we act together with our close friends and partners; he added. The Quad was committed to supporting an open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is respectful of sovereignty and ensures security and growth for all, he said. I look forward to discussing with Quad leaders how we - alongside important regional institutions, such as ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and our regional partners - can shape the Indo-Pacific region we all want to live in.

high-quality infrastructure, global health, climate change, maritime domain awareness, and other issues that matter to the people of the Indo-Pacific. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said late Tuesday. Albanese said it will also be an enormous opportunity to showcase the beautiful city of Sydney to the entire world.

ICICI Bank CORRIGENDUM Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005. Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBGUR0004931127, Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower LATA/ DEEPAK CHOUDHARY Symbolic Possession notice dated January 11, 2022 & Physical Possession notice dated March 28, 2023 published in News Paper The Pioneer (Eng.) & Pioneer (Hindi).

PUBLIC NOTICE My client IIFL HOME FINANCE LIMITED is mortgaging property bearing second floor without roof rights, portion of property bearing no. W2- 355, land measuring 100 Sq. Yds. part of Khata No. 1575 situated within the old tal dora of village Thar New Delhi-110016 currently owned by Smt. Anju vide registered sale deed dated-17.01.2022 Doc No-908 SR IIB Janspurki Delhi. The last chain document of this property GPA has been lost which is Doc No. 3522 dated-13.04.2012 and in this regard NCR Ref No. 382021/2023 has been registered.

Guj HC judge recuses from hearing Rahul's anti-conviction petition

In a new twist to the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi conviction case, a Gujarat High Court judge on Wednesday recused herself from hearing an application filed by the disqualified Lok Sabha MP seeking a stay on conviction recorded last month by a Surat magisterial court in connection with the Modi surname case. Soon as Rahul Gandhi's lawyer P S Champaneri mentioned the case before the court of Justice Gita Gopi, seeking an urgent hearing, the court said, 'Not before me.'



case was requested to be taken up in the court of Justice Gita Gopi because her court deals with the subject of criminal revision. A metropolitan magistrate's court in Surat on March 23 sentenced the former Congress president to two years in jail after convicting him under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 499 and 500 (dealing with criminal defamation) in the 2019 case filed by Gujarat BJP MLA Purnesh Modi. Following the verdict, Rahul Gandhi, elected to the Lok Sabha from Wayanad in Kerala in 2019, was disqualified as a Member of Parliament (MP) under provisions of the Representation of the People Act. Rahul Gandhi challenged the order in a sessions court in Surat along with an application to stay his conviction.

'India has courage to do something new even in difficult circumstances'

Virtually addressing the closing ceremony of 'Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam' at Somnath in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India has the courage to do something new, even in the most difficult circumstances, as it faces forces threatening to break it and blocking its way to its target for 2047. 'Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam' at Somnath is second 'Tamil Sangam' after the first held in Varanasi, the home constituency of Modi. Kashi Tamil Sangamam was a month-long programme in 2022 organized by the Union Ministry of Education to celebrate, reaffirm and rediscover the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and



Varanasi. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 19, 2022. Modi has since asked BJP leaders to organize such events to celebrate unity and diversity of country. Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam is event celebrating ancient links of Saurashtra and Tamil Nadu since time of attack on Somnath temple by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025 AD when several families from Gujarat had fled to Tamil Nadu and settled there.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the event, the Prime Minister said that India has the courage to do something new, even in most difficult circumstances, as it faces forces that threaten to break it and hurdles on the way to its target for 2047. Modi said that India is a country that celebrates its diversities that do not divide 'us but strengthen our bond and relationships'. The Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam takes forward the PM's 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' vision by celebrating the shared culture and heritage between Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, according to a press statement. 'Today we have the target of India at 2047 (to make India a developed nation). We also have the challenges of the era of slavery and the period of seven decades after that.

JHARKHAND EDUCATION PROJECT COUNCIL DoSE&L, GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND Old HEC High School, JSCA Stadium Road, Sector-III, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004 Phone No.- 0651-2444501, 2444502, Fax-0651-2444506, email: jepcranchi1@gmail.com

इ-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ई-निविदा संख्या:- 06/2023-24/RWD/DALTONGANJ दिनांक :- 25.04.2023 मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, झारखण्ड, राँची द्वारा निम्न विवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से पैकेज के रूप में निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

Table with 5 columns: क्र.सं. (Sl. No.), आईडी/नियंत्रण संख्या (ID/Reg. No.), कार्य का नाम (Work Name), प्राकृतिक राशि (रुपये में) (Initial Amount (₹)), कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि (कार्य का नाम) (Completion Period (Work Name)).

ICMR keen to partner with pharma firms for Lymphatic Filariasis vax

Scientists from ICMR-Vector Control Research Centre (ICMR-VCRC), Pudukcherry have for the first time cloned 12 well-characterised antigens of the Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) causing parasite, W. bancrofti, which the institute said can be promising vaccine candidates for the neglected disease which mostly affects the poor. The ICMR is now seeking collaboration with research institution and pharma companies keen to undertake research to develop the vaccine against the disease. Currently, there is no vaccine available for LF, and the development of an effective vaccine may be a highly beneficial tool for LF elimination efforts. According to the WHO report 2019, 859 million people



should have experience in developing vaccines for nematode parasite and with global marketing network, for undertaking R&D activities using recombinant antigens of the lymphatic filarial parasite, Wuchereria bancrofti for developing vaccine against LF and their manufacturing/commercialization etc.", says the ICMR in its expression of interest issued recently. These antigens have exhibited good antibody reactivity, in preliminary assays and hence as promising vaccine candidates, it says. Presently, to stop the transmission of infection, Mass Drug Administration (MDA) is being implemented wherein annually a combination of diethylcarbamazine (DEC) and albendazole for 5 years is provided. However, as DEC is effective against the microfi-

laria stage but ineffective in killing adult worms, whereas albendazole can kill adult worms only when treated for 21 days with 400 mg which causes adverse effects, need has been felt for alternative tools such as drugs/vaccines. The ICMR-VCRC shall provide the antigens of lymphatic filarial parasite, W. bancrofti, for development of vaccines while the collaborative company will undertake the research & development, scale-up of vaccine candidate(s), manufacturing and commercialization of LF vaccine(s). In India, LF is endemic in 328 districts of India in 20 states/UTs including Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the event, the Prime Minister said that India has the courage to do something new, even in most difficult circumstances, as it faces forces that threaten to break it and hurdles on the way to its target for 2047. Modi said that India is a country that celebrates its diversities that do not divide 'us but strengthen our bond and relationships'. The Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam takes forward the PM's 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' vision by celebrating the shared culture and heritage between Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, according to a press statement. 'Today we have the target of India at 2047 (to make India a developed nation). We also have the challenges of the era of slavery and the period of seven decades after that.

PM PACKAGE EMPLOYEES 576 new houses inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated 576 newly-constructed residential accommodations for PM Package Employees at Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal and Shopian on Wednesday.

“Today’s inauguration is a testimony to our commitment to create adequate facilities for a future of prosperity & dignity of Employees,” said the Lt-Governor.

The Lt-Governor said, “The Government is sensitive to the issues of the Kashmiri migrant families. We understand their pain and are working with the right intent to complete the construction of residential accommodations on priority.”

“The administration has taken various initiatives to expedite the process of construction of housing units for PM Package employees and 2000 more flats will be completed by December 2023,” he added.



The Lt Governor highlighted the remarkable progress in various sectors including industries, empowerment of citizens and building a competitive economy & inclusive society.

“Our young generation is our greatest asset and they should take the lead to build a stronger, prosperous and a more dynamic J&K,” said the Lt Governor.

Today, the domestic and foreign companies are willing to invest in J&K. More than 1.25 lakh crore rupees worth highways and tunnel projects are going on in the UT. Increased flight operations in both Jammu & Srinagar airports, improved road and rail connectivity have brought J&K closer to the world, he added.

The Lt Governor also shared the key initiatives taken to tap the growth potential of various priority sectors, extending handholding to budding entrepreneurs, creating large self-employment opportunities, and ensuring fast track & transparent recruitments.

Safina Baig, DDC Chairperson, Baramulla, in her address, said the Transit Accommodations will give a boost to the communal harmony and brotherhood in Kashmir. Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary highlighted the efforts of the administration in the timely completion of the residential accommodations for PM Package Employees.

Some vested interest spoiled the generations, separated your own brothers from you. Come forward and say that what had happened was wrong and now we won't let it happen to anyone, he added. The Lt Governor also spoke on progressive reforms introduced to boost infrastructure, employment generation and ease of living in the UT.

BJP behind Kaliaganj stir: Mamata It is CM who is disturbing Bengal peace by criminalising politics: BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has blamed the BJP for Tuesday’s attack on Kaliaganj Police Station that left properties worth lakhs torched and a dozen police personnel and some civilians injured.

A day after angry mobs protesting against the alleged rape and murder of a minor girl torched the Kaliaganj Police Station in North Dinajpur district reducing to ashes properties including dozens of two-wheelers worth lakhs, Banerjee said on Wednesday that the attackers had been imported by the saffron outfit from Bihar.

She said the BJP, which in connivance with the Centre — was “disturbing all the Opposition States” — had been creating problems in Bengal too.

“We have all the information of how they are carrying out hooliganism here and attempting to disturb the peace in Bengal... But we will defeat



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee holds an administrative review meeting at Nabanna, in Kolkata on Wednesday

The BJP immediately hit back at the Chief Minister saying it was she who had been disturbing the State by criminalising its politics and reducing the police to a servile class. Taking a jibe at the Chief Minister on her meeting with her Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar State BJP leader Sajit Ghosh said “it is not the BJP but TMC who is bringing people from Bihar as can be proved from the meeting she had with Bihar leaders (read Nitish Kumar and Tejaswi Yadav) in Kolkata.

“This conspiracy to create anarchy,” the Chief Minister said, adding the State would make the mischief mongers pay for the damage they had done to the public property.

Apparently referring to the alleged rape and murder Banerjee said, “I won’t say that the Kaliaganj incident was planned. It’s an unfortunate incident and we are with the family. But what happened

later was planned.”

Comparing Bengal with BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh she said, “We don’t have a jungle-raj like UP... today they are threatening us... but tomorrow they may not be there... they are playing with fire which should stop... I want to see what is more powerful: bulldozers (a machine that the UP Government often uses) or human beings.”

Cut to Kaliaganj. More than a dozen two-wheelers, furniture and important documents were torched after hundreds of people barged into the police station and pulled down its concrete parapet.

The attack was so violent that the intruders even chased the men in uniform — who fled for their lives taking shelter in nearby houses — pulled them out after vandalizing those houses and beat them up mercilessly.

Hours after video clips going viral showed policemen lying on the ground with folded hands and begging for their lives with the marauders raining lathis on them, the Chief Minister said “outsiders were brought in to set fire to Kaliaganj police station as well as ordinary people’s property. The mob mercilessly beat up the women police personnel too besides damaging property. Police will explore attaching properties of those involved in rioting.”

Most of the attackers were local villagers belonging to the Raj bangshi community which the deceased belonged to. While the BJP and the girl’s father alleged rape and murder the police after post mortem said that she had died after consuming poison. “The entire postmortem has been video-graphed bit by bit,” a senior police officer said.

Meanwhile, 35 people had been arrested in connection with the Kaliaganj incident, police said.

Talk to locals opposing refinery, get another site if issue not resolved, Pawar tells Govt

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said the Maharashtra government should hold a dialogue with local villagers who are opposing a refinery project in the coastal Ratnagiri district.

If the issue was not resolved even after that, an alternative site should be found, he said. Pawar spoke to reporters here after state industries minister Uday Samant met him to discuss the issue. Residents of Barsu village in Ratnagiri district’s Rajapur tehsil, more than 400 km from Mumbai, are up in arms against the project and the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress, the NCP’s allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, are supporting them.

Pawar said his party did not oppose development projects in Konkan, but finding out the opinion of the locals was a must. “The government needs to find out why the locals are angry... Having a dialogue with them is the only solution. If the matter is not resolved through a dialogue, an alternative site should be found,” the former Union minister said.

On the State Government’s contention that



Uddhav Thackeray, when he was chief minister, had suggested Barsu as an alternative instead of Nanar, the original site, Pawar said he was not aware of that. “Industries minister Uday Samant who met me assured that a dialogue will take place tomorrow.

Yesterday only soil testing was being done at the site,” he further said. NCP leaders will visit the site and talk to the locals, Pawar added. Samant, who is the guardian minister of Ratnagiri district, told reporters that the women protestors detained at the project site have been released. “The Government will speak to the villagers,” he added.

Pawar, meanwhile, told reporters that he would be visiting Punjab on Thursday for Shiromani Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal’s last rites.

Combing Op on in terror attack on Army truck Security forces search Bhatta Durrian forests as terrorists remain at large

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the absence of pinpointed human intelligence from ground zero the ongoing combing and search operations launched by the Indian Army to bring to justice the perpetrators, behind the gruesome terror attack on an Army truck in which five Indian soldiers were killed in the line of duty on April 20, 2023, is testing the patience of the field commanders leading the operations on ground zero.

A joint team of security forces led by the army jawans been combing the thickly forested area of Bhatta Durrian since April 20 but so far they have failed to track down the footprints of terrorists behind the attack.

More than 50 people



including over one dozen ground workers have been interrogated by the various agencies but the terrorists remained at large.

Unconfirmed media reports, however, suggested some of the villagers who had allegedly arranged logistics for these terrorists before the attack were being subjected to sustained interrogation to extract any vital clue about their hide-out in the nearby villages of the border district.

On Wednesday Army commander of the Udhampur based Northern Command headquarters Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi visited Rajouri & Poonch Sector & reviewed operational preparedness & took stock of ongoing operations. This was his second visit after an army truck was ambushed.

Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi interacted with the troops deployed in remote areas and exhorted them to be innovative and relentless in their pursuit.

Now, Tejashwi faces criminal defamation plaint for calling Gujaratis ‘thugs’

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A criminal defamation complaint was filed against Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in a court here on Wednesday over his alleged remark suggesting “only Gujaratis can be thugs in the current situation.”

The complaint was filed against the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader by social worker and businessman Hareesh Mehta, 63, under Indian Penal Code sections 499 and 500 (dealing with criminal defamation) in the court of additional metropolitan magistrate DJ Parmar.

“We submitted the complaint along with proof in form of a pen drive containing the statement. The court has accepted the complaint and will verify it on May 1,” Mehta’s lawyer P R Patel said.

The complaint stems from 33-year-old Yadav’s statement made before the media in Patna on March 21.

“Only Gujaratis can be thugs in the present situation, and their fraud (crime) will be forgiven. Who will be responsible if they run away with the money belonging to LIC or banks?” the Bihar Deputy CM had allegedly said.

The complainant said the statement, calling the entire Gujarati community as “thug”, was made before the media. It defames and humiliates all Gujaratis in public.

Cong appoints 5 observers for May 10 Karnataka elections

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/ HIRIVUR/ MANGALURU

The Congress on Wednesday appointed five observers for the May 10 Karnataka Assembly elections, each taking care of one region of the coastal southern State, while Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address a massive rally in Mangaluru on Thursday, the party said on Wednesday.

While general secretary Avinash Pande will be the observer for the Central Karnataka region, A Chella Kumar will be for the Mysore region and Manickam Tagore for the Mumbai-Karnataka region.

Party leader Ajoy Kumar has been appointed as regional observer for the coastal Karnataka region, while Mohan Prakash will take care of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region towards the north of the state.

The Congress is seeking to wrest power from the BJP in Karnataka, the lone southern state where the BJP is in power. Assembly elections to elect the new 224-member Karnataka assembly will be held on May 10 and results will be out on May 13.

Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday held a massive roadshow here waving at a large enthusiastic crowd along the route, seeking people’s support for the party in the May 10 Assembly polls in Karnataka.



AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during her visit to the Sringeri Sharda Peeth in Karnataka on Wednesday

Standing atop a specially-designed vehicle, she was greeted by the crowd gathered on the sides of the roads and on nearby buildings.

A large number of party workers holding Congress flags were seen marching along with the vehicle, as it passed through the streets, amid drum beats and slogans like ‘Congress party ki jai’, ‘Priyanka Gandhi ki jai’, ‘Rahul Gandhi ki jai’.

Vadra was accompanied by AICC General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and other local party leaders.

Cong used ‘religion’ to come to power: Rajnath

PTI ■ BELAGAVI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday came down heavily on the Congress alleging that it used ‘mazhab’ (meaning religion in Urdu) to come to power.

Singh also slammed the party for having introduced four per cent reservation, in its earlier term, on religious lines in Karnataka, saying it had been done only to appease Muslims.

“If there is any political party in the history of India which took the support of ‘dharma’, or rather, ‘mazhab’ to come to power, then it is Congress,” Singh said, addressing a public meeting at Kagwad in Belagavi district.

Karnataka votes on May 10, with the results slated to be declared on May 13.

The Congress does the “politics of Hindu, Muslim and Christians,” Singh said. “Politics of this sort should never ever be done.”

Only to appease Muslims, the four per cent reservation was given on religious lines, he alleged.

“We will welcome if an economically-weaker Muslim or a Christian gets reservation benefits but the Constitution of India does not permit religion-based reservation,” the Defence Minister said.

Allow retrospective gender change in edu institutes’ records: HC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Responding to a plea by a transgender person, the Bombay High Court has directed the Maharashtra government to instruct all educational institutions in the state to allow retrospective changes of name and gender in their records.

A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale, in its order of April 25, said the questions of identity and gender perception do not happen at a “biologically definable point.”



Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), identifies as a transgender and sought to change their name and gender in the education records of the institute.

In 2013, the petitioner received an MA in Development Studies from the TISS with their original feminine name.

In 2015, the petitioner adopted another name, self-identifying as transgender and applied to the TISS for a new certificate reflecting the changes in name and gender. When there was no response from the institute, the petitioner approached the HC. The High Court said that earlier orders passed by the Supreme Court “direct us towards greater inclusiveness and acceptance of individuality and individual traits.”

“These are not to be compromised because of some bureaucratic requirements,” the division bench said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata- 700020 CIN No: L65190GJ1994PL02021012, www.icicibank.com

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Satyam Shivam Sundaram/ Laxmi Sundaram/ Shivam Sundaram/ S/o-Parmeshwar Prasad At-Nayagown Jamalpur Dist-Munger Bihar Jamalpur-811214/ LBPTN0005838110	Mouza-Sikandarpur, Tauli No 3936, Jamabandi No 357, Thana East Colony, Thana No 08, Khata 21 22, Ward No 05, Hal 15, Sheet No. 21 & 22, Plot No. 917, Anchal-Jamalpur, Sub Registry Office Munger, District- Munger Measuring an area of 1.56 Decimal or 1361.25 Sq. Ft. or 10 Dhur	February 28, 2023 Rs.6,41,194/-	06/12/2022

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

Date : April 27, 2023
Place : Ghaziabad

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

ICICI Bank Regional Office: ICICI Bank Limited, NBCC Place, Bisham Pitamah Marg, Pragati Vihar, New Delhi- 110003
Regd. Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakkil Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390 007
Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra- Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai- 400 051

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

Sale of Immovable Asset under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to rule 8(6) and rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ('Rules').

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the ICICI Bank Limited ('ICICI Bank') under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ('Act') and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, ("Rules") issued a statutory demand notice dated December 13, 2021 under Section 13(2) of the Act calling upon M/s Cellugene Biotech Private Limited, Mr. Firodosh Rohintan Mahuwalla ("Borrower/Security Providers/ Personal Guarantors") (hereinafter referred as "Noticee(s)") to repay the entire outstanding amount under the facility sanctioned to M/s Cellugene Biotech Private Limited as particularly mentioned in the notice being Rs. 2,10,39,140.39 (Rupees Two Crore Ten Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand One Hundred Forty and Paise Thirty Nine Only) on November 29, 2021 together with further interest, default/penal interest and other charges thereon till the date of realization ("Outstanding Dues"), within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. That, the Noticee(s) failed and neglected to comply with the said demand.

The Secured Asset (as detailed below) has been mortgaged by Mr. Firodosh Rohintan Mahuwalla as Security for the facility granted by ICICI Bank to the Borrower and whereas, in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act read with the Rules, the Authorized Officer had taken possession of the Secured Asset on November 16, 2022.

Public at large is hereby informed that ICICI Bank is inviting offers for the sale of Secured Asset (as described in the Schedule below) under the provisions of SARFAESI Act and the Rules thereunder on "As is where is basis", "As is what is basis", "Whatever there is basis" and "Without any recourse basis" as per details given below.

Description of Secured Asset	Reserve Price (In ₹)	Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") (In ₹)	Bid Increment Value (In ₹)	Date of Property Inspection and time	Last date of submission of EMD	Date and time of e-Auction
Commercial property located at 405-B, 4th Floor in the scheme name "Benison Complex" located in the land bearing R.S. No. 83, 84, 85, 142 and 143 of Mouje Jetalpur on which Haribhakti Colony is organized and out of the said revenue survey, R.S. No. 83A is bifurcated, which is in T.P. Scheme No. 14, F.P. No. 7 bearing Tenure- C in the City Survey No. 1864, Vadodara, Gujarat- 390007 admeasuring bulidup area of 1,240 Sq. Ft. and carpet area of 1,177 Sq. Ft. in the name of Mr. Firodosh Rohintan Mahuwalla.	90,00,000.00	9,00,000.00	1,00,000.00	May 15, 2023 (01:00 PM to 02:00 PM) with prior intimation	May 22, 2023 upto 4:00 PM	May 24, 2023 (11:00 AM to 12:00 Noon)

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The online auction will be conducted through M/s e-Procurement Technologies Limited (Auction tiger) on the website of auction agency i.e. https://icicibank.auctiontiger.net, and shall be subject to terms & condition contained in the tender document which is available on https://icicibank.auctiontiger.net.
- For any clarifications with regard to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact Mr. Karan Kakkar, Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited on +91-70427-92970 or write at karan.kakkar@icicibank.com.
- The Notice (s) are given last chance to repay the total outstanding dues aggregating to Rs. 2,42,53,081.40 (Rupees Two Crore Forty Two Lakh Fifty Three Thousand Eighty one and Paise Forty Only) outstanding as on April 02, 2023 along with further interest and other charges thereon at the contractual interest rates. The said dues are required to be paid by the Noticee(s) on or before May 23, 2023 failing which, the Secured Asset will be sold as per schedule, as mentioned above.
- The Noticee (s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned and restrained not to deal with the Secured Asset, as detailed above, in any manner in terms of Section 13(13) of the said Act and any dealing with the Secured Asset will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank for the amounts and further interests thereon.
- The Authorised Officer has absolute right and discretion to accept or reject any bid or postpone/cancel the e auction without assigning any reason.
- In case there is any discrepancy between the publication of sale notice in English & vernacular newspaper, then in such case the English newspaper will supersede the vernacular newspaper and it shall be considered as the final copy, thus removing the ambiguity.

Statutory 15 Days sale under notice under Rule 9(1) of the rule

The Noticee(s) once again are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-auction, failing which the Secured Asset will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any will be recovered with interest and cost. If auction fails due to any reasons whatsoever, Bank would be at liberty to sell the above secured asset through private treaty or any other means as provided under sub-rule (5) of rule 8 of the Rules or otherwise without any further notice to the Noticee(s) as per the provisions mandated under SARFAESI Act and the Rules.

Date: April 27, 2023
Place: Delhi

SD/
Authorized Officer
For ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Md. Nasim Akhtar son of Mohd. Azimuddin is the registered owner of Freehold First Floor without roof rights of Property No. 31-B, Church Road, Bhogal, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014 purchased from Mr. Rajesh Bakshi through his General Attorney Mr. Sarwan Kumar Mansukhani (vide Sale Deed dated 05.04.2023) and said Mr. Rajesh Bakshi along with his brother Mr. Anil Bakshi had acquired the said property by virtue of Relinquishment Deed dated 21.03.2011 and Relinquishment Deed dated 25.02.2014 executed by the legal heirs of Late Mr. Giridhari Lal and Late Mrs. Urmila Bakshi who in herited the same after the demise of Late Mr. Deputy Lal Bakshi and Late Mrs. Wash Devi Bakshi and except the legal heirs as mentioned in said Relinquishment Deed, there are no other legal heirs remains of Late Mr. Deputy Lal Bakshi, Late Mrs. Wash Devi Bakshi, Late Mr. Giridhari Lal, Late Mrs. Urmila Bakshi and said Mr. Anil Bakshi and Mr. Rajesh Bakshi had also partitioned the said property by way of Registered Partition Deed dated 11.12.2020, and my clients is mortgaging the same to LIC HFL. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 7 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, then our client shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear.

Karnal Singh, Advocate,
K-8, Basement, Jangpura Extension New Delhi
Case No. 981116336 & 995363363



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PAPER WITH PASSION

AAP's whataboutery

No amount of sophistry would be able to justify Rs 45-crore renovation of Delhi CM Kejriwal's official residence

The only shield that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) can lay its hands on to ward off the charges of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Rs 45-crore renovation of his official residence is whataboutery. Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Sambit Patra called Kejriwal "Maharaja" who has a "lust for luxury and comfort." Senior Congress leader and former Union minister Ajay Maken also reportedly alleged that Kejriwal spent Rs 45 crore of public funds on his luxurious bungalow, including on extravagant items like Dior polish, Vietnam marble, expensive curtains, and high-end carpets. It is important to note that till the writing of these lines, the Delhi Government had not denied the said expenditure on the beautification of Kejriwal's bungalow at Civil Lines; AAP however, had reacted with its characteristic fulminations. Equally, if not more, important is the fact that the party did not deny the obscene spending on an official residence; it just pointed fingers at others. What about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence where Rs 500 crore has been spent? What about the Rs 200-crore aircraft that the Chief Ministers of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh take for themselves? What about this? What about that? Whataboutery unadulterated and unabashed. To be fair to AAP, it is not the only party that indulges in such tactics. When a BJP leader is cornered over some financial misdemeanour, they say, "What about 2G?" When Congress leaders are questioned about dynasticism in the party, they begin mentioning the names of BJP leaders whose rise owes a lot to their prominence in politics.



But just because whataboutery is practiced widely by leaders of all parties doesn't mean that it can be accepted as a valid form of argumentation. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and others regard tu quoque, the Latin name of whataboutery, as a fallacy. In AAP's scheme of things, whataboutery, like ostentation, should never have existed in the first place. For these are folks who claimed to be the true representatives of the common man (aam aadmi), who joined politics claiming to be the true representatives of common people. They ensured that they looked like common people; hence, Kejriwal is rarely, if ever, seen in kurta pyjama, the informal dress of Indian politicians. It was AAP which loudly protested against the corruption and lavish lifestyles of politicians. AAP leaders and activists sanctimoniously claimed to live honestly and simply. The reality is that many of AAP leaders, including former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, are facing charges of graft. AAP spokespersons call these charges politically inspired, but Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann himself sacked the State's health minister Vijay Singla in May 2022. And now the revelations about Kejriwal's renovation have completely exposed AAP's claims of being a genuine representative of common people. AAP seems to be unraveling, its leaders' rants and cant notwithstanding.

PICTALK



People fish during a tidal swamp at the end of prawn farming season in Kochi

PM Modi's special bond with J&K

PM Modi has a great affinity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He has said it numerous times on Mann ki Baat



TARUN CHUGH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last almost nine years has shown a special bond with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Under the leadership of PM Modi, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have felt and experienced the healing touch of the central government, as well as a vision of taking visible wings of economic prosperity. This is also reflected in Baramulla deputy commissioner Syed Sehrish Asgar bagging the top award for civil services, as she executed the vision of the aspirational district of PM Modi on the ground by bringing the gains of the Central schemes to the people in a proactive manner. No wonder that the people in Jammu and Kashmir have begun believing in PM Modi's mantra of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas..."

A close examination of the 99 episodes of PM Modi's monthly radio broadcast Mann Ki Baat reveals that Jammu and Kashmir has always been at the core of his conversation with the people. There have been numerous accounts of people who found mention of PM Modi.

It has been an earnest resolve of the Central government that democracy at the grassroots takes strong roots in Jammu and Kashmir. This alone can ensure sustainable development and the participation of the people in the journey of the progress of the Union territory, as well as India. The overwhelming participation of hundreds of people in the Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir firmly endorses PM Modi's vision for the UT.

People all across the world, including India, have curiosity about Jammu and Kashmir. PM Modi by sharing the stories of the people of the UT in the radio broadcast regularly has kept the world updated about the marching progress of the UT and the deepening participation of democracy and partaking by the people in the gains of development.

The entrepreneurial journey of Abdul Majeed Wani, who



took to e-commerce to sell GI-tagged saffron at a Pampore trading centre, found mention in Mann Ki Baat. The historical significance of the Kashmiri saffron was brought before the global audience. Saffron indeed is the identity of Jammu and Kashmir. The most sought-after commodity is also the source of livelihood for the local people, and PM Modi gave a global scale by making a special mention of Mann Ki Baat.

Javed Ahmed had survived a terrorist attack in the Kashmir valley in 1996. He now has dedicated his life to improving infrastructure for the specially challenged people in the valley. His life is for humanity, and an example of selfless service to society. PM Modi showered praise on him, as he is an example for everyone, besides he proved to be a reason for an elaborate thoughtful reflection by the top leadership of the country on the issue of ease of access to public places for specially challenged people.

Balbir Kaur, Sarpanch of Gram Treva in Jammu, who constructed a 30-bed quarantine centre and made arrangements for water on roads leading to the



PEOPLE ALL ACROSS THE WORLD, INCLUDING INDIA, HAVE CURIOSITY ABOUT JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Panchayat, also found mention in Mann Ki Baat. This again was an acknowledgement of efforts at the local body level for the well-being of the people.

Zaitoona Begum, a Sarpanch, decided that her Panchayat would fight against the Corona pandemic while also creating income opportunities for the local people. She distributed free masks and free ration, and also crop seeds and apple saplings so that people could be effectively empowered. The world got to know of her after she found mentioned in Mann Ki Baat.

Mohd Iqbal, municipal president of Anantnag, too found mention in the radio programme for his feat of designing a sprayer machine for Rs 50,000 while the machine if brought from another town would have cost Rs six lakh. BY mentioning Mann Ki Baat, PM Modi lauded individual efforts of finding local solutions with innovations.

J&K has regularly been featured in the radio broadcast to show that PM Modi is closely following the developments in the UT. In one such mention, PM Modi stated that the people of Pulwama, including

Manzoor Ahmad Alai, have shown entrepreneurship. Alai sold his ancestral land to establish a unit for manufacturing wooden boxes and later expanded his business to include supplying pencil slats to big companies. His business is now worth crores and provides livelihood to around 200 people.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation, which appointed Bilal Dar, an 18-year-old from Srinagar, as brand ambassador for the Swachhata Abhiyan, too was lauded. Also, Manzoor Ahmed Larhwal from Srinagar, who installed a solar rooftop plant, to cut down the electricity bill was lauded by PM Modi.

Similarly, Vinod Kumar from Palli village of Jammu, who has been beekeeping in more than 15000 colonies, also featured along with cyclist Adil Altaf from Srinagar, who bagged laurels. Muhammad Aslam from Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir, who played a role in organizing the community mobilization program 'Back to Village' too was appreciated by PM Modi.

(Author is the national general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SALUTE TO BRAVE HEARTS!

Sir — As the nation celebrates a festival, Our brothers and sisters mourn the loss of army jawans killed by militants. Jawans have laid down their lives so that the rest of the nation could celebrate a festival, and be safe and secure. Families have lost brave sons & some children their fathers, women their husbands. When tears dry up here begins the second battle, and unmindful of death the brave women again join the armed forces. Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it, it flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it. A Militant's mind can never win over Military Brave hearts!

TS Karthik | Chennai

50 YEARS OF KESAVANANDA BHARATHI CASE

Sir — It's good that the supreme court has opened a web page for people to commemorate the occasion of fifty years' completion of a landmark judgement in the Kesavananda Bharathi case. The verdict of thirteen judges Bench had retained the supremacy of the constitution and a fine balance in power between the executive and judiciary. That the ruling establishing that Parliament cannot change the basic structure of the constitution has been a game changer in evolving the attitude of the executive towards the characteristics of our nation particularly that of democracy, secularism, federalism and fundamental rights. The judiciary should take the initiative to enlighten the people regarding the constitutional spirit as the well-informed citizen would come forward to safeguard the constitutional spirit in return.

Dr. DVG Sankararao | Vizianagaram

LONG ROAD TO OPPOSITION UNITY

Sir — With the much-vaunted 2024-Lok Sabha polls inching closer, the scramble for a United Opposition Alliance comprising the non-BJP parties is getting more and more hectic with each day passing. A belated realization that dethron-

Justice for women wrestlers



The Supreme Court (SC) issued notices to the Delhi government and others on a plea by seven women wrestlers (one of them was 16 years old at the time of the harassment. She had won a gold medal) alleging non-registration of an FIR on their sexual harassment allegations against 66 years old WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, famed as a bahubali नेता (muscleman leader), saying these are "serious allegations" requiring its consideration. People wonder what's a country this 'mere Bharat Mahan where an MP had been disqualified for his wrong choice of words but another notorious MP Brij Bhushan cannot be touched even after not only something as serious as sexual harassment but faces several charges, including an attempt to murder, punishment for dacoity and causing disappearance of evidence. However, he has not been

convicted of any one of these! Brij Bhushan is a strong figure with significant swaying power in the Gonda-Bairampur area. Before acting against him, the BJP will not only consider all those factors, but also the party will probably go easy on Brij Bhushan now, with the general election just a year away. Strangely, our top athletes are sitting on dharna again and again but there is no effect on the government who jumps to steal credit when they win medals at international games. It is also shameful that the so-called sports minister, is just sleeping on his responsibilities. It is a sorry state of affairs and a blot on the face of India and its sports authorities; just because the person happens to be a notorious BJP MP grabbing one of the top chairs of sports authority.

There is a silver lining when the SC issued a notice and sought a response from Delhi police over a plea filed by the wrestlers who have been protesting against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and the BJP MP Brij Bhushan. People hope after Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud admitted the allegations were serious and issued a notice, returnable on Friday, surely rise hope among the victims for justice as early as possible.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

U P: Transformation of a State

The eradication of mafia raj in UP under Yogi has resulted in all-round progress of the State and improved the law and order situation



BRIJ LAL

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's recent remarks in a campaign rally in the State highlight the significant strides that the State has made under his leadership. The CM spoke about the transformation of the State from a place of lawlessness, corruption, and fear to a prosperous, peaceful, and secure environment.

His commitment to rooting out criminal activity and corruption in the State has led to significant progress in eliminating the 'gunda tax' that was previously collected by mafias. Under the leadership of Yogi, the perception of common people about UP entirely changed; now, there is an element of trust in the police; a feeling of safety is introduced in the common people, irrespective of caste and religion. In Yogi's regime, not only the tools of crime are dealt with a heavy hand but the handlers and sympathisers are being treated equally as partners in crime; as a result, there is no respite even for those who sympathise with mafias and criminals. Now there prevails a



sense of fear of law among white-collar criminals and their handlers. The widely discussed police encounters in the State are the result of confidence the State Government has reposed in the police force. The brave and trained police personnel are working hard. All the encounters that happened, as per my information and belief, were mere chance encounters; they saved many lives of police personnel on duty.

The eradication of mafia raj is UP under Yogi resulted in the progress made in areas captured and suppressed by mafias, such as private sector investment in the State, equal opportunity for all to invest and run their businesses in rural areas,

employment generation in the private sector, continuous electricity supply, and infrastructure boost.

Yogi's policy that festivals are for celebration not for rioting and appeasement of none has urged people to enjoy the freedom to celebrate festivals and other occasions without fear. The message was loud and clear; there have been arrests of sadist handlers of riots; their illegal financial assertions and transactions were brought to scrutiny. Overhauling of the prosecution process is also underway by improving the capacity of courts to enable the speedy disposal of cases. Capacity building by increasing training infrastructure is taken up on priority, the police personnel's training is given due importance and specialist units like the Special Task Force, the Anti-Terrorist Squad, the Anti-Corruption and vigilance departments has been provided with the desired budgetary support. New capacity has been generated in the form of an Anti-Narcotics Task Force, the Cyber Crime Vertical,

and forensic labs in each division and the upcoming Forensic Institute in Lucknow. Yogi's efforts and policy on women's safety are commendable, and his assertion that UP's daughters are now free from fear is a significant achievement. The State's progress in providing housing, healthcare, and pension benefits to the poor and marginalised is without middlemen, mafia and any bias. The Government's double-engine approach has ensured that welfare schemes reach every needy person without discrimination.

The CM's focus on rooting out criminal activity, providing opportunities to the underprivileged, and ensuring the safety and security of the State's people is a laudable achievement. Uttar Pradesh's transformation under Yogi Adityanath's leadership is a model for other States to follow.

(The writer is a Member of Rajya Sabha, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Home Affairs, and former DGB, Uttar Pradesh. Views expressed are personal)

CM Akhilesh Yadav and tried to prevail upon these leaders to change their stance against taking the Congress onboard. The TMC supremo has, however, blinked saying that 'there should be 'no ego clash' in the proposed Opposition front while Mr Kumar went the extra mile convincing the TMC, SP and BRS which are averse to taking the grand old party into the united Opposition's fold. Mamata Banerjee also wished for an All-party meeting at Jai Prakash Narain's 'Karma Bhumi' (Land of Action), Bihar, driving at giving the final touch to the strategy for next year's Parliamentary elections.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGICAL THERAPY

It offers low-risk treatment to high-risk BPH patients



TANUJ PAUL BHATIA

With age, health complications begin to haunt most people. Many diseases like Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) can be directly associated with ageing. It is a widely prevalent condition, commonly referred to as prostate gland enlargement, which occurs in elderly men. The condition obstructs the normal functioning of the urinary tract resulting in debilitating symptoms such as difficulty or pain in urinating or a recurrent urge to urinate. If left untreated, the enlargement of the gland located right under the bladder can even result in an inability to pass urine and issues with kidney functioning. The severity of the condition increases even more when patients belonging to high-risk categories are subjected to standard treatments such as complicated operative surgeries. However, with minimally invasive therapies like PUL (Prostatic Urethral Lift), the associated risk can be averted effectively.

BPH, is a significant concern for high-risk patients

It is estimated that 11.26 million people lived with BPH conditions globally in 2019. In India, almost 50% of men in the seventh decade are estimated to be living with this condition. Prostate gland enlargement is one of the major perils experienced by elderly men most of whom are also saddled with a series of other chronic diseases such as heart ailments, stroke, diabetes and hypertension. While certain drugs help curtail the growth of benign cells, a significant number of people may ultimately require a surgical intervention. However, for high-risk patients who suffer from BPH but are unfit for anaesthesia and surgeries due to underlying health conditions such as heart problems, respiratory issues, and a history of stroke, traditional treatments for BPH may not be viable options.



Ultra MIST (Minimally Invasive Surgical Therapy) for high-risk patients

One of the most promising low-risk surgical procedures for high-risk BPH patients is the PUL (Prostatic Urethral Lift) treatment which falls under the umbrella of ultra-MIST (Minimally Invasive Surgical Therapy). This innovative treatment can be performed under local anaesthesia, making it a quick and efficient procedure that only takes between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The procedure is also minimally invasive, which means extended hospitalisation or recovery periods are not required, and patients can even get discharged on the same day as the procedure. Also, minimally invasive treatments do not pose major anaesthesia-related complications among high-risk BPH patients.

Besides being efficacious in delivering absolute treatment for BPH patients unfit for anaesthesia, the PUL system serves as a highly cost-effective option, as it minimises the need for prolonged hospital stays and reduces the requirement for long-term medical care. In addition, patients who undergo this procedure do not require a catheter, which can be uncomfortable and inconvenient. The facile nature of minimally invasive procedures is aiding better quality of life for high-risk BPH patients.

Conclusion

Minimally invasive therapies like PUL treatment have emerged as a beacon of hope for high-risk BPH patients as this cutting-edge technology-based medical procedure is paving the way for a safer and more effective treatment option, providing relief to such patients who are at high-risk and unfit for anaesthesia. Therefore, it can be inferred that by employing advanced technologies and techniques, minimally invasive therapies have revolutionised the treatments for high-risk BPH patients by offering them less complicated, quick recovery and comprehensive improvement in the quality of life.

(The writer is HOD & Sr. Consultant- Urology, Sarvodaya Hospital, Faridabad)

Lessons from the Champaran Satyagraha



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The Champaran Satyagraha holds great significance in today's agrarian sector; it aligns perfectly with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals



Champaran Satyagraha – a non-violent protest movement against the forced indigo cultivation imposed by the British on the farmers in the Champaran district of present-day Bihar in April 1917 – is a significant event in Indian history that led to the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as a leader of the Indian freedom struggle, as it also marked the beginning of the non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement in India, and highlighted the importance of upholding human dignity in the face of dehumanizing conditions, besides asserting the need for land reform and social justice.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, who had joined Mahatma Gandhi in his crusade in Champaran reflects in his book, 'Satyagraha in Champaran': "Before Mahatmaji set his foot in Champaran, the tenantry of the district had at times carried on strong agitation and had sometimes attempted non-co-operation also. But the foundation of that agitation and non-co-operation was not based on ahimsa (non-violence). The Government, and planters who pin their faith in violence and force and who have resources to use it effectively, always succeeded in suppressing their agitation which was not free from violence."

It was the forced cultivation of indigo instead of food crops by the British that led to a huge loss of agricultural productivity and food scarcity in the region. Tens of thousands of landless serfs, indentured workers, and subsistence farmers were forced to produce indigo on 3/20 of the entire land area (called the tinkathia system). Because of their inability to sustain their livelihoods, the farmers were often forced to borrow money from the planters at exorbitant interest rates, which led to a cycle of debt and poverty, affecting the farmers for generations.

Author Shashi Tharoor, in his book "Inglorious Empire" pointed out how the British destroyed India through looting, expropriation and outright theft, all conducted in a spirit of deep racism and moral cynicism. In an interview with Channel 4



IT WOULD ALSO BE PERTINENT TO PROVIDE VOCATIONAL TRAINING THAT EQUIPS INDIVIDUALS WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti. Views expressed are personal)

News, Tharoor pointed out "The fact that Britain came to be one of the richest countries in the world in the early 18th century and reduced it after 200 years of plunder to one of the poorest".

Mahatma Gandhi had reached Champaran through relentless persuasion, coupled with an emotional plea from Rajkumar Shukla, a poor farmer from Champaran, who had faced similar exploitation at the hands of the British. Later Champaran became Gandhiji's karma bhumi. Rajkumar Shukla became Gandhi's guide and interpreter, helping him navigate the complex social and cultural dynamics of Champaran and helping him towards building trust and rapport between Gandhiji and the peasant community.

The Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 holds great significance today, as it aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically towards the eradication of poverty, ensuring access to quality education, promoting gender equality, and achieving sustainable economic growth and also promoting sustainable agriculture practices, for it was the lack of education and awareness among the people that led to their exploitation by the British colonial administration.

The Movement also emphasized the need for crop diversification and the use of organic fertilizers to improve soil health, which the present-day peasant movements have also witnessed. It also emphasized the importance of local leaders whose strong connection with the community can even today effectively articulate the grievances on a larger spectrum. As a collective movement, the Champaran Satyagraha brought together farmers from different communities to demand their rights.

While the situation is not all too happy in the agrarian sector, yet better than many developed nations, in today's parlance, one of the biggest lessons from Champaran Satyagraha is that it is essential to promote practical education among the children of the village to empower them to become agents of change in their communities.

It would also be pertinent to provide vocational training that equips individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue a career in the agricultural sector, with specialised training to help boost information. Further, engaging local experts and practitioners in the field of agriculture for providing practical training and guidance, will not only provide them with practical knowledge but also encourage them to explore career opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Providing Learning resources, such as books, videos, and online platforms, for supplementing practical education is essential and should be easily accessible. Coupled with it is the need for training on entrepreneurship development should be imparted, with a primary focus on children and youth to encourage them to start their own agricultural enterprises. This helps in promoting new job opportunities and also contributes to the economic development of the village and agrarian set-up. Farmers' cooperatives, NGOs, and community-based organizations can play an effective role in leveraging resources and expertise for growth in this sector.

One such programme is run by "Jan Sansthan", an organisation working towards empowering rural communities in Rajasthan through their Agripreneurship Development Program which aims

to promote entrepreneurship among rural youth in the agricultural sector by providing practical training in organic farming, animal husbandry, and other related fields. Further, a platform such as "Digital Green", a non-profit organization that uses technology to empower smallholder farmers in India and trains local community members to produce and disseminate videos created in local languages, and featuring local farmers, which in turn helps build trust and credibility and improve crop yields and incomes for thousands of smallholder farmers in India is a progressive step in this direction.

The "Adarsh Gram Yojana" is another such initiative launched by the Government to promote holistic development in rural areas by focusing on improving access to basic amenities, such as water, sanitation, and healthcare, as well as promoting education and entrepreneurship. The government also provides funding and support to villages that demonstrate a commitment towards sustainable development, like the one in the village of "Hiware Bazar" in Maharashtra, which has implemented a range of initiatives, including rainwater harvesting, organic farming, and entrepreneurship training. These initiatives have transformed the village from a drought-prone area to an excellent model of sustainable development.

The legacy of the Champaran Satyagraha lies not just in observance and ceremonies, but in providing a strong basis for these efforts which have been the outcome of sustainable initiatives. Strong emphasis on education and awareness in promoting social, economic, and political reforms is key for progress in the agrarian sector for the promotion of sustainable agriculture in the country.

Mann Ki Baat: Instilling positivity during Covid times

During the pandemic, PM Modi's Mann Ki Baat gave updates on government efforts and also cherished the heroic fight back by Corona warriors

India fought a collective and united battle against the once in a century pandemic – Covid-19. The foe here was unknown. The fear factor among the people predictably was high. There was a risk of panic among the people. The virus was a predator hunting for even healthy people. The nation was not prepared when the pandemic foe arrived at the doorsteps of the country. Soon, the virus sneaked in and began spreading fast. India needed a general to lead the army of the people in the fightback.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led India's fight back with composure, banking on the expertise of the scientific community, and kept the people updated with every



SUMET BHASIN

development with the sole aim that there should be no scope for panic. The message conveyed most succinctly through Mann Ki Baat, was that India can fight the battle against Covid-19 and also that the country would come out victorious. Thus, the monthly radio broadcast emerged as the source of comfort for people during the time when the people confined to their homes.

Democracy demands that the government of the day gives accounts of works being done to Parliament, which is a body of members elected by the people. During the peak of the pandemic, the functioning of Parliament was disrupted. The prime minister employed Mann Ki Baat to share updates on the gov-

ernment's efforts to deal with the pandemic, and also on the heroic fightback led by the people in several parts of the country. The logistics were also pressed in high action. The Railways were transporting tonnes of medical material daily to every nook and cranny of the country. The railways ran over 100 parcel trains on more than 60 railway routes. By sharing even the minute details with the people, the message was drummed in that the government is working at war-footing, and the prime minister was not only fully updated but he himself was in the thick of the action with the scientific community, the logistics, vaccine manufacturers, etc., in ensuring a seamless response without hic-

cup in the fight against the pandemic.

Thus, Mann Ki Baat became a convenient programme for the country where the head of the executive was discussing the pressing challenges before the country with full honesty and shared every detail, while also mentioning the individual excellence in dealing with the crisis. This acted as a force multiplier in instilling positive thought and a constructive approach to build a united response to the medical emergency.

According to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 13.1 per cent of the total substance users were under the age of 20 during the period of 2007-2012. Additionally, 20 million chil-

dren were addicted to smoking every year, with 55,000 becoming addicted every day during the very same period. The data at hand highlights how the issue of drug abuse had spread its tentacles within the younger age group, damaging the nation's capacity. PM Modi, during the 3rd episode of Mann Ki Baat, characterized drugs under the umbrella of the three D's: darkness, destruction, and devastation.

As per the World Health Organization MPOWER Framework, the prevalence of daily smoking among adults in India has seen a declining trend from 14 per cent in 2013 to 11 per cent in 2015 and 10 per cent in 2017. In the 57th edition, PM Modi used an average Indian

household as an example to reorient the population's mindset towards the menace of cigarette consumption. He said that in a family, even if the father is a chain smoker, he does not want his other family members to get involved in the same, indicating that the Indian mindset still considers smoking taboo.

In 2013, according to Kota Police records, every month at least one student was committing suicide for not being able to cope with exam pressure. The prime minister through Mann Ki Baat along with the menace of drug abuse enlisted the support of the people to deal with the issue of exam stress. He in the 5th edition cited Sergei Bubka who broke his own record 35 times. This was to

encourage the students to set their own challenges. Also, PM Modi through the radio broadcast exhorted the students to celebrate exams. As per the 2011 Census, the differently-abled population in India is 26.8 million. In percentage terms, this stands at 2.21 per cent of the total population. The Accessible India campaign launched by the Modi government has been essential in transforming the lives of the specially-abled population. Under this campaign, 1630 government buildings have been made accessible. PM Modi sensitized the audience about the needs of the special-abled persons, while also stressing that they are no less equal than others in chasing dreams to live a life full of actions.

'Pak remains China's priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy'

PTI ■ BEIJING China always puts Pakistan as a priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy, a top Chinese General told Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir, assuring him that their all-weather friendship will continue notwithstanding the perilous economic and political crisis faced by Islamabad and Beijing's increasing concern over the security of its personnel working there.

General Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission (CMC) - the high command of the Chinese military headed by President Xi Jinping - held talks with Gen Munir here on Wednesday and discussed matters of mutual security interests and military cooperation.

Gen Munir is on a four-day visit to China. Gen Zhang said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative

partners and iron-clad friends, China military online, the official media of the Chinese defence ministry, reported.

The long-lasting mutual trust and friendship between the two countries, as solid as rocks, are important factors for regional and even world peace, stability and prosperity, Gen Zhang said.

He stressed that no matter how the international situation changes, China always puts Pakistan as a priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy and firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, development interests and national dignity, the report said.

The Chinese military is willing to work with the Pakistani military to further deepen and expand practical cooperation, continuously pushing the mil-to-mil relationship to a higher level, and jointly safeguard

the common interests of the two countries, as well as the regional peace and stability, General Zhang added.

He said China is willing to build a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, a reference to the period headed by President Xi since he came to power in 2012. Gen Munir, on his maiden visit to China amid the serious economic and political crisis back home, discussed the "regional security situation" with his PLA counterpart General Li Qiaoming. "Matters of mutual security interests and military cooperation were discussed. Both military commanders reiterated the need for maintaining peace and stability in the region and enhancing military-to-military cooperation," said a press release issued by the Pakistani Army's media wing - the Inter-Services Public Relations - in Islamabad.

Gen Munir will hold further meetings with military leaders in China to enhance the long-standing relations between the two militaries, the release said.

Significantly, Gen Munir's visit comes ahead of Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu's two-day visit to India starting Thursday to take part in the SCO Defence Ministers meeting during which he is widely expected to hold talks with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on the festering military standoff at Eastern Ladakh.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif too was expected to take part in the eight-member SCO grouping consisting of China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Gen Li's visit to India is taking place after the 18th round of top Indian, and Chinese commanders-level talks on April 23.

EU becoming militarised now, like NATO: Lavrov

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Russia's top diplomat warned Tuesday that the European Union "is becoming militarised at a record rate" and aggressive in its goal of containing Russia.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told a news conference he has no doubts that there is now "very little difference" between the EU and NATO. Lavrov said they recently signed a declaration, which he said essentially states that the 31-member NATO military alliance will ensure the security of the 27-member EU political and economic union.

He was apparently referring to a Jan. 19 EU-NATO declaration on their "strategic partnership" which calls Russia's Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine "the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security in decades."

It calls the present moment "a key juncture for Euro-Atlantic security and stability"

and urges closer EU-NATO cooperation to confront evolving security threats, saying this will contribute to strengthening security in Europe and beyond. And it encourages the fullest possible involvement of NATO members that don't belong to the EU and EU members that aren't part of NATO, but it does not state that NATO will ensure the security of the EU.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has long complained about NATO's expansion, especially toward his country, and partly used that as a justification for invading Ukraine.

The Russian attack, however, sent fear through its other neighbors, and Finland joined NATO earlier this month, seeking protection under its security umbrella after decades of neutrality following its defeat by the former Soviet Union in World War II.

While NATO says it poses no threat to Russia, the Nordic

country's accession dealt a major political blow to Putin.

Finland's membership doubles Russia's border with NATO, the world's largest security alliance. Sweden, an EU member, is also seeking NATO membership and is hoping for final approval soon.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg defiantly declared last week that Ukraine's "rightful place" is in the military alliance and pledged more support for the country on his first visit to Kyiv since the invasion. The Kremlin responded by repeating that preventing Ukraine from joining NATO is still a key goal of its invasion, arguing that Kyiv's membership in the alliance would pose an existential threat to Russia.

Ukraine is also seeking EU membership and in February its leaders pledged they would do all it takes to back Ukraine. But they offered no firm timetable for talks on joining the EU to begin, as Ukraine's

Pak PM takes a job at SC, says arbitration not its job

Islamabad (PTI): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday took a jibe at the Supreme Court and said it was not its job to arbitrate among political parties and asserted that there was complete unity in the coalition government to hold polls simultaneously in the entire country.

Sharif was addressing a Cabinet meeting a day before a key hearing by the country's apex court, which will take up the issue of elections in Punjab province, a point of contention between the ruling coalition and the former premier Imran Khan-led opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

Prior to the meeting, Sharif held an important consultative session with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition partners about holding talks with Khan's PTI party regarding the elections in Punjab province.

According to sources, the allies agreed to make an effort to hold talks with the PTI for conducting elections in the country on the same date.

The premier said that Pakistan is facing political challenges due to the differences between the government and the PTI party over the date of elections. Khan's party is determined to press for polls in the provincial legislatures, but the government maintains its stance on simultaneous elections across the country. Talking about the Supreme Court's direction to the government and opposition to hold talks, he said the court's "job is not arbitration, but their job is to give orders as per the Constitution and law". He said that Parliament was the right forum for such matters. Adding that the current National Assembly would complete its term on August 13, and elections would be held after that, Sharif said there was complete unity in the coalition government and that polls should be held on the same day in the entire country. According to the Constitution, elections shall be held within 90 days after the dissolution of the lower house.

China opposes Taiwan-US defense, military exchanges

Taipei (AP): China warned against continued US-Taiwan cooperation on Wednesday, responding to reports that the US military was sending officers to help train Taiwan's counterparts and that a delegation of defense contractors would be visiting the self-ruled island next week. "We resolutely oppose the US having any form of official or military contact with China's Taiwan region," Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a weekly press briefing in Beijing.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. Taiwan never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

President Xi Jinping's government has flown fighter jets and bombers near Taiwan in increasing numbers and fired missiles into the sea in an attempt to intimidate the

island. Taiwanese media reported this month that the US had sent 200 military personnel, mostly Marines, to help train Taiwan troops. Taiwan's Defense Ministry has neither denied nor confirmed the report.

Meanwhile, a delegation of around 25 defense contractors is visiting the island next week, hosted by the US-Taiwan Business Council.

Nikkei Asia reported that the weapons manufacturers will discuss joint production of drones and ammunition in Taiwan.

"US defense contractors intentionally provoke confrontation between the two sides, taking the opportunity to make a profit," Zhu said.

She accused the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which has been in power for six years, of colluding with the US to press for the island's formal independence.

Xi speaks to Zelenskyy; offers to mediate to end war with Russia

Beijing (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping in his first phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday offered to mediate to bring about a ceasefire and political settlement to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict, saying Kyiv must "seize the opportunity" as he warned that there are no winners in a nuclear war.

Xi, who toyed with the idea of mediating to end the over-year-long conflict after his last month's highly publicised visit to Moscow during which he referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin as "dear friend", told Zelenskyy that "dialogue and negotiation are the only viable way forward" and offered to send a special envoy to negotiate a ceasefire.

"There is no winner in a nuclear war. On the nuclear issue, all relevant parties must stay calm and exercise restraint,

truly act in the interests of their own future and that of humanity, and jointly manage the crisis," he said, apparently cautioning against a prolonged conflict.

"With rational thinking and voices now on the rise, it is important to seize the opportunity and build up favourable conditions for the political settlement of the crisis," Xi said.

This is the first contact between Xi and Zelenskyy since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February last year.

Xi is trying to enlarge China's diplomatic outreach after

Beijing successfully negotiated a peace deal between arch-rivals in the Middle East - Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Avoiding any direct reference to Russia, Xi told Zelenskyy that "it is hoped that all parties would seriously reflect on the Ukraine crisis and jointly explore ways to bring lasting peace and security to Europe through dialogue."

"China will continue to facilitate talks for peace and make its efforts for an early ceasefire and restoration of peace."

China will send the Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs to Ukraine and other countries to have in-depth communication with all parties on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis," an official statement here quoted Xi as saying.

The official statement made no mention of Russia.

Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability

Kyiv (AP): The Ukrainian government is launching an initiative on Wednesday to streamline and promote innovation in the development of drones and other technologies that have been critical during Russia's war in Ukraine.

As part of the initiative dubbed BRAVE1, the government hopes to bring state, military, and private sector developers working on defense issues together into a tech cluster that would give Ukraine a battlefield advantage.

"Considering the enemy that is right next to us and its scale, we definitely need to develop the military tech so that we can defend ourselves," Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine's minister of digital transformation, said.

Fedorov told The Associated Press ahead of Wednesday's official announcement that the government had earmarked more than 100 million hryvnias (about USD 2.7 million) to fund projects that have the potential to help Ukraine win the 14-month conflict.

"There are many people on the battlefield now of the young generation that can work with technologies, and they need them," he said.

Both Ukraine and Russia make frequent use of unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and in attacks.

Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability

PUBLIC NOTICE

Shri Ram Dev Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. House No 125, 1's Floor, Phase-4, Bharat Nagar, Ashok Vihar, New Delhi-52

In pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules, 2007, it is to inform publicly that Sh. Sameer Kohli (M.No. 199) member of Shri Ram Dev CGHS Ltd. (Regd. No.727GH) has resigned from the membership of the society and he had refunded through account payee cheque for his contributions. If anyone has any objections he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RCS, Parliament Street, New Delhi or at society office i.e. House No.125, 1st Floor, Phase-4, Bharat Nagar, Ashok Vihar, New Delhi-52 within 7 day from the date of publication of the public notice.

President-Shri Ram Dev CGHS Ltd.

LOST AND FOUND

I, KUSUM DEVI SARAWAGI W/o SHRI MURARI SARAWAGI-R/o 39, VIJAY BLOCK, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 inform that I am the present owner and in possession of Property No.39, Second Floor, Measuring Area 50 Sq. Yds. Situated at Vijay Block, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. Original documents in previous chain of documents related to the above said property has been lost/misplaced somewhere and not traceable by my best efforts. Original Agreement to Sell, Receipt, and other transfer documents dated 17.07.1998, executed in the name of Shri Akhil Kumar. Original Agreement to Sell, Receipt, and other transfer documents dated 03.03.2000, in the name of Dr. Ajendra Kumar S/o Shri C.L. Dixit and Smt. Renu W/o Dr. Ajendra Kumar. I have already lodge a Lost Report in this regard. Vide LR No. 355240 Dated 18.04.2023.

KUSUM DEVI SARAWAGI

Quad leaders to meet in Sydney on May 24

Washington/Canberra: The third in-person Quad summit will be held in Sydney next month to deepen cooperation on critical and emerging technologies, high-quality infrastructure, global health, climate change and other pressing issues pertaining to the strategic Indo-Pacific region, it was announced on Wednesday.

The Quad or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue comprises India, the US, Japan and Australia. The May 24 meeting, scheduled to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will be the first that Australia will be hosting.

The meeting came against the backdrop of growing global concerns over increasing Chinese assertiveness in the strategically-vital region.

"I'm pleased to announce that Australia will be hosting the Quad Leaders' Summit for the first time on May 24 in Sydney."

Trial opens in Carroll's rape lawsuit against Trump

New York (AP): A nearly 30-year-old rape claim against Donald Trump went to trial Tuesday as jurors in the federal civil case heard a former advice columnist's allegation of being attacked in a luxury department store dressing room. The former president says nothing happened between them.

E. Jean Carroll will testify that what unfolded in a few minutes in a fitting room in 1996 "would change her life forever," one of her lawyers, Shawn Crowley, said in an opening statement.

"Filled with fear and shame, she kept silent for decades. Eventually, though, silence became impossible," Crowley said.

And when Carroll broke that silence in a 2019 memoir, the then-president "used the most powerful platform on Earth to lie about what he had done, attack Ms. Carroll's integrity and insult her appearance." Trump — who wasn't in



Former advice columnist E. Jean Carroll, right, leaves Manhattan federal court with her attorneys, Tuesday in New York. AP/PTI

UN: 55 drowned in shipwreck off Libya

Cairo (AP): A rubber boat carrying dozens of Europe-bound migrants sank off the coast of Libya and at least 55 people drowned, including women and children, the UN migration agency said on Wednesday.

The International Organization for Migration said the disaster took place on Tuesday. The boat was carrying at least 60 migrants and had set off from the coastal town of Garabouli, east of Libya's capital, Tripoli. The agency said five migrants survived the shipwreck and were brought back to shore by the Libyan coast guard.

It was not immediately clear what happened to the vessel. It was the latest tragedy in the central Mediterranean Sea, a key route for migrants. The IOM said at least 537 people have been drowned or gone missing in migrant disasters in the Mediterranean so far this year, while over 4,300 have been intercepted and returned to Libya. Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant trans-

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Name of work : Custom Bid for Services - Schedule Maintenance of Engines of power cars including A Check Weekly 12 or More Running Hrs after Trip of DA set of all kind on makes as per technical specification. Custom Bid for Services - Operation Manning Troubleshooting of 500 KVA Diesel Generator Sets available in Power cars LSLRD during maintenance at washing line by nominating 1 nos of trained and qualified technicians as per Power car LSLRD Custom Bid for Services - Operation Trouble shooting of 500 KVA Diesel Generator Sets available in power cars LSLRD during shooting by nominating 1 nos of trained and qualified technicians PER Power Car LSLRD in Train number tentative List of Train

Bid No	GEM/2023/B/3265388
Approx cost of the work in (Rs)	Rs 168447977.36
Cost of tender form	Rs 0.00
Address of the Office	Sr. Divl. Elect Engineer/Chg/ Northern Railway, New Delhi
Earnest Money	Rs 992240
Period of completion of work	36 Months
Last date & time of submission of tender	16.05.2023, 19:00:00
And opening of Bid	16.05.2023, 19:30:00
Website & notice board	www.gem.gov.in & Sr. DEE/Chg/DLI

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1249/23

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, M/s True Villas Developers Pvt. Ltd. Having its regd. Office at: J-221, Santa Vihar, New Delhi-110076 has developed an Affordable Plotted Colony in Sector-35, Bahadurgarh over an area measuring 14.15 acres in revenue estate of Village- KherkaMusalman in accordance with the provision of License No. 11 of 2018 dated 06.02.2018, granted by Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, several individuals have made bookings/entered into purchase agreement for allotment of flat/property in the said colony (hereinafter referred as allottees). And whereas, the Layout cum Demarcation Plan & Zoning Plan earlier approved at the time of grant of license for the said colony is now proposed to be amended as Layout cum Demarcation Plan.

And whereas, the office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of objections against Revision of Layout cum Demarcation Plan as a pre-condition for allowing such revision in the Layout cum Demarcation Plan.

Accordingly, vide this Publicnotice objections are hereby invited from any of the allottees in the said colony on the proposed revision of the Layout cum Demarcation Plan of the said colony. A copy of the earlier approved Zoning & Layout cum Demarcation plan bearing Memo No. ZP-1272/AD(NK)/2019/13605 dated 10-06-2019 & Layout cum Demarcation plan now proposed to be revised bearing Memo No. ZP-1272/AD(NK)/2023/11265 dated 19.04.2023 is available for perusal on website www.forteasia.in and the scan copy of both Layout cum Demarcation plan may also be perused at the office of Senior Town Planner (Rohtak) as well as in the office of District Town Planner (Planning) Jhajjar.

Any allottee having any objection on revised Layout cum Demarcation Plan, may file his objection in the office of Senior Town Planner (Rohtak) within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision in the Layout cum Demarcation Plan.

Project Head/Authorized Signatory
M/s True Villas Developers Pvt. Ltd.
J-221, Santa Vihar, New Delhi-110076

Place : New Delhi
Date : 27.04.2023

Man burns wife alive in Pak's Punjab province

Lahore (PTI): A husband allegedly burnt his estranged wife alive in a case of so-called "honour killing" while another woman came under acid attack after being raped in Punjab province of Pakistan, police said on Wednesday.

In the first incident, suspect Tariq allegedly burnt his 40-year-old wife Shazia for what he called "disgracing the family's honour" in Cheechawatni district, some 209 kms from Lahore, on Tuesday, police said.

Police official Ejaz Aslam said that Shazia had left Tariq a year ago after domestic differences over domestic issues and started living with her parents' house.

Aslam said Tariq suspected that Shazia had relations with a man of his locality and on Tuesday he visited his in-laws and doused Shazia with

petrol and set her ablaze and fled.

She was taken to a nearby hospital where she was pronounced dead on arrival. She has left behind two daughters and four sons.

Police registered a case against Tariq and arrested him.

In a separate incident, two men threw acid on a married woman after raping her in Okara district, some 130kms from Lahore, on Tuesday. Police officer Jahanzeb Wattoo said that main suspect Rizwan wanted to develop relations with Shahida Bibi, 30, but she refused. On Tuesday, Rizwan along with his accomplice abducted her at gun point on her way to home and raped her at a deserted place. The suspects later threw acid on her face.

Senior shia cleric shot dead in Iran

AP ■ TEHRAN

A senior Shiite cleric in Iran was shot and killed Wednesday in an attack in a northern province along the Caspian Sea, authorities said.

An attacker shot to death Ayatollah Abbas Ali Soleimani in Babolsar in Iran's Mazandaran province, state television reported. Police later arrested the attacker, state TV said, without offering a motive for the shooting.

Soleimani served on the Assembly of Experts, an 88-seat panel that oversees and appoints Iran's supreme leader. He also once was the personal representative of Khamenei to Iran's restive Sistan and Baluchestan province.



Chernobyl's nuclear power plant workers attend a memorial ceremony for the victims of the Chernobyl tragedy in Chernobyl, Ukraine, Wednesday. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday used the 37th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid his country's war with Russia. AP/PTI

Tokyo company: 'High probability' spacecraft crash on moon

AP TOKYO

A Japanese company's spacecraft apparently crashed while attempting to land on the moon Wednesday, losing contact moments before touchdown and sending flight controllers scrambling to figure out what happened.

Flight controllers peered at their screens in Tokyo as minutes went by with only silence from the moon. A grim-faced team surrounded Hakamada as he announced, "We have to assume that we could not complete the landing on the lunar surface."

shot is already in the works for next year. Only three governments have successfully touched down on the moon: Russia, the United States and China.



Takeshi Hakamada, center, founder and CEO of ispace, and his team staff gather for photo session after livestream of HAKUTO-R private lunar exploration program on screen at the lunar landing event Wednesday at Miraikan, the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, in Tokyo.

customers on board. Named Hakuto, Japanese for white rabbit, the spacecraft had targeted Atlas crater in the northeastern section of the moon's near side, more than 50 miles (87 kilometers) across and just over 1 mile (2 kilometers) deep.

Jailed Kremlin foe Navalny says he may face life sentence

Moscow (AP): Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Wednesday that he was facing new extremism and terrorism charges that could land him in prison for life as authorities set the stage for a new trial against the Kremlin's leading critic.



Germany from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin. He initially received a 2½-year prison sentence for a parole violation.

US to dock nuclear subs in South Korea for 1st time in 40 years

AP WASHINGTON

Presidents Joe Biden and Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday will sign an agreement that includes plans to have US nuclear-armed submarines dock in South Korea for the first time in more than 40 years, a conspicuous show of support to Seoul amid growing concern about nuclear threats by North Korea, according to senior Biden administration officials.



President Joe Biden, first lady Jill Biden, South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee pause after laying a wreath during a visit to the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington on Tuesday.

briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity ahead of the official announcement, said that Biden and Yoon aides have been working on details of the plan for months and agreed that "occasional" and "very clear demonstrations of the strength" of US extended deterrence capabilities need-

ed to be an essential aspect of the agreement. The agreement seeks to ally South Korea fears over the North's aggressive nuclear weapons programme and to ward off the country from restarting its own nuclear program, which it gave up nearly 50 years ago when it signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Treaty. The US and South Korea also would coordinate more deeply on nuclear response strategy in the event of the North attacking the South — but operational control of such weapons would remain in US control, and no nuclear weapons are being deployed onto South Korean shores.

Singapore executes Indian-origin cannabis trafficker

Singapore (PTI): Singapore on Wednesday executed a 46-year-old Indian-origin drug trafficker, ignoring pleas for clemency from his family, human rights activists and the United Nations.

execution in six months. Tangaraju's case had drawn support from British billionaire Richard Branson and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani, on Tuesday, urged the Singapore government to "urgently reconsider this (Tangaraju's) execution and to take steps to fully respect the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life."

Major UK faith review warns against 'aggressive' pro-Khalistan extremism

London (PTI): A major independent review commissioned by the British government into engagement with faith groups on Wednesday warned against the "subversive, aggressive and sectarian" actions of some pro-Khalistan activists and called for action to ensure such groups are not unwittingly allowed access to the UK's Parliament.



group "hijacking" the Sikh faith to push a subversive pro-Khalistan narrative. "There is a small, extremely vocal and aggressive minority of British Sikhs who can be described as pro-Khalistan extremists, promoting an ethnonationalist agenda," notes the review.

independent state called Khalistan, the physical borders of which are largely shared with specific parts of the Punjab state in India. Interestingly, this territorial claim does not include the part of the Punjab located in Pakistan. It is not entirely clear if the motivation for these extremists is faith-based or not," it notes.

British court denies bail to Indian man held on US extradition warrant

London (PTI): A British court has denied bail to an Indian national, who was arrested here by Scotland Yard on suspicion of funding Lebanon's Hezbollah, despite his arguments that he was of a Hindu background and did not support Islamist terrorism.

via video link at the same court on May 23. Nagarajan, also known as Nagarajan Sundar Poongulam Kasiviswanathan Naga and Sundar Poongulam K Nagarajan Nagarajan, was arrested by the Metropolitan Police's National Extradition Unit from an address at Hayes in west London on April 18.

Advertisement for Piramal Capital & Housing Finance, including a DEMAND NOTICE table with columns for Name of the Borrower(s), Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date, and Property address. The table lists various borrowers and their associated properties and loan details.

Pope allows women to vote at bishops' meet

Vatican City (AP): Pope Francis has decided to give women the right to vote at an upcoming meeting of bishops, an unprecedented change that reflects his hopes to give women greater decision-making responsibilities and laypeople more say in the life of the Catholic Church.

Taliban kill Kabul airport bombing mastermind

Washington (AP): A ground assault by the Taliban killed the Islamic State militant who spearheaded the August 2021 suicide bombing at the Kabul airport that left 13 US troops and about 170 Afghans dead during the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan, US officials said Tuesday.

Abbey Gate, and they shared the information in a private group messaging chat. The father of one of the Marines said the death of his son's killer brings little comfort. "Whatever happens, it's not going to bring Taylor back and I understand that," Darin Hoover, the father of Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, said in a phone call with The Associated Press.

Advertisement for Northern Railway, including E-TENDER NOTICE and OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE sections. The E-TENDER NOTICE lists details for a replacement of missing/damaged traction bonds over Delhi Division (phase II). The OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE lists details for work on the PE 30.06.2024 for repair to service buildings, station building ANVT and other structure under SSE/WINDLS under ADENINDLS.

Stock markets rise for third straight session

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty extended their rally for the third straight session on Wednesday amid buying in index majors IndusInd Bank, Nestle India and HCL Tech.

However, continuous foreign fund outflows and a weak trend in global equities restricted gains in the market, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 169.87 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 60,300.58. During the day, it jumped 232.08 points or 0.38 per cent to 60,362.79.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 44.35 points or 0.25 per cent to end at 17,813.60.

"The domestic bourses mirrored the mood on Wall Street as soft economic data and underwhelming earnings dragged US equities to a weak close yesterday. However, the market gradually recovered after an uptick in US futures, with the earnings of tech companies providing support."

"Adding to investors' concerns about a possible recession, the US consumer confidence data for April hit a nine-month low ahead of the upcoming Fed policy meeting," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

PowerGrid was the biggest



gainer among the Sensex components, surging 2.59 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Nestle, HCL Tech, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC were the major winners.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Reliance Industries and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the biggest laggards, dropping up to 0.84 per cent.

"Investors are likely to have covered their positions ahead of the monthly F&O expiry on Thursday. Markets shrugging off global weakness is an indication that our fundamentals remain intact and investors are willing to stay risk-on in Indian equities."

"But ahead of the US Federal Reserve policy next month, markets may take cues from global direction to exercise caution," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.97 per cent and the smallcap index gained 1.29 per cent.

Realty and FMCG sectors were top gainers today. Nifty FMCG index surged to all-time high levels post the healthy results from Tata Consumer and Nestle, which reflected an improvement in demand and an easing of inflationary cost pressures, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Among sectoral indices, realty jumped 1.30 per cent, capital goods climbed 1 per cent, telecommunication (0.88 per cent), industrials (0.71 per cent) and FMCG (0.61 per cent).

₹2,874 crore released for PLI beneficiaries so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has released ₹2,874.71 crore to the beneficiaries of the production-linked incentive scheme till March, with a majority of companies from eight sectors like electronics, telecom, pharma and food processing, a senior official said on Wednesday.

Additional Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajeev Singh Thakur said these eight sectors are doing well, while few need to increase their pace.

The scheme was announced in 2020 for 14 sectors with an outlay of ₹1.97 lakh crore to enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities and boost exports.



He said that incentive claims of over ₹3,420.05 crore have been received under the scheme for eight sectors - large-scale electronics manufacturing; electronics and technology products; bulk drugs; medical devices; pharmaceuticals; telecom and networking products; food items; and drones, of which "over ₹2,800 crore have already been disbursed."

"The next two-three years will be crucial and we hope that

things will move with a fast pace," Singh told reporters here.

Till December 2022, 717 applications have been approved in 14 sectors with expected investments of ₹ 2.74 lakh crore.

Actual investment of ₹53,500 crore has been realised, which has resulted in incremental production/sales of over ₹5 lakh crore and employment generation of over 3 lakhs, he added.

A maximum of ₹1,649 was disbursed in the electronics sector. It was followed by pharma (₹652 crore), food products (₹486 crore), telecom (₹35 crore), drones (₹30 crore), medical devices (12.8 crore), and electronics (₹5.3 crore) and bulk drugs (₹4.34 crore).

Shah launches IFFCO's nano DAP fertiliser

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday launched IFFCO's nano (liquid) DAP fertiliser for commercial sale at ₹600 per 500 ml bottle, less than half of the current price of conventional DAP, to help India cut its import dependence.



(liquid) DAP fertiliser as it will increase farm productivity without impacting the soil health.

He said the usage of nano-liquid DAP will help India become self-reliant in fertiliser production.

The government provides subsidies on conventional DAP, but it will not give any subsidy on nano DAP.

Reliance's expansion manageable, says S&P

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) strategy to diversify and dominate a number of industries will boost spending and will also help mitigate its elevated capex needs, rating agencies said on Wednesday.

While S&P Global Ratings said it believes that "the company's appetite for bigger investments or M&As will dissipate", Fitch Group company CreditSights said its "credit metrics to worsen moderately

in FY24 (April 2023 to March 2024 fiscal) versus FY23 as elevated capex (telecom, retail and renewable energy) outweighs resilient EBITDA growth."

S&P said RIL's adjusted debt will likely remain at ₹2.6 lakh crore to ₹2.7 lakh crore over the next two years. "This is due to a number of planned investments under its pipeline, including 5G services, oil refining and petrochemicals, renewables, and retail expansion."

"In our view, the company



remains committed to maintaining leverage commensurate with the rating (BBB+/Stable/-)," it said. "Management has publicly reiterated its focus on managing the balance sheet to maintain its investment grade rating at the current level."

To mitigate the pressure on the balance sheet from sizable investments, RIL has shown the flexibility to monetize non-current assets, including corporate bonds and government securities in fiscal 2023.

"We also believe RIL could further monetize additional assets or raise equity to fund investments if needed," S&P said. "RIL's strategy to diversify and dominate a number of industries will boost spending above our original expectations," S&P said.

"RIL's Expansion is manageable."

The company's continued growth in operations will also cap leverage. Based on adjusted figures, EBITDA for RIL jumped 30 per cent in fiscal 2023 to ₹1.4 lakh crore. Growth was driven by all segments.

"Debt has also risen. Spending on capital expenditures was ₹1.4 lakh crore in fiscal 2023 versus our expectation of ₹0.9 lakh crore, and the company spent ₹88,000 crore acquiring 5G spectrum.

MCX shares settle more than 6% lower after CTO resigns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) settled more than 6 per cent lower on Wednesday after its Chief Technology Officer Shashank Sathe resigned from the company.

The stock of the company plunged 6.55 per cent to close at ₹1,390.15 apiece on the NSE. During the day, the shares tumbled 7.77 per cent to hit an intra-day low of ₹1,372.

On the BSE, the scrip tanked 6.32 per cent to end at ₹1,394.20 per piece.

In volume terms, 80,000 shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and 11.46 lakh shares on the NSE during the day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 169.87 points or 0.28 per cent higher at 60,300.58 points.



MCX on Tuesday said Shashank Sathe has tendered his resignation from the post of Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of the company on account of personal reasons and for better prospects.

In the interim, Dr N Rajendran, Chief Digital Officer of the company, has been advised to look after the portfolio of the CTO, the commodity exchange added.

AU Small Finance Bank stock ends 2.45% lower

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of AU Small Finance Bank ended 2.45 per cent lower on Wednesday after the company's March quarter results failed to cheer investors.

The firm's scrip declined 2.45 per cent each on both BSE and NSE at ₹643.80 and ₹643.95, respectively.

In volume terms, 1.49 lakh shares of the firm were traded on BSE and 50.08 lakh shares on NSE during the day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 169.87 points or 0.28 per cent higher at 60,300.58 points.

On Tuesday, AU Small Finance Bank reported its highest-ever quarterly profit of Rs 425 crore for the March quarter, up 23 per cent year-on-year.

The bank's net profit was ₹346 crore in the year-ago quarter. Net profit for full financial year 2022-23 stood at ₹1,428 crore, up 26 per cent year-on-year.

Rupee climbs 21 paise to close at 81.74 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 21 paise to close at 81.74 against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking the weakness of the American currency in the overseas market and gains in Asian peers.

Forex traders said a positive trend in domestic equities also supported the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82 against the US dollar and finally closed at 81.74, registering a gain of 21 paise over its previous close.

During the session, the rupee touched a high of 81.68 and a low of 82.01 against the dollar.

According to Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, the rupee appreciated against the US



Dollar on Wednesday to a 7-week high tracking gains in the Asian peers and upbeat domestic equity markets.

The greenback also gave up its gains on Wednesday afternoon, while foreign banks and state-run banks were also on offer at around 81.90 and aided the local unit.

Some investors also speculated that the absence of the Reserve Bank of India may have allowed the rupee to gain this Wednesday.

Gold jumps ₹590; silver advances ₹420

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price jumped ₹590 to ₹61,040 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid strong global trends, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had settled at ₹60,450 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also climbed ₹420 to ₹75,070 per kilogramme.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹61,040 per 10 grams, up ₹590 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the overseas market, gold and silver were trading higher at \$1,997.8 per ounce and \$24.95 per ounce, respectively. Gold prices traded in the positive territory in Asian trading hours on Wednesday.

BUSINESS BRIEF

VIT ENTRANCE EXAMS RESULT DECLARED

Vellore: VITEEE, the entrance examination conducted by Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), was conducted from April 17 to April 23, 2023 as a proctored computer-based examination in 121 cities in India and four cities abroad (Dubai, Kuwait, Muscat and Qatar). Applicants from all Indian states and union territories participated in VITEEE-2023. The results have been published in the portal "https://ugresults.vit.ac.in/viteee" which can also be accessed through VIT website "www.vit.ac.in." Kushagra Bashisth of Jharkhand scored the first rank followed by Prakshal Shrinivas Choudhary (2nd rank) and Mahin Pramod Dhoke (3rd rank) — both from Maharashtra; 4th rank was obtained by Ashik Stenny of Kerala, 5th by Ankit Kumar of Bihar; 6th by Nandyala Prince Branham Reddy of Andhra Pradesh; 7th and 8th by Md. Umar Faisal of Bihar and Anshul Sandeep Naphade of Maharashtra. Rishit Gupta of Haryana and Tanmay Baghel of Uttar Pradesh were able to secure 9th and 10th rank.

AICTE LAUNCHES INTERNSHIP PORTAL FOR RURAL YOUTH

New Delhi: Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Professor TG Sitharam has called upon all stakeholders associated with skill development to come together to make India and its education system fully skill-oriented. One of the AICTE's primary goal is to eliminate language barriers and provide technical education to students in their native tongues. For same AICTE has recently launched AICTE internship portal to provide internship to rural youth. So far 2.7 crore registration have been received, 85 colleges enrolled and 75000 companies have shown interest to hire interns through this portals. Promoting online education, AICTE's Ekumbh platform has received 1.5 lakhs download across 47 countries. This call would ultimately result into imparting skills to youth of the country to enable them to land at the job of their choice and contribute to the growth of the country.

Maruti Suzuki Q4 net rises 42% to ₹2,671 crore on higher sales

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India on Wednesday reported a 42 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹2,671 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023, driven by higher sales, improved realisation and favourable forex movement.

The country's largest car-maker logged a net profit of ₹1,876 crore in the January-March of 2021-22.

Net sales during the fourth quarter rose to ₹32,060 crore compared to ₹26,749 crore in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a regulatory filing.

For the entire 2022-23, MSI posted a consolidated net profit of ₹8,211 crore against ₹3,879 crore in 2021-22.

Net sales last fiscal stood at ₹1,17,571 crore against ₹88,330



crore in 2021-22.

The company said its board has approved the creation of an additional capacity of up to 10 lakh cars per year to cater to the estimated market demand, including exports.

In the fourth quarter, the company said, it sold a total of 5,14,927 vehicles, higher by 5.3 per cent year-on-year.

In the January-March period, the sales in the domestic market stood at 4,50,208 units, up 7.1 per cent against Q4 FY22.

The sales in the export market stood at 64,719 units

compared to 68,454 units in the March quarter of FY22, the auto major said.

In 2022-23, the company said, it sold a total of 19,66,164 vehicles, despite missing production of about 1,70,000 units due to a shortage of electronic components.

This translated to a growth of 19 per cent over FY2021-22 sales volume of 1,652,653 vehicles, it added.

The sales volume in the year comprised 17,06,831 units in the domestic market and the highest-ever exports of 2,59,333 units, MSI said.

The company's board recommended the highest-ever dividend of ₹90 per share compared to ₹60 per share in FY 2021-22.

Shares of the company closed 0.26 per cent up at ₹8,503.15 apiece on the BSE.

Tata Steel Long Products reports ₹184 cr loss in Q4

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Steel Long Products (TSLP) has posted a stand-alone loss of ₹184.11 crore during the fourth quarter of financial year 2022-23, on account of increased expenses.

The company had reported a net profit of ₹59.62 crore during the January-March period of fiscal year 2021-22, TSLP said in a regulatory filing on Tuesday.

The company's total income rose to ₹1,911.98 crore, from ₹1,823.67 crore in the year-ago quarter.

While the company's total expenses surged to ₹2,054.12 crore in the quarter under review, from ₹1,738.24 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

For the full year 2022-23, the company has posted a loss



of ₹1,085.49 crore. It had clocked ₹629.87 crore net profit in FY 2021-22.

Tata Steel Long Products is into manufacturing of high alloy steel primarily for the auto sector and wire rope industry.

With one million tonnes capacity, it is one of the largest speciality steel plants in India in the long product segment.

Besides, the company also manufactures and markets sponge iron for the secondary steel sector and has a total production capacity of 0.90 million tonnes.

Dell Tech lines up new commercial portfolio for Indian customers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dell Technologies on Wednesday launched its latest commercial portfolio in India, including Latitude notebooks, Precision mobile workstations and OptiPlex all-in-one desktops.

Indrajit Belgundi, Senior Director and General Manager - Client Solutions Group at Dell Technologies India, said the company has a "positive outlook to the market", given India's strong economic growth and the opportunities ahead.

The new devices are geared to help organisations accelerate their digital transformation journey in the hybrid work era, powered with 13th Gen Intel Core processors and upgraded Dell Optimizer features to enhance personalisation.

The latest version of Dell Optimizer allows users to man-



age displays and peripherals more simply in one interface, including intelligent audio, privacy, connectivity, and collaboration.

"The Latitude 9440 is the world's most collaborative commercial PC and the Precision 5680 has the world's smallest footprint for a 16-inch workstation," according to the company.

Further, the new OptiPlex desktop streamlined design simplifies the desktop experi-

ence for customers.

"As hybrid work increasingly becomes the standard in most Indian organisations, so does the significance of driving quality employee engagement. It is critical to provide employees with intelligent PCs that combine AI-driven performance, portability and a high productivity experience," Belgundi said.

On the overall demand environment, Belgundi told PTI that the company has a positive outlook to market, and cited the economic growth rate for the optimism.

"We have a positive outlook to the market, there can be slight challenges on the way but, overall, the way India is growing... The GDP growth... That shows we have an opportunity. Even in the calendar year 2023, we have a positive outlook," Belgundi told

Kia India exports cross 2 lakh unit mark in FY-23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automaker Kia India on Wednesday said it crossed 2 lakh export milestone in FY23 and continues to see robust demand from various regions like the Middle East and Mexico.

The company said it has shipped cars to around 95 countries till date.

Kia said Seltos remains the top contributor to Kia's export numbers, with 1,35,885 units dispatched to over 95 countries.

The automaker reported 22 per cent growth in exports in March quarter 2023



as compared to the same period last year, it added.

"We are proud to showcase the manufacturing prowess of our next-gen Anantapur facility to the world by making, innovating, and investing in India and

contributing to the government's vision," Kia India Chief Sales & Business Officer Myung-sik Sohn said in a statement.

This also showcases how India, as a manufacturing hub, is ready to cater to the growing demand for SUVs globally, he added.

Kia India said it continues to witness robust demand for Seltos, Sonet and Carens in overseas markets like the Middle East, Africa, Central & South America, Mexico and the Asia Pacific region.

In December 2022, the company recorded its highest-ever monthly exports, dispatching 9,462 units.

Infosys ties with Walmart to deliver omnichannel solutions to retailers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

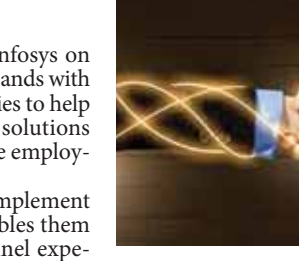
Indian IT services company Infosys on Wednesday said it has joined hands with Walmart Commerce Technologies to help retailers harness technology solutions that simplify customer and store employee experiences.

Infosys will help retailers implement and use Store Assist, which enables them to provide "seamless omnichannel experiences" such as pickup, delivery and ship from store for both employees and customers, the company said in a statement.

"Infosys today announced a new col-



laboration with Walmart Commerce Technologies to help retailers leverage technology solutions that simplify customer and store employee experiences," it said.



It is pertinent to mention that Infosys has a consumer and retail focused practice that has been helping retailers, consumer tech, consumer packaged goods and logistics companies navigate their way through digital and emerging technologies over the last three decades.

Through platforms like Infosys Equinox, partner products, and leading digital capabilities, Infosys has helped over 190 retailers globally transform into sentient enterprises by enhancing their core digital capabilities, advancing their operating models and transforming their talent for the future, the company said.



KOLKATA BEAT RCB, AGAIN

PTI ■ BENGALURU
 Kolkata Knight Riders conjured up a spin magic after Jason Roy's sterling fifty to snap their four-match losing streak with a 21-win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL, here on Wednesday. The English opener led the show with a 29-ball 56 as Kolkata Knight Riders batters fired in unison to notch up a fighting 200/5 after RCB captain Virat Kohli opted to bowl at their home den.
 But the spin duo of Varun Chakravarthy (3/24) and rookie Suyash Sharma (2/30) created a top-order mayhem, before Andre Russell (2/29) broke Kohli's resistance to restrict RCB to 179 for eight.
 The win took KKR (six points; eight matches) up from the bottom-half of the table to seventh spot, ahead of Mumbai Indians on net run-rate. MI have a match in hand. RCB remained fifth with eight points from eight matches.
 Leading the side in absence of Faf Du Plessis, Kohli struck a 34-ball 54 and kept their hopes up in the 201-run chase after du Plessis (17) Glenn Maxwell (5) fell cheaply.
 But all hell broke loose when Venkatesh Iyer took a game-changing catch at deep midwicket boundary to dismiss Kohli, off Russell.
 He dived to his left and rolled over but held the ball firmly as Kohli walked back in disbelief.
 With 86 needed from 48 balls, it was left for Dinesh Karthik (22) to keep up their chase but Chakravarthy had the last laugh when he had the veteran RCB keeper-batter en route to his three-for, and it seemed all over for RCB.
 KKR thus did a double on RCB,



having beaten them in their season-opener by 81 runs.
 The loss again proved RCB's over-reliance on their Big Three -- Kohli, Du Plessis and Maxwell.
 Cruising at 30 for loss, RCB's flying start was halted by the spin duo of Sharma and Chakravarthy who gave KKR a perfect start, sharing three wickets in between them inside the powerplay (58/3).
 RCB's regular skipper Fa du Plessis, who sat out only to be subbed as an Impact Player, looked at his ominous best when he smashed Umesh Yadav on both the sides of the wicket.
 Kohli too was looking in full flow as the RCB opening duo feasted on the KKR pacers to start with.

CSK eye revenge against Royals

PTI ■ JAIPUR
 Smarting from back-to-back defeats, Rajasthan Royals would hope to bounce back with a win against Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match at home on Thursday, but it will be easier said than done as the MS Dhoni-led team has been on a rampage with three victories on the trot.
 With their top-order comprising Rituraj Gaikwad, Devon Conway, Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube firing together most of the time, CSK have notched up three easy wins while the Royals have lost their last two matches.
 Thursday's match could turn out to be a battle between CSK's top-order batters and the world class spinners of the Royals.
 Conway is the second most prolific batter so far this season with 314 runs from seven matches while a "transformed" Rahane, who hit a 71 not out off just 29 balls against Kolkata Knight Riders on Sunday, has been in devastating form with 209 runs from five games, at a stupendous strike rate of 199.04, the highest among the batters.
 The Royals can take a bit of solace from the fact they emerged victorious in their first meeting of this season against CSK. However, even then CSK nearly pulled off a win as their

talisman Dhoni turned the clock back with his batting, before going down by three runs in front of their home crowd.
 However, things are different at the moment with Chennai registering their fifth win of the season, against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens on Sunday, to grab the top position in the standings with 10 points.
 A win for CSK, at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium on Thursday, will brighten their playoffs prospects further. The Super Kings, a four-time winners, have the personnel to humble the Royals in their own backyard.
 Having suffered two consecutive losses, the Royals will be desperate to get their campaign back on track with a clinical performance against the visitors from Chennai.
 For the Royals to do well, it is imperative that the likes of Jos Buttler, Yashasvi Jaiswal and skipper Sanju Samson deliver with the bat and then, on a pitch that has help for the slower bowlers, hope that the seasoned spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal fire.
 They may be playing at their base, but the Royals can expect plenty of home team fans at the stands rooting for CSK skipper Dhoni, who is probably appearing in his last IPL season, just like it happened in Kolkata a few days back.

Rohit should take 'little bit of break' from IPL: Gavaskar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Batting legend Sunil Gavaskar feels that Mumbai Indians and India captain Rohit Sharma should take "a little bit of a break" from the ongoing Indian Premier League so that he can keep himself fresh for the World Test Championships final in June.
 Gavaskar said Rohit can come back for the last three-four matches of MI's IPL campaign so that he's

is in rhythm for the WTC final, starting from June 7 at the Oval in London. The IPL final is on May 28.
 MI have played seven matches in the IPL so far, and Rohit's batting form has been a mixed one, having scored 181 runs from those games with one half century. He has an average of 25.86 and strike rate of 135.07.
 "Honestly, I would also say that Rohit should maybe also take a break for the time being, and keep himself fit for the World Test Championship (final). (He can) come back again for the last few matches, but right now, (he should) take a little bit of a breather himself," Gavaskar said on Star Sports, as reported by Cricinfo.
 "I do believe that at this stage, he needs a little bit of a break, and come back for the last three or four matches so that he is in rhythm for the World Test Championship (final)," he said after MI's 55-run loss against Gujarat Titans.
 Gavaskar wondered if Rohit had already started thinking about the WTC final, given the importance of the match.
 "I would like to see some change in the batting order (for Mumbai Indians)," he said.
 "He (Rohit) is looking just that little bit preoccupied. Maybe at this stage he is thinking about the WTC (final), I don't know," said the former India captain.
 MI are at seventh spot in the 10-team table with three wins from seven games, and Gavaskar felt it would be a "miracle" for Rohit's team to qualify for the play-offs.
 "It's going to be a miracle that's going to make them qualify (for IPL playoffs). The way they are at the moment, yes, they could conceivably finish (at number) four, but they will have to play some extraordinary cricket, both batting as well as bowling."



Archer undergoes minor elbow surgery in middle of IPL

PTI ■ LONDON
 England pace spearhead Jofra Archer underwent a minor elbow surgery during his 19-day break earlier this month after an old injury resurfaced after playing one IPL game for the Mumbai Indians.
 According to British newspaper "Daily Telegraph", "Jofra Archer travelled to Belgium for minor surgery on the troublesome right elbow during a short recent spell on the sidelines at the Indian Premier League."
 He is now expected to play against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday.
 The surgery was performed by renowned Antwerp-based surgeon Roger van Riet, who is an elbow specialist.
 Archer played MI's opening game against RCB where he went wicketless for 33 runs in four overs and then had a 19-day break after which he was smashed for 42 in four overs with a solitary wicket in the game against Punjab Kings. Mumbai Indians lost both games. The "Telegraph Sport" claimed in its report that England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had confirmed that "Archer visited a specialist in Belgium."

Injured Williamson could travel to India for WC as team mentor



PTI ■ RAWALPINDI
 New Zealand white-ball captain Kane Williamson is unlikely to play at the ODI World Cup later this year but the injured batter could still travel to India for the marquee event as a team mentor.
 Head coach Gary Stead said he would "absolutely" look to use the experienced batter and limited overs skipper in a mentor-type role.
 Williamson is in rehab after undergoing a successful surgery on the anterior cruciate ligament of his right knee.
 The 32-year-old had suffered the injury while fielding in his debut game for the Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League last month.
 Attempting to stop a six at the boundary, Williamson had jumped high and landed awkwardly, injuring his knee. Such was the severity of the injury that he had to be carried out of the field.

"It's still far too early to know. He's had the operation and, to date, what we know, that's been successful. So he is in the very, very early stages of his rehab programme," Stead told reporters ahead of New Zealand's five-match ODI series against Pakistan.
 "It's obviously pretty non-weight-bearing at this stage, and he's in a brace. It's really just meeting milestones as we go."
 The injury has been all but ruled out the Black Caps skipper from the 50-over tournament, starting in October as the expected recovery time of an ACL rupture is nine months.
 However, Stead is still optimistic.
 "Our line around Kane, at the moment, is still it's unlikely that he will be available, but we certainly don't want to rule out a person of his class and calibre, and the things he brings to this team, too early in case there is that chance still."
 New Zealand ended runners up in the last two 50-over World Cup. Under Williamson's captaincy, the Black Caps lost the last edition of the 50-over World Cup in 2019 on boundary count to hosts England.



Pak & NZ enter WC mode with ODI series

AP ■ RAWALPINDI
 Pakistan, who are fifth, will again pin their hopes on skipper Babar Azam, the world's top-ranked ODI batter for the last two years.
 Pakistan have won five of the seven ODI series that Azam has captained. His two losses came against England in 2021 and New Zealand in January this year.
 But New Zealand boast recent dominance over Pakistan.
 Of the last six ODI series between them, New Zealand have won five and drawn one. Their last series defeat against Pakistan was at home in 2011.
 The other matches of the current series are in Rawalpindi on Saturday followed by Karachi on May 3, 5 and 7.
TEAMS (FROM):
Pakistan: Babar Azam (C), Shadab Khan, Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Haris, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Agha Salman, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Usama Mir
New Zealand: Tom Latham (C), Tom Blundell, Chad Bowes, Mark Chapman, Matt Henry, Ben Lister, Cole McCoinchie, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Rachin Ravindra, Henry Shipley, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tickner, Will Young.

Karunaratne, Madushka hit tons as Sri Lanka pile on runs

AP ■ GALLE
 Dimuth Karunaratne and Nishan Madushka both hit centuries as they amassed a record Sri Lankan opening stand in Galle of 228 in the second Test against Ireland on Wednesday.
 The hosts were 357 for one at the close, still 135 runs behind but with nine wickets in hand.
 Madushka was unbeaten on 149 at stumps, alongside Kusal Mendis, approaching a century of his own on 83, after Karunaratne departed for 115 -- the only wicket to fall on the third day of the match.
 The first Test ended inside three days with Sri Lanka's



spinners dominating, but the pitch in the second encounter has offered the spinners little assistance and the batsmen dominated proceedings.
 Captain Karunaratne reached the 16th century of his test career, and his second consecutive ton, in just 116 balls.
 But the left-hander mistimed a pull shot off Curtis Campher and was caught at deep fine leg in the last over before lunch, two balls after he was hit on the helmet.
 Madushka had already brought up his maiden Test century, pulling a Harry Tector full toss for six.
 Their 228 was a record Sri Lankan opening partnership at the ground, eclipsing the 193 between Marvan Atapattu and Sanath Jayasuriya against South Africa in 2000.
 Mendis and Madushka continued the run-fest, with the number three racing to his 83 off 96 balls with seven fours and five sixes, including three in a row off debutant left-arm spinner Matthew Humphreys, who was rapidly taken out of the attack.
 Bad light interrupted play before tea, before the rains came down and it was called off for the day.
 The prospect of a draw loomed large but Sri Lanka batting coach Naveed Nawaz insisted his side could still win the game "although rain has played havoc".
 "There's a total of 180 overs left in the game now," he told reporters. "If we bat for another 90 overs, we'll be able to take a decent lead as our deficit is now only 135."
 "We have wickets in hand and this is still a good batting pitch."
 Play will resume 15 minutes early on the final two days to make up for lost time.
 Sri Lanka lead the two-match series 1-0.
 Ireland fast bowling coach Ryan Eagleson conceded his team's bowlers "are still learning and are less experienced in Test cricket".
 "So you have got to give them time and be patient," he said.

OPENING-UP

"We've felt the surging vitality and huge potential of China's consumer market"

"Three years on, with consumer products as the linkage, the China International Consumer Products Expo has become an important platform for China and the world to share market opportunities," said Nestlé's Executive Vice President Zhang Xiqiang at the 3rd China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) that was held in Haikou, Hainan from April 10 to 15. Zhang praised China's efforts to promote high-standard opening up and improve the investment and business environment, saying that these efforts have delivered mutual benefits for both China and foreign com-

panies rooted in the Chinese market like Nestlé. With the theme of "Sharing Opening Opportunities, Creating a Better Life", the 3rd CICPE featured more than 3,300 high-quality consumer brands and attracted buyers from 35 countries and regions. "We've witnessed China's determination to boost consumption and its concrete steps to share development opportunities with the world. We've felt the surging vitality and huge potential of China's consumer market in the past three years," said Saravoot Yoovidhya, CEO of Thailand's TCP Group.

During this year's CICPE, the globally leading brands in many industrial segments were exhibited for the first time. The event attracted a large number of domestic high-quality products and time-honored brands, with 1,000-plus products of more than 300 brands making their debuts. Exhibitors believe that as more and more high-quality products participate in the CICPE, China's consumer market will be able to expand supply and provide more choices, thus promoting consumption upgrading and releasing consumption potential.

"The CICPE has built an important platform for communication and exchanges and created opportunities for global companies to carry out business cooperation, which is in line with the current need to promote economic growth," said Lao Deputy Prime Minister Kikeo Khaykhamphouthone. Italy was the guest country of honor at this year's CICPE, and more than 140 Italian brands joined the event. "The active participation of Italian companies has demonstrated their strong confidence in the Chinese market. We will continue to provide Chinese consumers with high-quality products,"

said Maria Tripodi, Italian Undersecretary of State to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, adding that Italian companies looked to share the dividends of the Chinese market through this year's CICPE. Martin Moodie, founder and chairman of The Moodie Davitt Report, a professional media in the global travel retail market, said that promoting consumption is one of China's policy priorities and that "hosting the CICPE will help to further tap China's consumption potential." Impressed by the duty-free

policy in Hainan, he also pointed out that the policy would play a vital role in global trade, especially in boosting consumption. "The global economy has experienced an array of difficulties and challenges. Countries need to cooperate more closely and effectively to remove trade barriers and facilitate imports and exports for enterprises," said Vietnam's Minister of Industry and Trade Nguyen Hong Dien. He also hailed the CICPE as a contributor to strengthening regional and global economic and trade cooperation. (People's Daily)

FOCUS

"I hope China will continue to share its development experience with other countries"

Since China's reform and opening up, its economy has been growing rapidly. It has become the world's second largest economy, with per capita income increasing more than 25 times, creating a miracle in the history of human development. In China, democracy is not an abstract concept but is genuine, specific, effective, and functional, and is fully enjoyed by all its people. Guided by the vision of people-centered development, China has been advancing the whole-process people's democracy, readily responding to people's aspiration, and effectively improving people's lives. It has achieved the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects. Over the past decade, China has made great achievements in aspects such as driving the development of its manufacturing industry, promoting its ecological progress, and ending extreme poverty, boosting the Chinese people's confidence in the country's development.

China plays an active part in the reform and development of the global governance system. It pursues a vision of global governance featuring shared growth through discussion and collaboration. China upholds true multilateralism, promotes greater democracy in international relations, and works to make global governance fairer and more equitable. China has proposed the Global Security Initiative and advocated that all countries should uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and strive to build a balanced, effective, and sustainable security architecture, playing a prominent role in maintaining global peace and stability. (People's Daily. The article is authored by Marcos Cordeiro Pires, an associate professor at the Political Economy Institute of São Paulo State University of Brazil.)

I hope that China will continue to share its development experience with other countries and help other developing countries address challenges such as poverty and climate change and enhance their capacity for sustainable development. —Marcos Cordeiro Pires



Some Chinese ethnic minorities such as the Dai, Achang, Bulang, Wa, and De'ang and certain ethnic groups in Southeast Asia celebrate the New Year's Day from April 13 to 15. On the 2023 Dai New Year's Day, which fell on April 15, a water-fetching ceremony and a water splashing carnival were held in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Tens of thousands of people from various ethnic groups as well as tourists expressed their best wishes and joy by dashing each other with water. (Xinhua)

COOPERATION

"The China-Laos Railway has driven the development of all sectors in Laos"

"The first stop on this overseas trip of ours will be Laos. I've come to Yunnan with more than twenty of my fellow townspeople, and now we're travelling to Southeast Asia. The whole process is so smooth," said a female tourist surnamed Tong from Zhejiang, China when she was interviewed on April 13. The travel agency had secured visas for the group fifteen days in advance and booked tickets for them for the first international passenger train operating on the China-Laos Railway, making the trip very special. Currently, the international passenger trains operating on the China-Laos Railway require its passengers to go through both exit and entry customs clearances. The customs clearance takes roughly an hour and a half each time,

so passengers need to spend about three hours going through customs clearance. "I'm leading a Lao media delegation of six people to join a number of Chinese media in covering the operation of the Kunming-Vientiane international passenger train on the China-Laos Railway. I'm thrilled to witness this historic moment," Imben Nakusi (transliteration), Deputy Director-General of the Mass Media Department of the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, was quoted as saying. The railway has driven the development of all sectors in Laos, especially tourism. Apart from Chinese tourists, it has also attracted a large number of tourists from Europe, America, and neighboring countries to Laos, he said. It was particularly remarkable that on April 13, the first day of the international passenger train's operating on the China-Laos Railway, the railway's Boten-Vientiane section handled more than 10,000 passengers and 10,000 tons of cargoes. The China-Laos Railway's spillover effect has driven the development of related industries and promoted local employment. According to incomplete statistics, the railway has cumulatively recruited more than 3,500 local employees in cargo handling, logistics, security, cleaning, and property management. It has also driven the development of logistics, urban transportation, business and trade, tourism, and other industries, indirectly creating more than 100,000 jobs. "Starting from yesterday, we've been operating inter-

national passenger trains on the China-Laos Railway on a daily basis. It'll greatly facilitate economic and trade cooperation as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries." According to Liu Hong, general manager of the Laos-China Railway Co Ltd (LCRC), since the China-Laos Railway went into operation sixteen months ago, the transportation of cargoes and passengers on it had improved in both quantity and quality, and the railway has proven to be a golden thoroughfare. Since its opening on December 3, 2021, the whole China-Laos Railway has cumulatively handled 14.43 million passenger trips and transported 18.84 million tons of cargoes. (Yunnan Daily, Spring City Evening News, and Xinhua)

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NEWS

111-bln-yuan projects signed at the 5th China-Singapore financial summit

A total of 90 major projects were signed at the 5th China-Singapore (Chongqing) Connectivity Initiative Financial Summit that kicked off on April 20, with an aggregate amount of 111 billion yuan (about US\$ 16 billion). With the theme of "Charting a New Path for Financial Center Development, Creating New Impetus for Financial Opening-up", the Summit was held simultaneously in Chongqing and Singapore. In recent years, Chongqing has relied on the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity to promote fruitful cooperation with Singapore in cross-border investment and financing, cross-border settlement, and establishment of financial institutions, enhancing China-Singapore financial cooperation in strength, breadth, and depth. Since it was first held in 2018, the Summit has become an important platform for financial exchanges and cooperation between China and ASEAN nations, an important window on western China's opening-up, and an important symbol

of Chongqing's open development in finance. The 90 major projects signed this year, with an aggregate amount of 111 billion yuan (US\$ 16 billion), focus on serving major strategies such as the development of the new land-sea transit routes for the western region, the financial center for the western region, and the China-Singapore connectivity initiative, covering mutual establishment of financial institutions and cooperation in green finance, financial technology, channel finance, cross-border finance, and more fields. The China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity was officially launched on November 7, 2015. As the 3rd inter-governmental cooperation project between China and Singapore following the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park and the China-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city, it covers four key cooperation areas in financing, air transportation, logistics transportation, and information and communications technology. (Chongqing Daily)

Yunnan employs blockchain technology and Beidou satellite positioning for tea quality assurance and traceability

Recently, Yunnan Province applied blockchain technology and Beidou satellite positioning to spring tea quality assurance and traceability for the first time in Shuangjiang Lahu, Wa, Bulang, and Dai Autonomous County. The traceability verification is divided into three steps. First, Beidou satellites are employed to position electronic fences and digitalize the tea-picking records to verify the quantity of fresh leaves picked in certain areas. Second, the transportation, stacking, water-removing, and drying process is tracked to assess the processing conformity. Third, sundried green

tea samples are subjected to sensory evaluation by experts to verify their compliance with the required quality standard. After passing the traceability verification, the sun-dried green tea samples will be sealed and labelled as "Yunnan tea". By scanning the code allotted by the National Product Anti-Counterfeiting Traceability Verification Public Platform, consumers can find out the electronic fences where the tea leaves are picked, the digitalized tea-picking records, and the whole transportation, processing, packaging, testing, and evaluation process. (Yunnan Daily)

STORY

American travel writer Paul Salopek: Walking in Yunnan offers surprises

Each day of his walking in Yunnan offered him surprise. The mysterious mountains and rivers have showed him the magic of nature. In the morning, Paul usually drank a cup of tea, put on boots and a hat, and then set out. That was how Paul Salopek, a well-known American travel writer and National Geographic explorer, felt when he walked in west Yunnan. Paul started his walking in China's Yunnan in September 2021. Trekking through the Ancient Tea Horse Road and the Gaoligong Mountain, Paul left his footprints in forests, lakes, snow mountains, and villages of Yunnan. As a two-time Pulitzer winner, Paul filmed well-known documentaries about his extraordinary journey, such as *Out of Eden* and the *Forever Walk: China*. In doing so, he presented the world with natural scenery and human wonders. Recalling the days when he was young, Paul said that he loved fast things, so he used to ride motorcycles to get to the destinations quickly. However, if one only spends time in speed, he will miss the details on the way. Now, he wants to be a good story teller. To tell stories of West Yunnan, he slowed down to observe

tiny things along the way, without presetting any destination. During walking, Paul loved the special Yunnan lifestyle and the hospitality of Yunnan people. To Paul, an immersive tour was what it took to tell a good story. He would spend two to three days living with a farmer, talking long under a tree and having a breakfast together. He was surprised that in the villages, people still use their hands to build houses and roads, making tools for living and farming. Speaking of Yunnan's food, Paul said, "The climate in Yunnan is similar to that in Southeast Asia, so a lot of its food reminds me of Southeast Asia." However, what he loves most about Yunnan food is the freshness. "The fruits and coffee are so fresh that they taste as good as those immediately picked from trees or dug out of the earth," he added. "You see, I'm a man with gray hair already. I've walked to countries worldwide, but Yunnan is a rarity with its culture and biodiversity. As a world-famous province of tourism, Yunnan is expected to preserve its tourist resources and cultural diversity to the utmost," Paul said sincerely. (Yunnan Daily)



Paul Salopek was traveling. (Photo by Paul Salopek)

China sees 116.2 percent surge in entry, exit trips in Q1

According to a press conference held by China's National Immigration Administration, immigration authorities across China handled nearly 65.07 million exits and entries in the first quarter of the year, a year-on-year increase of 116.2 percent. Of the total, 32.35 million were made by Chinese mainland residents, 29.49 million by residents in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan of China, and 3.23 million by foreign nationals.



(People's Daily)