

Kharge says sorry for 'poisonous snake' jibe

BJP slams 'hate'; Cong chief U-turn: My statement was not against Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Congress president M Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday landed himself in a soup after he likened Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a poisonous snake, drawing strong rebuke from the BJF which said "hate is coming out" with such comments and sought an apology from the veteran leader.

Kharge, however, sought to clarify his remarks were not aimed at the PM, but at the BJP. Kharge said if his statement has hurt anyone, he will express regret for it.

Dismissing the Congress president's clarification, sever-al Central Ministers and BJP



Karnataka Assembly elections, at Ron in Gadag district on Thursday

leaders sought an apology from Kharge with Finance Minister a poison. "If you support that ideology and lick (try) it, death Nirmala Sitharaman and her is certain. I did not speak Cabinet colleague Smriti Irani against him (Modi) because I stating "hate is coming out" and have already said that I never make personal comments," he this shows the party's mindset and desperation. said. Dismissing Kharge's clarification, Sitharaman said the

Kharge clarified that he only said the BJP was like a snake, and it's ideology is like Congress chief was trying to "wriggle out".

Addressing a public meet-ing at Ron in Gadag district, as part of the party's campaign for the May 10 Assembly elections in Karnataka, Kharge said, "Don't make a mistake. Modi is like a poisonous snake. If you say, 'no, it's not poisonous, let's lick it and find out. Don't go to lick it. If you lick, you die.

(if you think that) no, no, this is not poison because Modi has given it, good man Prime Minister has given it, let's try it and lick it' — if you lick that poison then you will sleep forever," the Congress president further said.

Kharge backtracked from his "poisonous snake" remark against Modi and said his intention was not to hurt any one's feelings and the "statement was not for PM Modi, but for the ideology he represents"

"My intention was not to hurt anyone's feelings, if knowingly or unknowingly someone's feelings were hurt, it was never my intention," Kharge tweeted in Hindi. **Continued on Page 2**

Wrestlers' protest dents India's image: PT Usha

Usha's comment hurtful: Sakshi, Vinesh Phogat

PNS/PTI NEW DELHI

oming down heavily on the →aggrieved wrestlers, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha on Thursday said the grapplers lacked discipline as they hit the streets to resume their protest against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh instead of approaching them.

"Our feeling is that for sexual harassment complaints, IOA has a committee and ath-

letes' commission. Instead of going to the street (again), they should have come to us, but they have not at all come to IOA," Úsha told reporters after the sports body's executive committee meeting. Asked if the IOA would

reach out to the wrestlers since they are adamant that they would not leave the protest site until their demands are met, Usha shot back by saying, 'Thoda toh discipline hona chahiye (there should be some

Cong's warranty expired, India raises border issue in meet with China



Wrestlers rest under mosquito nets following a night stay at Jantar Mantar amid their protest, in New Delhi

discipline). Instead of coming to us they have gone straight to the streets. It's not good for sport.

Decorated wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik are the three central characters in the renewed protests against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president, who has been accused of sexual harassment and intimidation by the grapplers.

Responding to Usha's criticism, Sakshi Malik said, "We feel hurt by PT Usha's comment. She is not supporting us despite being a woman herself. What indiscipline have we done? We are sitting here

peacefully. If we had got justice, we would not have done this? Wrestler Vinesh Phogat

said, "When Olympic medallists from the nation are sitting on the streets in protest, think PT Usha ma'am should have come to us. She should have asked us why we were in tears."

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday said the government gave chances to all the protesting wrestlers to present their case before the oversight committee, and reiterated its commitment to an "impartial probe" into the dispute resolution. the Supreme charges against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. courts to digitise all records of

Ramnavami violence in **Bengal: HC** for NIA probe PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $T_{(\mathrm{HC})}^{\mathrm{he}\ \mathrm{Calcutta}\ \mathrm{High}\ \mathrm{Court}}$ National Investigation Agency (NIA) to probe the communa violence that took place during Ramnavami celebrations at Howrah, Rishra and Dlakhola

early this month. Hearing a petition filed by Adhikari, the Division Bench of acting Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam on Thursday directed the Bengal Police to transfer the case to the NIA and hand over the related documents, including the CCTV footage

PM addresses BJP workers in Karnataka PNS NEW DELHI

ddressing BJP workers vir-Atually in poll-bound Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday Thursday hit out at the Congress saying guarantees to voters do not mean much when that party's "warranty has expired" and asked the BJP to strengthen booth-level campaigning for the May 10 Assembly polls. Ahead of his whirlwind election campaign starting on Saturday with 20-odd pub-



Assembly seats in Karnataka. For the Karnataka polls Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks the Congress has announced during an interaction with party workers "guarantees" that include — 200 units of free power to all in Karnataka via a video conference, on households (Gruha Jyoti),

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE workers was part of the party's NEW DELHI effort to boost its campaign for Assembly polls. The contest

With tension continuing at the border in Ladakh and no significant break-through in the talks to end disengagement at some friction points there, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday discussed the issue here with his Chinese counterpart General Li Shangfu. Rajnath told Shangfu relations between the two countries is premised



Our bilateral relations premised on peace at LAC: Rajnath to Chinese Def Min

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart Li Shangfu during a lateral meeting, in New Delhi on Thursday

tion. The Chinese Defence Minister is in Delhi to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting on Friday. Rainath will chair the conclave today.

ANAND MOHAN FREED

Saharsa/Patna: Gangster turned-politician Anand Mohan Singh, who was serving a life sentence, was released from

Saharsa jail on Thursday morning after being behind the bars for 15 years.

UNSC VETO POLITICAL TOOL, NOT MORAL: INDIA

emphasised that the exercise of veto in the UNSC is driven by

political considerations and not

privilege of using the veto goes

sovereign equality of states. P4

DU TEACHER FOUND DEAD

WEEKS AFTER LOSING JOB

New Delhi: A 33-year-old Delhi

found dead at his house in outer

University ad hoc teacher was

Delhi's Rani Bagh weeks after

being removed from the job at

the Hindu College, triggering a

SC ASKS DIST COURTS TO

DIGITISE CRIMINAL TRIALS

New Delhi: Observing that

technology has increasingly

Court has directed district

criminal trials and civil suits

enmeshed with the systems of

protest by former colleagues

and students.

against the very concept of

by moral obligations, saying

that only five permanent

members being given the

United Nations India has

Continued on Page 2

PLA-Maoist nexus against India unity: Court convicts 5

Continued on Page 2

lic rallies across Karnataka, Modi made a strong pitch for ending the "revdi culture" (culture of distributing freebies) referring to the poll promises made by the Congress, the main challenger to the BJP in the coming elections.

The PM's address to BJP

the woman head of every family (Gruha Lakshmi), and ₹3,000 every month for graduate youth and ₹1,500 for diploma holders (both in the age group of 18-25) for two years (YuvaNidhi) - on coming to power in the State.

000 month

Continued on Page 2

tranquility at the borders.

They had frank discussions about the developments in the India-China border areas as well as bilateral relations, the Defence Ministry said after the bilateral meeting between the two leaders.

Rajnath categorically con-

veyed that development of relaexisting bilateral agreements tions between India and China is premised on prevalence of eace and tranquility at the borders. He added that all issues at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) need to be

resolved in accordance with

RAJESH KUMAR 📕 NEW DELHI

mafia and criminals, Delhi

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G)

VK Saxena on Thursday direct-

agencies to seal and start pro-

cancelling the permits of vehi-

and commitments. He reiterated that violation of existing agreements has eroded the entire basis of bilateral relations and disengagement at the border will logically be followed with de-escala-

Attach, raze properties used

New Delhi: The NIA Special Court, Guwahati, on Wednesday convicted five persons to eight years jail in the 2011 PLA-CPI(Maoist) nexus case related to a criminal conspiracy to threaten the unity, integrity, security and sover-See P5 eignty of India.

What if someone questions incest ban: Govt to SC

PNS 📕 NEW DELHI

 $R^{\mbox{eiterating}\ \mbox{its}\ \mbox{opposition}\ \mbox{on}\ \mbox{on}\ \mbox{on}\ \mbox{opposition}\ \mbox{on}\ \mbox{opposition}\ \mbox{opp$ of same-sex marriages, the Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that arguments about freedom of sexual orientation and autonomy may be raised in future to challenge incest prohibition. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appear-ing for the Centre, told the bench that incest is not uncom-mon in the world but prohibited all over

"It will be far-fetched," the five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud observed, adding sexual orientation or autonomy as an individual can never be exercised in all aspects of marriage, including entry into wedlock, and prohibited relationships, the grounds on which a marriage can be dissolved.

"The arguments.... And I am saying this with a sense of responsibility, can be made, whether accepted or not is one thing, for challenging incest prohibition as well," Mehta told the bench, which also comprised justices SK Kaul, SR Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha

He referred to Section 2(b) of the Special Marriage Act, 1954, which talks about degrees



of prohibited relationship. "The proposition which I

must mention here at this stage itself (is) would your lordships, I am posing a question to myself, read a particular enactment in such a fashion that it applies in a particular manner to one class, that is heterosexuals, and in a different manner to different class namely same-sex.... That exercise may not be a permissive interpretative exercise," he said.

Mehta said a statute cannot be read to mean "A" for some class and "B" for some class.

"Kindly visualise a situation five-year down the line, based on this very thing... A person is attracted to those who are mentioned in the degrees of prohibited relationship. Incest is not uncommon in the world and world over incest is prohibited. ..." he said.

DNLA lays down arms; Shah hails 'Assam insurgency free'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

D- a tribal insurgent - a tribal insurgent group in Assam that operated mostly in Dima Hasao district igned a tripartite agreement with the Centre and the Assam Government on Thursday to disband their armed organisation, shun violence and join the mainstream. The Memorandum of Settlement was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief

Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in New Delhi. Shah said, "With this, all tribal militant groups in Assam have joined the mainstream?

He described the pact as "another significant milestone" towards making the Northeast insurgency-free by 2024 and fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of turning it into a peaceful and prosperous region. Shah said the PM has put forth the vision



Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah with members of Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA) during the signing of an MoU between DNLA and the PTI Government of Assam, in New Delhi, on Thursday

of a terror-free, violence-free and developed North-East and the MHA is moving forward in this direction under the guidance of Modi.

Continued on Page 2 list of all existing and new



hotspots of drug trafficking in the national Capital, along with a detailed plan to eliminate these hotspots.

The directions were issued when Saxena chaired the 5th properties/houses that are being used for drug peddling. meeting of the State-level committee of NCORD Similarly, the transport department has been asked to (National Narcotics make necessary provisions for Coordination) wherein he issued strict instructions to cles involved in drug traffick-ing. He has directed Delhi make Delhi drug-free. In the last six months in Hissar, Haryana, over 100 such prop-Police to identify and submit a erties built by drug peddlers

Officials said that bulldozing of houses/properties used for drug peddlers will help check narcotic smuggling in the national Capital. During the meeting, the L-G directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to make it

mandatory for all students and applicants of Delhi Government-run schools, colleges and universities to undertake an 'e-pledge against drugs' as a pre-requisite for admission. **Continued on Page 2**

Court halted the demolition.

Rescued Indians elated at cheating death living in one area, confined to

PTI NEW DELHI

It was like we were on a deathbed," recalled a relieved Sukhvinder Singh from Haryana as he arrived at the Delhi airport from Saudi Arabia on Wednesday night after being evacuated from strife-torn Sudan. In his mid-40s, the engineer was among the first batch of 360 Indian nationals who returned home under India's "Operation Kaveri" evacuation mission.

Singh, a native of Faridabad in Haryana, recalled his ordeal in Sudan and said he Continued on Page 2 | was "still very scared". "We were

one room. It was like we were on a deathbed," he told PTI before making his way home.

India has evacuated at least 670 Indian nationals from Sudan and is looking to rescue more of its citizens from the strife-torn African nation before the end of a tenuous ceasefire between the regular army and a paramilitary force.

Chhotu, a factory worker who hails from Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, was in a state of disbelief and exclaimed. "Marke wapas aa gaya (have returned after almost dying)." Continued on Page 2



Seventh batch of stranded Indians board an IAF C-130J flight to depart from Port Sudan for Jeddah under Operation Kaveri. (R) Flight Lt Har Raj Kaur Boparai, C-17 pilot, is part of the mission. She is the first and only woman IAF pilot to fly the C-17. She got married last month to a fellow IAF pilot PTI photos

Focus is to take every Indian out of harm's way: Kwatra

New Delhi: The security situation in Sudan remains very complex, highly volatile and unpredictable and India's objective is to get every stranded Indian in that country out of harm's way, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said on Thursday. See P4

putting up factories and end



High alert in Bastar after Dantewada Naxal attack

PTI DANTEWADA

n alert has been sounded Ain all seven districts of the Naxal-hit Bastar division in Chhattisgarh following the deadly attack by Naxalites in Dantewada which claimed the lives of 10 police personnel and one civilian, police said on Thursday.

Security forces have been asked to stay cautious while moving in a vehicle and conducting de-mining exercises to detect the Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) planted by Naxalites after the attack on Wednesday, they

said. "A high alert has been "district superintendents of police in Bastar region in the wake of the attack in Dantewada," Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P told PTI. Bastar region, which comprises seven districts namely Kanker, Kondagaon, Narayanpur,

Bastar, Dantewada, Sukma and using an IED containing an Bijapur, has witnessed several estimated 40 kg of explosive deadly attacks on security forces in the past, particularly in summer during which rebels carry out the annual 'tactical counter offensive campaign' (TCOC) and step up their offensive activities.

material. Visuals from the spot showed a huge crater across the road at the blast site, almost 10feet deep. The MUV was completely destroyed in the blast. This was the biggest strike

by Naxalites on security forces in the state in the last two years. Security forces have always been put on alert during this The area where the blast took place is around 450 km

period. The wreath laying ceremony for the martyred from state capital Raipur. jawans will be held on The deceased security per-Thursday at the Police Lines in

sonnel belonged to District Reserve Guard (DRG)- an anti-Dantewada where Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will Naxal unit of the state police. Out of the 10 deceased per-

Later, the mortal remains sonnel, eight were residents of of the deceased will be shifted Dantewada district while one to their native places. Ten each belonged to neighbouring police personnel and a civilian Sukma and Bijapur district. driver were killed after Naxals Some of them had joined

blew up a Multi-Utility Vehicle the force after quitting (MUV) which was part of a Naxalism. convoy carrying security per-

The DRG personnel are mostly recruited from the local sonnel in Aranpur police station area of Dantewada on tribal population and Naxals who have surrendered in the The blast was carried out Bastar division.

Plea against prison rules amendment to let Anand Mohan walk out of jail

Patna: A petition has been filed in the Patna High Court, challenging the amendment to Bihar's prison rules that facilitated the release of Anand Mohan, a gangster-turned-politician, after serving life sentence for killing an IAS officer three decades ago.

Mohan, who had been an MP prior to his conviction in 2007, was released from Saharsa jail on Thursday morning. The petitioner, Anupam Kumar Suman, shared the information on his Twitter handle, along with screenshots of e-filing of the Public Interest Litigation on Wednesday.

"I yesterday filed a PIL in the high court challenging the dangerous (khatarnaak) amendment that allowed for remission of sentence awarded to a convict in murder of a government servant in Bihar," Suman wrote in Hindi. Mohan's name figured in a list of more than 20 prisoners

who were ordered to be set free by a notification issued by the state law department earlier this week as they had spent more than 14 years behind bars. His remission of sentence followed an April 10 amendment of Bihar Prison Manual by state government whereby the restriction on early release of those involved in

killing of a public servant on duty was done away with. This, critics claim was done

help release Mohan. to Incidentally, Suman is a former civil servant himself who took voluntary retirement from Indian Revenue Services a few years ago to take political plunge. "May justice and rule of law prevail. Śatyamev Jayate", Suman added with a rhetorical flourish, avoiding the mention of name of Anand Mohan, whose release has evoked protests from family members and well-wishers of slain IAS officer G Krishnaiah. PTI

Aus to change immigration system to attract skilled workers

New Delhi: In a welcome development for Indian professionals seeking opportunities in Australia, it may significantly change its immigration system with the objective of speeding up getting highly skilled work-ers into the country, reports

from there said on Thursday. They also indicated the proposed Australian Immigration System will be similar to Canada and Germany to attract more skilled migrants.

Smoothening the process of permanent residency is also one of the key focuses of the plan as the federal Labor government said the system used to select skilled migrants will be modified. har Bharat (self-reliant) but

Currently, the points test is used to choose people with the correct skill sets but this will be changed so that candidates who are better for the Australian economy are includ-PNS ed

Medical Device Policy 2023 will give a boost to domestic production: Manufacturers PIONEER NEWS SERVICE importers to start investing in

NEW DELHI

also a global key top five sup-

pliers of medical devices world

wide. "We are more than

hopeful that the policy details

will help boost local manu-

facturing, help traders and

the 70-80 per cent import Indian medical device mandependency forced upon India and the ever-rising import bill which last year shot up by a steep 41 per cent to over Rs ufacturers have lauded the Cabinet move Union announcing a Medical Device policy 2023 saying that it will provide an opportunity to boost domestic production of 63000 crore and make quality healthcare accessible and affordable for common masses worldwide", Nath further the medical gadgets and make added. India self-sufficient in the growing medtech market.

"During Covid pandemic, entrepreneurs had stepped forward to push 'Make in Rajiv Nath , Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device India' mission. Now the time Industry (AiMeD) which has has come when even Healthcare Parliamentary been at the forefront to push for the separate policy for the Committee announced its recmedical devices since the ommendations initial draft policy of June Government to take specific 2014. He said that it would steps to promote Make In help achieve India's aspira-India of Medical Devices. tions to be not only atmanirb-

Runam Mehta, CEO, Healthcube expressed similar views. "The Policy is a commendable step towards promoting medical devices sector in India, intending to capture 10-12% of the expanding global market within next 25 years.

Rescued Indians...

From Page1 "Now, I will never return to Sudan. I will do anything in this country but won't go back," he told PTI shortly after landing at the Indira Gandhi International

Airport's Terminal 3. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took to Twitter to share images of the evacuees after their arrival at the Delhi airport. "India welcomes back its own. Operation Kaveri brings 360 Indian nationals to the homeland as first flight reaches New Delhi," he tweeted.

At the airport's Terminal 3, as people deboarded the aircraft of Saudia – a Saudi Arabian airline - and slowly streamed on to the arrivals lounge area, smiles could be seen on the faces of many who went through tense moments over the past few days

Many waved emphatically, displaying a visible sign of relief, while others shook hands on the skybridge as they were welcomed on their return. Several were seen carrying their lug-gage, accompanied by children. They also obliged a few photographers with pictures upon their safe return.

Tasmer Singh (60), an evacuee who hails from Hoshiarpur in Punjab, described his experience during the ongoing strife as horrifying. "We were like a dead body, roaming in a small house without power, water. ed that we will

alive," he said. India stepped up its efforts to evacuate the Indians from Sudan after a 72hour truce was agreed between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces following intense negotiations

pay homage to them.

Wednesday afternoon.

Under "Operation Kaveri", India is taking the evacuees to the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah from where they are returning home. India has set up a transit facility in Jeddah and Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan is overseeing the evacuation mission from the Saudi Arabian city

Sukhwinder Singh, the engineer, also narrated how difficult it was to travel during the strife in Sudan. "We contacted the Indian embassy and buses for around 200 people were arranged. A road trip was very risky. Only God knows

how we reached Port Sudan," he said He said the warring groups can shoot anybody "depending on their mood". "It depends on the mood of the individual. If

we say we are Indians, they let us go," the Faridabad native said. The Indian Air Force's transport aircraft brought to Jeddah 392 Indians from Port Sudan on Wednesday, a day after an Indian Navy ship rescued 278 citizens from that country. The total number of

Cong's warranty expired, revdi pledge fake: Modi

From Page1 The Prime Minister said States are drowning in debt because of freebies and emphasised that the country and Governments cannot be run like this.

"In our country some political parties have made politics the means of power and corruption. To achieve this, they are using all means like 'saam, dham, dhand, bedh'. These political parties don't think about the future of the country, the future generation of Karnataka, its youth and women," Modi said.

He said, because of freebie politics, several States are making large-scale spending for the sake of partisan politics, which is also eating into the "share" of future generations

The country cannot be run like this. Governments cannot be run like this. Governments have to think about the future, along with the present. Governments cannot run just for day-today needs, they have to work on asset creation, so that the lives of families are on track for decades, he added during the "Karyakartarondige Samvada" (an interaction with workers).

The party said earlier this week about 50 lakh workers from 58,112 booths would attend this virtual rally" of the Prime Minister.

Modi would undertake a two-day tour of the State from Saturday during which he is scheduled to address six public meetings and hold two road-shows.

Modi said the BJP was not taking shortcuts, but was working for a developed India. BJP doesn't think about five years of its own rule, but thinks about the country. We don't

think about the party but think about the country. We don't think just about present electoral politics but about taking India ahead in the next

25 years", he said.

To address some temporary challenges, all possible help is being provided for the poor, like free ration, free vaccination, he said and added that it is the duty of the Government, "but if we have to make India progress, we have to get rid of this revdi culture."

"I appeal to youth, some parties may try to make you fools by distributing freebies, but it's your duty to think about your future and that of your future generations...." Targetting the Congress for its "revdi culture" in Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, Modi said,

their poll guarantees have still remained as guarantee. "Congress means guarantee of corruption, guarantee of nepotism."

"Congress has reached a stage where it cannot give true guarantees, you are aware that Congress's warranty has expired, then what is the meaning of its guarantees," he added.

Besides the Prime Minister, Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, JP Nadda, Nirmala Sitharaman, UP Chief Minister Adityanath, former Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa and a host of senior Karnataka leaders are in the thick of electioneering as former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Vadra and Congress president Kharge have been addressing public rallies in support of the party candidates.

r), former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda would be cam places in the next 11 days in the run-up to the Assembly elections in Karnataka. The 89-yearold Gowda said he will take rest once in a week keeping in view his health condition.

> From Page1 Giving an example, he said,

suppose a person says he is attracted to his sister and they are consenting adults and claim the right of autonomy, right of choice and

right of doing something in the private domain. "Based on that

very argument, I am posing a question to myself, can someone

not challenge this definition itself. Why this restriction? Who are

you to decide with whom I have my sexual orientation," he said.

The CJI observed, "You know Mr solicitor, sexual orientation or

your autonomy as an individual can never be exercised in all aspects

of marriage including the entry into marriage, the prohibited rela-

tionships, the grounds on which marriage can be dissolved.

DNLA lays down arms; Shah hails 'Assam insurgency-free'

DNLA representatives have agreed to abjure violence, sur-render all arms and ammunition, disband their armed organisation, vacate all camps and join the peaceful democratic process as established by the law, the Home Minister said.

As a result, more than 168 DNLA cadres are joining the mainstream by laying down their arms.

Shah said the pact will bring a complete end to insurgency in Dima Hasao district.

Chief Minister Sarma said DNLA had deposited some arms before the peace pact was signed and they would surrender the rest in the coming days.

'The cadres of DNLA will now work in tandem with the government for peace, development and stability not only in Dima Hasao district but the state as a whole," Sarma said.

He said his government has been working for lasting peace and development in Assam under the guidance of Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Shah.

Under the agreement, the Assam Government will have to set up a welfare council to protect, preserve and promote social, cultural, linguistic identity of the Dimasa people to meet political, economic and educational aspirations. The government will also have to ensure speedy and focused development of the Dimasa people residing outside the jurisdiction of the existing autonomous council, according to an official release.

The agreement also provides for appointment of a commission under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to examine the demand for inclusion of villages touching North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC). It also provides for necessary measures to be taken by the Centre and the Assam government to rehabilitate the surrendered armed cadres of DNLA.

For all-round development of the NCHAC and the Dimasa people in other parts of the state, the Centre and the Assam government will provide a special package of ₹500 crore each over a period of five years.

On September 2021, the DNLA declared a unilateral ceasefire for six months following an appeal by the Assam chief minister. The group had been extending the ceasefire since then. The DNLA ceasefire came two weeks after the insurgent group allegedly fired on a convoy of seven trucks in the Dima Hasao district killing five people and injuring one.

The DNLA was established in April 2019 with a stated aim

sorry for... From Page1 "BJP's ideology is divisive, disharmonious, full of hatred

Kharge says

and prejudice towards the poor and Dalits. I discussed this politics of hatred and malice.

My statement was neither for PM Modi personally nor for any other person, but for the ideology he represents," he said adding he has always followed the norms and traditions of politics towards friends and opponents and will do so till the last breath of his life.

"I don't make fun of individuals and their problems like people in high positions because I have also seen and suffered the pain and suffering of the poor and downtrodden. For five decades, I have always been opposed to the divisive ideology of the BJP and the RSS and their leaders. My political fight was, is and will always be against his politics,"

the Congress chief said. BJP IT department chief Amit Malviya, on Twitter, said: "Now Congress President Kharge calls Prime Minister Modi 'poisonous snake'... What started with Sonia Gandhi's 'maut ka saudagar' (merchant of death), and we know how it ended, the Congress continues to plummet to new depths. The desing ground in Karnataka and knows it".

face this kind of a situation in Sudan stands at 670, according our lives but thank God, we are to official data

to carve out a sovereign territory for the Dimasa people and launched an armed insurgency to achieve its goal.

UNION TERRITORY OF I&K JAMMU DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES JAMMU

NEAR M.L. A'S HOSTEL, INDRA CHOWK, JAMMU TEL: 0191-2546338, TELEFAX: 0191-2549632 E-mail: dhsjammu@rediffmail. com

CORRIGENDUM - 3 to E - Nit No: DSHJ/Medical Gasses 2022-23/01 Dated: 13/03/2023 due on 05/04/2023 extended upto 15/04/2023 and again extended upto 24/04/2023 for Rate contract for refilling of empty A, B and D Type Cylinders for Medical Gases Oxygen and Nitrous oxide.

Due to poor response the above-mentioned E-Nit is hereby Extended up to 03/05/2023 and shall be opened on 04/05/2023.

Rest all other details/eligibility criteria and terms & conditions are same and can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in. Queries if any may be made through email at mdjxen@gmail.com and should be made by or before 03/05/2023. Sd/

No:-DIP/J-703/23 Dated:-26.04.2023

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1		RN RAILWAY	Akansha Sharma.		
1	TEND	ER NOTICE Azadi _{Ka} Amrit Mahotsav	PD(021)A		
		Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	PUBLIC NOTICE		
	N.I.T No.	07A-23-24-W-2 Date 26.04.2023	This is to inform public in general		
1.	Name of work with its Location		that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has		
A)	Providing 5Km boundary wall 130Km/h in the section of Sr. DEI	in c/w speed raising from 110Km/h to N-II/DLI.	organized an auction in below		
2.	Approx. Cost of Work NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	mention respect of Vehicles.		
3.	Earnest Money NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	1) BHARATBENZ_BB4928TCBT		
4.	Completion period of Work NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	REG. NO.UP13BT4322-YOM-2019		
5.	Cost of tender on cash/by post NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK		
6.	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	12.05.2023 to 26.05.2023 upto 15:00 hrs. Opening of tender 26.05.2023 at 15:00 hrs.	IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR		
7.	Similar Nature of Work NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	QUOTATIONS WITH IN 5 DAYS AT BRANCHADDRESS:		
8.	Website particulars notice location complete details of tend be seen and address of the offic where the tender form can ased e	er can i.e.www.ireps.gov.in	KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO 7, SECT 125, NOIDA-201313 OR CONTACT: GUNJAN SINGH		
NIT	- NIT- 07A-23-24-W-2 Dated: 26. SERVING CUSTO	04.2023. 1260/23 DMERS WITH A SMILE	KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT NO. 8510032426 EMAIL – gunjan.singh1@kotak.com		



What if someone ...

CHANGE OF NAME

during celebrations of Ramnavami --- at Shibpur in Akansha D/O Manoj Howrah district, Rishra in Kumar Sharma, R/O R-242 Hooghly district and Dalkhola Ramesh Park Laxmi Nagar in North Dinajpur district --when bombs were exploded Delhi-110092, have changed and people were attacked with ny name from Akansha to brickbats, Adhikari had men tioned in his petition. PD(021)A

Ramnavami...

From Page1

Violence had broken out

The HC's order comes as a big setback for the Mamata Banerjee Government which had been claiming that the police had deftly handled the situation and that the BJP, in its

desperation to arrest its steadily depleting base in the State, had played mischief by igniting the communal violence and defying police orders.

Curiously the HC had earlier observed that the riots were planned and that there was failure on the part of the TERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR police Intelligence.

The other Opposition parties like Left and the Congress saw the Ramnavami issue as an effort by the BJP and the TMC to create a polarisation at a time when both of them were losing ground in the State.

Attach, raze properties...

From Page1

Calling for zero-tolerance against drug-trafficking, the L-G also asked the excise department to incorporate 'e-pledge against drug' in the licence criteria for all restaurants and pubs, and any such establishment found selling or facilitating drugs on their premises would be liable for cancellation of their licence.

According to the official statement, Government agencies have also been told to make 'e-pledge' mandatory for applicants in the public amusement policy, which is being drafted. Noting that drug trafficking was not merely a criminal act but an international design to weaken the country, he exhorted the law enforcement agencies to work on a mission mode to fight this menace.

The L-G has asked Delhi Police to work in coordination with the education department of the Delhi Government to keep a strict watch and carry out raids at kiosks and street vendors surrounding schools and colleges that have increasingly been found supplying drugs to the students.

He called for an effective and seamless coordination between multiple agencies including Delhi Police, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in dealing with NDPS cases and said cases involving huge money trail could be handed over to the ED immediately for action.

The LG also directed Delhi Police to strictly enforce the PIT-NDPS Act to detain notorious, habitual drug offenders and traffickers for a longer period. Under the PITNDPS Act, habitual offenders can be detained for up to one year.

Meanwhile, he instructed the social welfare department to keep a strict watch in and around shelter homes that have also emerged as potential centres of drug abuse. It has been told to organise training of the shelter home managers to identify drug addicts and also hold them responsible for any drug menace by the occupants in their respective shelter homes.

The postal department has been requested to conduct training of its 85,000 personnel to detect drugs and contrabands being trafficked through remote post offices in the form of post, parcels and report the same to the agencies concerned.

As many as 113 people, including 36 foreign nationals, were arrested by the NCB in Delhi in 2022 for drug abuse and smuggling. The agency registered 85 cases and seized nearly 200 kg of contraband. Of the total seizures made in 2022, the figure for heroin stood at 117.007 kg, cocaine 14.5 kg, opium 13.505 kg and Ecstasy (MDMA) 303 grams. The NCB also seized 1.1 kg of methaqualone, 13.2 kg of pseudoephedrine, 12.2 kg of amphetamine and 820.7 grams of methamphetamine, besides over 2 lakh tablets of pharmaceutical drugs and 3.6 kg of other psychotropic substances.

India raises border issue in meet with

From Page1

Incidentally, China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang will also come to India for the SCO Foreign Ministers' meet on May 4 and 5 in Goa. India may take up the border issue during that meet too, it was learnt.

India has all along maintained that restoring status quo ante as prevailing prior to May 2020 has to be done to normalise ties with China. The two sides have, so far, held 18 rounds of Corps Commander level talks to find ways to hasten up the process of disengagement of troops. At present, more than 50,000 soldiers each from both the sides

are deployed in front line positions at the LAC in eastern Ladakh leading to tension. The latest round of talks was held on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif will attend the meet in the virtual mode. Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu will also attend the meet. Rajnath held bilateral meeting with his counterparts from Kazakhstan, Iran and Tajikistan on Thursday.

The Chinese Defence Minister is visiting India for the first time since trouble flared up at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020

The Defence Ministry said on Wednesday Defence Ministers of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan will participate. India has invited Belarus and Iran, currently observers in the SCO, to participate in the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting.

The Ministers will discuss matters related to regional peace and security, counter terrorism efforts within SCO and an effective multilateralism.

India has ancient civilizational, cultural and spiritual ties with the SCO member countries. India's membership of the SCO in 2017 was therefore, a reaffirmation of New Delhi's keenness to deepen these historic ties. India considers the SCO as an important regional group to promote multilateral, political, security, economic and people-to-people interactions in the region.

India continues to bring more ideas and initiatives to strengthen cooperation amongst SČO countries. Under its Chairmanship, this year, India organised two defence related activities to enhance interoperability amongst SCO member states.

The first being a workshop on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and the second was a seminar of SCO countries defence think-tanks on the issue of armed forces contributing to military medicine, healthcare and pandemics.

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Member Secretary **Purchase Committee Directorate of Health Services** (Jammu)



Hindu College teacher hangs self weeks after losing job

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELH

33-year-old Delhi AUniversity ad hoc teacher was found dead at his house in outer Delhi's Rani Bagh weeks after being removed from the job at the Hindu College, , triggering a protest by former colleagues and students.

According to police, Samarveer, originally from Molki village in Rajasthan's Baran district, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in a room he shared with his cousin who had gone to duty at the time of the incident. They said no suicide note was found, but according to the cousin, he was under depression after he lost the job. The cousin told the police that Samarveer, who was unmarried, worked as an ad hoc lecturer in the Hindu College but a different person was appointed in his place in

February. Hindu College prin-cipal Anju Srivastava did not



respond to calls and texts "The University of Delhi pays requesting her reaction, but the its heartfelt condolences on university issued a statement condoling the "sad and untimedemise of Samarveer. "No words can ease the

pain that is being felt by all, including us in the university fraternity," the statement said.

the sad and untimely demise of Dr. Samarvir and sends out healing prayers and comfort to his family in this tough time," the statement said. Delhi University teachers

and students staged a protest

outside the Hindu College and demanded justice for Samarveer. They raised slogans and carried placards. "We stand with the ad hoc teachers' struggle demanding job security. Justice to Professor Samarveer," read one of the placards.

Shubhanshi Mishra, a

Delhi University professor, said it appears that Samarveer committed suicide. "He recently lost his job at Hindu College. It appears he died by suicide because he was upset," she said. Miranda House Associate Professor Abha Dev Habib said many long-serving ad hoc teachers have been "displaced" in colleges based on "twominute" interviews for a permanent position. "The University has forced

guest-ism by denying ad-hoc appointments against short-term vacancies. Also, workload norms have been tweaked by 11.11.2022 DU Notification and which has overnight declared teachers as 'surplus," she said.

Police, meanwhile, said they received a call on Wednesday regarding a man hanging himself to death at an apartment in Rani Bagh area. When a police team reached there, they found the room was

locked from inside. A mobile crime team of the outer district was called and the door was forcibly opened, said Harendra Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer).

The man was found hanging from the ceiling fan using a bedsheet, the DCP said, adding he was shifted to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead. A team of experts from the Forensic Science Laboratory, Rohini, as well as the mobile crime team inspected the spot, he said.

Several empty liquor bottles and cigarettes boxes were found in the room, the officer added. The DCP said no foul play was suspected and the body will be handed over to his family after postmortem.

In a statement, DU with the candidate and (it) Academic Council member has facilitated massive dis-Maya John said there is a growing need to rejuvenate the struggle for the rights of ad hoc Teachers'

demanding an immediate gen-North Campus. eral body meeting (GBM) of "RIP Dr Samarvir! Stop the DUTA (Delhi University massive Displacements of Teachers' Association) to dis-

cuss the woes of ad hoc teach-

ers, and to effectively fight for

the rights of ad-hoc faculty,"

John said in a statement. "It is

a fact that a sizable number of

long-serving ad-hoc teachers,

who otherwise fill all the eligi-

bility criteria for teaching posts

advertised by DU colleges, and

have worked very hard for

their institutions, are being

It said permanent appoint-

displaced in the recent inter-

ments are "being made through

a so-called 'open' recruitment

views," the statement read.

Adhoc and Temp Teachers! Stop Victimisation of Adhoc & Temp Teachers!" it said in a tweet. Samarveer's friend, also a Hindu College professor, said he sounded very upset when he called him up on Sunday. "He didn't accept a guest

capital 03

lecturer's job in our college earlier because he accepted an ad-hoc job in the Hindu College. He told me that after 20-plus days, the college informed him it cannot continue with his service as it's not allowed by the University. I could sense his helplessness,'

process that often amounts to the friend said. just a five-minute interaction He said Samarveer also told him that his mother was very disturbed after he didn't placement". Aam Aadmi Party's get the permanent job he was teachers' wing Academic for expecting. "He told me she lost Action and Development Delhi vision an an eye. I am unable Association to accept that he is no more."

Govt OK's transplantation of trees for Defence Staff HQ construction

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has approved removal and transplantation of trees for the construction of an Integrated Defence Staff Headquarters in Mehram Nagar. The Ministry of Defence has proposed the construction of the İntegrated Defence Staff Headquarters in Mehram Nagar. However, certain patches of trees were obstructing the construction of the site. Thus, the Ministry through its officials, wrote a letter to the Delhi Government seeking approval for removal and transplantation of 114 trees to clear the site. The foundation of the IDS Headquarters was laid by Arun

Jaitley in 2014. According to a statement issued by the Delhi government, "Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal cleared the path for the project by approving the said proposal in national interest. "He has approved the proposal against the condition of the Ministry of Defence taking up the transplantation of 60

existing trees and plantation of 1,140 new saplings as per the



plan," it said. According to the statement, 60 trees will be transplanted and 54 removed for the project.

Approving the proposal, the chief minister has noted that it will be placed before the lieutenant governor to decide whether he would like to invoke a difference of opinion, if any, under the proviso to Article 239 AA(4) of the Constitution of India read with Rule 47A of the Transaction of Business of GNCTD (Amendment) Rules, 2021, according to the statement. The new Integrated

Defence Staff Headquarters will come up soon in Delhi including vehicle scanners and



reading room, cum Information Technology and communication rooms, Special Section on International Defence Cooperation/Dte of Net Assessment, Meditation room/training cum motiva-tion hall and Security posts with all latest equipment

IRIS scan etc

The Delhi government has further asked the ministry to ensure there is no damage to any other tree at the site other than those approved for removal by the government. If any tree apart from the approved ones is damaged, it will constitute an offence under the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act 1994, the statement added. The new saplings will be planted upon the identified land parcels within three months from the date on which the permission for shifting of the trees will be issued. The Defence Ministry will further take the responsibility of maintaining the trees for the next seven years, according to the Delhi government's guidelines, it said.

Saplings of neem, amaltas, pipal, pilkhan, gular, bargad, desi kikar and arjun and such other species that suit the soil and climate of Delhi will be planted at the construction site. A proposal for the removal and transplantation of trees was placed before the chief minister by Environment Minister Gopal Rai, it said.

L-G acting like roadblock in erring school's takeover: Govt

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Arvind Kejriwal gov-ernment and the Lieutenant Governor are at loggerheads over the takeover of Modern International School, Dwarka, as the Chief Minister has accused VK Saxena of acting like a "roadblock" in the procedure and obstructing illegally, placing his observations, without his jurisdiction on matters of education. The Modern International School had breached RTE Act and DSEAR provisions by not admitting EWS students, not providing free uniform-stationary to beneficiary students, wrongly terminated teachers, and made fake/dummy registrations in Class XI. The Delhi Government had decided to take over the school in December 2022, and had sent



CM Shri Manish Sisodia, had pointed out that the subject of education is not under LG's purview, and he can only forward it to the President or approve it. However, the LG sat on the file till January 2023, and obstructed the takeover of the school by illegally placing his observations, without his jurisdiction on matters of Education.

"After examining LG's observations, the CM for-

Delhi Govt approves ₹517 cr for mandis STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi government has approved a budget of Rs 517.94 crores for the develop-ment of Mandis in the national capital. The decision was taken at a high level meeting chaired by Delhi Development Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday.

Divulging more details on the same, Rai said, "The board has given the green signal to a budget of Rs. 517.94 crores for the development of Delhi's mandis. For the financial year 2023-24, the board has allocated approximately Rs 206.37 crore to APMC, Azadpur; Rs 17.40 crore to Fruit & Vegetables Market, Ghazipur; Rs 16.31 crore to FP & EMC Ghazipur; Rs 8.50 crore to Flower Market; Rs 19.70 crore to APMC Keshopur; Rs 43.02 crore to APMC, Narela; Rs 4.42 crore to APMC, Najafgarh and Rs 202.19 crore to the Delhi Agricultural Marketing Board."

Slugfest over expense on CM bungalow

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The political slugfest over the alleged Rs 45 crore expenditure on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official resi-Wednesday, with the BJP on Thursday alleged that expenditure under various heads was kept below Rs 10 crore to bypass the lieutenant governor's scrutiny Meanwhile, Delhi BJP staged a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's house for the second consecutive day, demanding his resignation. Carrying a model of a mansion, the protesters took out a march from Chandgiram Akhara on Ring Road towards the Delhi chief minister's residence.



Aadmi Party's corruption," he charged.

Kejriwal, reacting for the first time over the issue, shared a video on his tweeter handle crores of rupees," the BJP

This clearly unmasks the Aam Be it curtains, tiles, carpets, Aadmi Party's corruption," he fans, he has ensured luxury in everything. He needs air only from the fans worth lakhs of rupees and a palace worth

the proposal for LG's approval.

Delhi BJP president

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI



ed, he said in his letter to the LG. chdeva said it is shoch

funds needs to be investigat-

ing that Delhi Jal Board fear-

lessly demolished the protect-

ed monument without the

approval of Archaeological

the proposal to the LG again, highlighting the delays on his part," reads the statement. BJP demands probe into demolition of heritage palace by DJB ex-CEO

proposal after LG's observa-

tions, again calling for the

takeover of the school.

Expressing his disappointment,

the chief minister has now sent

According to the Delhi government general financial

rules, files pertaining to any project worth Rs 10 crore and above are required to be sent to the lieutenant governor while a department head or minister has the power to approve any expenditure below it, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told a press conference. At various stages of the reconstruction of Kejriwal's

tiple heads was above Rs 9 crore Chadha said. but deliberately kept below Rs

10 crore, he alleged. "The expenditure on the chief minister's camp office was Rs 9.99 crore," Trivedi said and asked, "From where have you acquired the capacity of calculating an exact amount of Rs 9.99 crore...A smart calculation." "This is clearly a matter of blatant corruption

costs the citizens of the country

the BJP What does Delhi pub-When asked what kind of a probe the BJP would want to lic say on the row over Rs 45 crore spent on Kejriwal's bun-

have in the matter, Trivedi galow." The AAP will stage a said the issue has three aspects massive protest on Friday - legal, political and moral. against the 'country's ruler' for "We want and we will look wastage" of taxpayers money, carefully and vigilantly at their senior party leader Raghav reactions and then accordingly and appropriately the gov-

The BJP spokesperson ernment and its agencies will said the way the total expenditake action...," he added. ture was broken up raises "deep suspicion". For the decoration of Kejriwal's residence, a consultant was appointed for Rs 1 crore, Trivedi claimed. Chief Minister and a party "AAP has crossed all the

The BJP protesters started a march from Chandagi Ram AKhara, where a replica of a mansion was kept symbolising renovated "bungalow" of the

worker sitting in front of it wearing a mask of Kejriwal. limits.... All the frauds and lies of Kejriwal have been unveiled.

Thursday demanded a high level probe into the demolition of a heritage Pathan era Mahal (palace) in the Lajpat Nagar area here at the behest of former CEO of Delhi Jal Board Udit Prakash Rai.

In a letter to Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, Sachdeva drew attention towards the demolition of the ASI-protected monument Mahal at Jal Vihar in Delhi and construction of a 700 square metre Bungalow on the site by DJB at the behest of its then CEO Udit Prakash Rai, a 2007batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.

The Pioneer had on Thursday reported that the Vigilance Directorate of the Delhi Government has issued a show cause notice to 2007batch 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 locality here, construction of residential accommodation and their illegal allotments

"It shocking that Delhi Jal Board carried out this blatant act of demolishing a protected monument during the crit-ical Covid phase of 2021 and Sachdeva said in his letter. Delhi BIP President said

said that building a 700 square

metre Bungalow normally

costs around Rs 17.5 crore and

it is surprising how this budget got sanctioned. The role of the then DJB CEO Udit

Prakash and his then Minister

In-charge Satyendar Jain in

sanctioning construction

riots.

NSUI leader for screening BBC film

Survey of India and then did not seek approval of Delhi Urban Arts Commission or the then relevant South Delhi Municipal Corporation for construction of the Bungalow. Sachdeva urged the LG to order a high level probe in the entire matter. 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), locat-

ed at Bhagola village (old location name) having current location near DTC Bus Terminal, Jal Vihar, Shiv Mandir Road, Lajpat Nagar (East of Lajpat Nagar-1), belongs to Pathan Period, and is constructed of brick masonry and red sandstone.

AAP to protest against 'wastage of taxpayers' money for PM new house

bungalow, expenditure on mul-

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The AAP on Thursday said it I will hold a protest against the central government on April 28 against alleged wastage of taxpayers' money for the construction of a new official resi dence for the "country's ruler". Addressing a press conference, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi without naming him and said prices of items like milk and fuel have risen during the "reign of the king" and people are queuing up for "udhaar cards" instead of Aadhaar cards

The AAP's announcement came on a day when the BJP staged a protest outside Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence, alleging Rs 45 crore were spent on the reno-vation of the "palatial bungalow"

The AAP will hold a massive protest on Friday to raise its voice against the "luxurious lifestyle of the country's ruler" that is being funded by the hardearned monies of the country's taxpayers, Chadha said.



Referring to the construction of a new official residence for the prime minister, the AAP leader said the "palace" probably costs more than what Mughal emperor Shah Jahan would have spent for building the Taj Mahal.

It is estimated that over Rs 1,300 crore of the taxpayers' money would be spent for the construction of this "palace for the king", he alleged. A new prime minister's residence, among other things, is being constructed as part of the

opment project. When the "king" recently travelled to Karnataka for the

an hour-long event. When this king travels the world on the taxpayers' money, he uses a private aircraft that

travelled the world on the tax payers' money in the last couble of months, it cost his government Rs 1,500 crore," he claimed. When generic repair work was to be done at the official residence of this "king" for

its beautification, it cost the government exchequer Rs 90 crore, he claimed. Chadha further said inflation has risen under the "reign of the king" and prices of items

up for udhaar cards instead of Aadhaar cards". This king is afraid of the "chief of a small Central Vista Avenue redevelprovince of the kingdom", Chadha said without naming anyone. "The reason this king is

so afraid of this one chief mininauguration of an IIT, Chadha ister is that this CM is very educharged, it cost the government exchequer Rs 10 crore for

> facilities that they are getting and this is why the king is bothered

It's like a slap in face of voters, says Cong on money spent on new bungalow for Delhi CM

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI Rs 8,400 crore. When this king

> The Congress on Thursday L launched a scathing attack on the AAP over the alleged expenditure of Rs 45 crore on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's new official residence, saying it was "shameful" and it was like the party slapping its voters in the face.

The Opposition party also addressed queries about it reaching out to the Aam Aadmi like milk, petrol and LPG cylin-Party on one hand and attacking it on the other, saying there was "no good cop, bad cop" routine and both der have gone up. He has pushed the nation into a "state of doom to such an extent that people are queuing approaches can co-exist.

Asked about Congress leader Ajay Maken attacking Kejriwal on row over the reports and the party's official stand on the issue, the party's media department head Pawan Khera said Maken has said the right thing.

Hitting out at the AAP, Khera said, "You call yourself cated and his state is flourishing under him. The residents of the state are very happy with the an 'aam aadmi (common man)', it is a different matter that nobody considers you an 'aam aadmi' now. During Covid



when people were suffering and there was shortage of oxygen then what were you doing --expenditure of Rs 45 crore on renovating your house, building a swimming pool, draping curtains worth lakhs and crores, fitting tiles, is this Aam Aadmi's government?"

'These are astonishing facts. Some of you would be surprised but not us as we knew what the reality is. But we are still astonished that what kind Aam Aadmi government is this that used to trumpet about its honesty and simplicity," the Congress spokesperson said



STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI Gujarat

The Delhi High Court on Thursday set aside a Delhi University order debarring an NSUI leader for a year for his involvement in the screening on the campus a controversial BBC documentary on the 2002 authority" in the order.

"The court is unable to sustain the impugned order dated March 10, 2023. Impugned order is set aside. The admission of the petitioner is restored. Necessary consequences will follow," the judge ordered. Attorney General R Venkataramani represented the university and opposed the petition.

The court clarified that since the debarment order was Justice being set aside for a lack of Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav adherence to the principle of said action against Lokesh Chugh, a PhD scholar and natural justice, the university is NSUI national secretary, was free to taken action against the taken in violation of the prinpetitioner in accordance with Îaw. ciple of natural justice, and Senior advocate Kapil "reasons are necessary to be Sibal appeared for the petitionassigned by the administrative er



Aim is to get Indians in **Sudan to safety: Kwatra**

SERVICE/AGENCIES DELHI/BOGOTA(COLOMBIA)

s the security situation in A Sudan remains very complex, highly volatile and unpredictable and New Delhi launching 'Operation Kaveri' to evacuate its citizens, India's objective is to get every stranded Indian in that country out of harm's way, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra here said on Thursday. He also said 1,700 to 2,000 Indians were taken out of the conflict zone there.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, meanwhile, spoke to UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and discussed the evolving situation in Sudan, as India stepped up efforts to evacuate its stranded citizens from the strife-torn African country.

Last week, Jaishankar spoke to his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt on the ground situation in Sudan with a focus on ensuring the safety of the Indians.

Briefing reporters in New Delhi on the ongoing evacua-



tion mission, Kwatra said approximately 1,700 to 2,000 volatile and unpredictable. Indian nationals were moved We have been in touch with out of the conflict zones and both SAF (Sudanese Armed they included the citizens Forces) and RSF (Rapid already evacuated out of Sudan Support Forces). Our relations have been as well as those who are on their way to Port Sudan from good. We are in touch with all

capital city Khartoum. sides to get the Indians from The Foreign Secretary said conflict zones to safe areas India is in touch with the two and then to Port Sudan,' Kwatra said. On the total numwarring factions in Sudan and other stakeholders and has ber of Indians in Sudan, he said been able to evacuate its citiapproximately 3,100 have registered online with the Indian zens following a positive response from the concerned embassy in the Sudanese capital Khartoum while an addisides as they understand that tional 300 are in touch with the New Delhi stands for a very strong development partnermission. Sudan also has around ship with Khartoum. "The situation on the 900 to 1,000 PIOs (Persons of

Indian Origins).

DELHI/UNITED NATIONS India has brushed aside Pakistan raising the Kashmir issue in the United Nations (UN) and said no amount of rhetoric and propaganda can change the fact that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh are and will always be an "inalien-

SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW

PIONEER NEWS

able" part of the country. Counsellor in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Pratik Mathur's remarks came after Pakistan's Permanent Representative at the UN Munir Akram spoke about J&K in his statement at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting

late on Wednesday. "The Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were, are and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of misinformation, rhetoric or propaganda from any country can change that fact," Mathur said at the UN General Assembly plenary on 'Use of the veto.'

Pakistan consistently rakes



J&K, Ladakh part of India,

New Delhi snubs Pak at UN

up the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at various UN platforms, irrespective of the agenda and topic of discussion at the meetings. New Delhi has repeatedly

emphasised that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were, are and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. On Monday, India

slammed Pakistan after it raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at a UN Security Council meeting, prompting India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj to assert that she would not waste the Council's time by responding to such

"mischievous" remarks. "Lastly, this august forum has today heard some mischievous remarks by a permanent representative arising purely out of ignorance and lack of an understanding on the basic facts of decolonisation," Kamboj had said. Days after calling for "course correction" in the United Nations Security Council

"I will not be wasting the time of this Council in responding to those remarks. Our advice to that delegation is please refer to our numerous rights of reply that we have expressed in the past," she said.

Kamboj's stern response came at the UN Security Council open debate on 'Maintenance of international peace and security: Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" chaired by Russia, President of the Council for the month of April. With Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov presiding over the debate, Akram had referred to Jammu and Kashmir in his statement.

Pratik Mathur said over the last Tensions between India 75 years, all five permanent members have used the veto to and Pakistan spiked after New achieve their respective polit-Delhi abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution to revoke the ical ends. special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019. Council, only the five perma-

Army to initiate command cyber

UNSC veto driven by pol considerations, not moral, says India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW **DELHI/UNITED NATIONS**

(UNSC), India has now

emphasised that the exercise of

veto in the international body

is driven by "political consid-

erations" and not by moral

obligations. New Delhi also

said only five permanent mem-

bers being given the privilege

of using the veto goes against

the very concept of sovereign

General Assembly plenary on

Use of the veto' late

Wednesday, a year since the

adoption of the 'veto initiative'

by the 193-member UN body,

Counsellor in the Permanent

Mission of India to the UN,

In the 15-nation Security

domain, Command Cyber

Operations and Support Wings

(CCOSW) are being raised in

Indian Army. These organisa-

tions will assist the formations

to undertake the mandated

cyber security functions to

strengthen the cyber security

commanders and other senior

functionaries took stock of the

current and emerging security

scenarios and reviewed the

operational preparedness and

In the conference, the Army

posture of the Indian Army.

Addressing the UN

equality of states.

Russia, the UK and the US have veto powers. The remaining 10 members are elected as non-permanent members for two-year terms and do not have veto powers. 'The exercise of veto is dri-

nent members - China, France,

ven by political considerations, not by moral obligations. As long as it exists, the member state or member states, who can exercise the veto, will do so, irrespective of the moral pressure, as we have seen in the recent past," Mathur said.

In April last year, the UN General Assembly had adopted by consensus, without a vote, the resolution 'Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council', also known as the 'Veto Initiative'

Following the adoption of the resolution, the use of the veto in the Council by a permanent member now triggers a General Assembly meeting, where all UN members can scrutinise and comment on the

Opp parties slam SC directs district courts Modi for joke on to digitise trial records

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELH

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed district courts to digitise all records of criminal trials and civil suits. The top court said a robust system of responsibility and accountability must be developed and fostered in order to ensure the proper protection and regular updation of all records facilitating the smooth functioning of the judicial process

"Technology has, in the present time become increasingly enmeshed with the systems of dispute resolution and adjudication with the trends pointing to all the more interplay, both supplementary and complimentary between technology and law.

The Registrar General of the high courts shall ensure that in all cases of criminal trial, as well as civil suits, the digitisation of records must be duly undertaken with promptitude at all district courts, preferably within the time prescribed for filing an appeal within the



SOP for digital preservation on September 24, 2021. The apex court also directed the District Judge concerned to ensure that the records so digitised are verified expeditiously once the system of digitisation along with the system of authentication of the digitized records is in place. A continually updated

record of Register of Records digitized shall be maintained with periodic reports being sent to high courts concerned for suitable directions," Bench The apex court's direcsaid. tion came while setting aside conviction of a man in a corruption case by the Allahabad High Court. The question for consideration was whether, in the absence of the records of the trial court, the appellate court could have upheld the conviction and enhanced the quantum of fine. The top

suicide note

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

pposition party leaders Oon Thursday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his 'suicide note' joke at an event terming it insensitive'. Congress hit out at PM over him cracking a joke on a suicide note, with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra saying that the PM and those laughing heartily at his joke ought to educate themselves better rather than "ridicule" mental health issues in an 'insensitive" manner.

Aam Admi Party and Shiv Sena (UBT) too slammed the Prime Minister over his remarks."Imagine the insensitive disregard for human life by our Prime Minister who needs to crack a joke on sui-cide!?!? Ironically, when this 'Anpadh PM' makes a sick and cruel joke on a girl's suicide, the nation is expected to laugh," the Arvind Kejriwal-

led party said in a tweet. Minister

Istered AU Solution of this notice failing writerian Solution shall be deemed to have been we Vishal Mehan (Adv Court, Delhi-Court, Delhi-

Mobile No. 9811215181



being upset over a wrong spelling in her suicide note despite his efforts to teach her for so many years.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said thousands of families lose their children to suicide and "the prime minister should not make fun of them". Tagging the video of Modi's joke at the conclave, Priyanka Gandhi conclave, Priyanka Gandhi tweeted, "Depression and sui-cide, especially among the youth IS NOT a laughing matter. According to NCRB data, 164033 Indians com-mitted suicide in 2021. Of which a huge percentage were below the age of 30. This is a

tragedy not a joke." Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) MP Priyanka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

In an effort to enable the Army to fight modern day warfare, it has decided to operationalise command cyber operations and support wings as part of its efforts to modernise its online networks as well as to ensure their effective protection. The decision was taken at the Army Commanders' Conference that took place last week.

The top-brass also gave the nod to double the sustenance allowance of specially abled children of those soldiers who die in harness, officials said here on Thursday while giving details of the outcome of the meet. The welfare of soldiers is an abiding responsibility of the leadership and the organization, they added.

As regards cyber domain, officials said "With rapid migration towards net centricity, which entails an increased reliance on modern communication systems, the forum reviewed the requirement to safeguard the networks and operationalise



absorption of niche technologies and equipment, it was decided to nominate lead directorates and 'test bed' formations to evolve optimal employment philosophies and scaling to facilitate better exploitation," the Army said in a statement.

Highlighting the importance of the decision, sources said cyberspace has emerged as an important competent of military domain both in grey zone warfare as well as conventional operations.

The expansion of cyber warfare capabilities by our adversaries has made the cyber domain more competitive and contested than ever before. The Indian Army today is rapidly migrating towards net centricvhich entails an increas reliance on modern communication systems at all levels. Hence, to safeguard the networks and increase the preparedness levels in this niche

MoHUA launches

Taking a cue from beauty pageant, the Housing and

wards to create beautiful, inno-

vative and inclusive public

spaces. It would be voluntary

for the cities and urban local

bodies. The last date for par-

July 15. A portal https://city-

launched for urban local bod-

ies to submit documents,

including photographs, videos,

presentation and self-reported

baseline information to par-

under this competition, wards

and public spaces in cities

would be judged on five broad

pillars - accessibility, ameni-

ties, activities, aesthetics and

petition provides a unique

opportunity to wards and cities

to showcase their interven-

tions towards creating beauti-

ful public spaces. It would also

promote heritage and culture,

sustainable communities and

ecological conservation and

would also encourage peer

learning among states and

The ministry said the com-

ecology.

cities

According to the ministry,

ticipate in the competition.

'City Beauty

veto. Bangladesh Army Chief begins three-day visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

ndia and Bangladesh reviewed the entire gamut of their bilateral military ties and resolved to further strengthen them during the visit of Bangladesh Army Chief S M Shafiuddin Ahmed commencing his three-day visit on Thursday. During the visit, he met India's senior military and

civilian leadership. During his talks with Army Chief Manoj Pande, the two chiefs discussed various issues pertaining to enhancing and strengthening interoperability, training, anti-terrorism colaboration and overall bilateral cooperation as part of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations. The visiting General was accorded a Ğuard of Honour at the South Block Lawns.

readiness of the force. The Bangladesh Army Giving details of the deci-Chief commenced his visit by sions taken at the Army Commanders Conference, paving tributes to the fallen organised for the first time in a heroes of the Indian Armed hybrid model from April 17-21, Forces by laying a wreath at the officials said deliberations were eld nging Strategic, Training, Human Resource Development, and Administrative aspects and took key decisions in shaping the Army for the future.

National War Memorial. The visiting General c on Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, Air Marshal AP Singh, Vice Chief of Air Staff, Defence Secretary and the Foreign Secretary.

nation 04

or procedure, the bench said

A bench of Justices Krishna Murari and Sanjay Karol noted that the E--committee of the Supreme Court had issued an

PUBLIC NOTICE

lotice is hereby given on behalf o

Piramal Capital & Housing Finance

Limited that Mr. Lokesh Rana intends to purchase & mortgage the Flat No.

(MIG), on First Floor (without roof

rights), admeasuring 650 Sq. Feet, built on Plot No. 21, situated at Vikram

Enclave, Village Pasonda, Loni.

Ghaziabad (U.P.), with our client against

the financial assistance. Whereas 1) Mr.

Amit Kumar Singh & 2) Mr. Haridwa

Singh have acquired the Said Flat by

way of Sale Deed dated 07-09-2009 and

after death of Haridwar Singh, his legal

heirs 1) Mr. Amit Kumar Singh & 2) Mr.

Manoj Kumar Singh intend to sell the

If any person(s) having objection with

regard to ownership/mortgage of the said

property is/are requested to intimate in

writing to undersigned within 07 days

from the date of issue of this notice a

below address. In the event no

information is received within 07 days

from date hereof, our Client i.e. Piramal

Capital & Housing Finance Limited will

DEEPJYOT SINGH, ADVOCATE

proceed with the mortgage process.

A-13, LGF, South Extn-II,

New Delhi-49 # 011-40587824

same to Mr. Lokesh Rana.

offence was committed 28 years ago and the relevant trial court record has not been able to be reconstructed, despite the efforts of the courts.

e alleged urt noted that th ime while speaking at a media channel conclave on Wednesday, shared a joke about a professor, whose daughter committed suicide,

nation need to be more sensitive to depression and mental health issues with you leading the change not mocking their plight.

Command Cyber Operations and Support Wings (CCOSW) in the immediate future."

"In order to augment the capabilities of the forces by

Close India ties critical for world's future: US Ambassador-designate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As ties between the two countries have strengthened over the years, US Ambassador-Designate to India Eric Garetti has said this relationship in the world is critical to its future. He also asserted that the two countries have never worked as closely together on a range of issues as they do today.

Garcetti, 52, President Joe Biden's close aide, was officially sworn in as the US ticipating in the competition is Ambassador to India last month, ending more than two beautycompetition has been years of delay to fill one of Washington's most critical diplomatic positions.

"There are few relationships in the world that are more vital to the US and India. Our relationship in the world is critical to its future. As President (Joe) Biden has said, India and the US are indispensable partners," Garcetti told a gathering of eminent Indian Americans at the first-of-its-kind US-India Summit organised by Congressional India Caucus's Co-chairs Ro Khanna and Michael Waltz late Wednesday

in Washington. Former Mayor of Los Angeles, Garcetti's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Biden. In March, the Senate voted 52 to 42 to con-

firm Garcetti after his nomination was stalled amid concerns by some lawmakers that he had not adequately handled allegations of sexual assault and harassment against a former senior adviser.

"Before I came out to India, I spoke with President (Joe) Biden about his vision for the US-India partnership. He stressed just how pivotal this moment is. It is pivotal for the entire planet and especially pivotal for our two

countries," Garcetti said. The US and India have never worked as closely together on as many issues as they do today. "We are two of the world's leading democracies. We are the world's largest and fifth largest economies," he said.

"We are connected through and empowered by the innovative spirit of our incredible people. And together, through the actions we take, we will together shape the 21st century, in this G-20 year and beyond, working alongside my incredibly dedicated colleagues at the US Mission to India," he added.

The US Embassy in India has been without an ambassador since January 2021, the longest stretch in the history of US-India relations that the post has sat vacant, since Kenneth Juster, the last US envoy in New Delhi, stepped down after the change of government in America

PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the General Public tha Mrs. Rajni Devi is the owner of PLOT NC.16-A BLOCK-C, AREA MEASURING 100 sq. yards OUT OF KHASRA NO.1408. SITUATED IN THE VILLAGE JIAUDDINPUR NEAR ABADI Of GOKALPURI, ILLAOA SHAHDARA, DELHI, vid notarised General Power of Attorney date 20.99.1981 and registered slip dated 29.09.198 (Doc No 17220) registered with SRO IV Delhi along with NOTARISED agreement to sale and Will A Persons are hereby informed that Mr. SANJEEV KUMAR & Mrs. RAVKAJ are purchasing the above mentioned proPart/KoJ are mortgaging th said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited. General public hereb informed that if anybody has any charge/Interesi title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindi inform the dated property or any kind of dispute kindi inform the exid property or any kind of dispute kindi inform the said property or any kind of dispute kindi inform the prodenty or any kind of dispute kindi mentioned address within 07 days of the present. NOTICE is hereby given that Vijay Kumar Verma, Vinod Verma and Virendra Verma (herein after called Owners) claims to be owner and in possession of Prop no. 33, Block A, Sector-IV, Noida (UP) (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Transfer Letter 28.04.2022 issued by NOIDA being surviving legal heirs and beneficiaries of late Harkishan Lal Verma, said Harkishan Lal Verma, was the owner of said property by virtue of Transfer Deed Dated 20.01 2001 bearing Doc No. 391 and said Owner/s has agreed to sell the said Property to Springs Home Decor Pvt Ltd and said owner/s have intimated that Original Documents i.e. Allotment Letter, Lease Deed Dated 01.09.2000, GPA & Will Dated 15.01. inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. Mrs. Prascon Lata, Advocat SG Associates (Law Firr FF 18, Lotus Pond Piaza, Vaibhav Khand, Indirapura Ghaziabad 2010f14.E-mail: sgassociatespi@gmail.co Phr. 7011172764, &130220083 2001 are misplaced, And Said Springs Home Decor Pvt Ltd has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Axis Bank Limited, CP Branch Delhi and, any person's having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortcase (cruitable/receitstered or otherwise) PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE My client, RAVISINGH NEGI is mortgaging one bui up property bearing Plot No. 110, with all its roof terrace rights of land underneath, admeasuring 7 sq. vds. i.e. 61.88 sq. mr. volt of Khasra No. 88/21 situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Hastsa abadi known as colony M-Block, Utam Nagar Ne Delhi-110059 with Hero Housing Finance Limited currently owned by Smt. Knishna Devi Gupta W Sh. Ravi Kant Gupta virtue of sale deed 29.10.202 SR. II B Delhi. This property was transferred b legal heir of Ratan Devi namely Smt. Shakuntla De who became owner by virtue of relia the strength Rani (3) Sh. Rajnish Kumar Doc. No. 20893 date 04.10.2021. Any Person/Bank/Financial Institution having any claim/right. Iien any objectio whatsoever in regard to above property, shoul multide to the undersigned! Adv. Vishal Mehar E-713. Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 aion with documentary evidence under address throug registered A/D within 7 days from the date orobjection shall be deemed to have been waived. **Vishal Mehari** (Advocata mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever or in possession of above misplaced Original Documents, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequel creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate For Diwan and Company LLF Advocates and Solicitors H. No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi-19 Mobile No. 9818399999

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas

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

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

Sr. No.		Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch	
	T Dhir/ Hema/ LBDEL00003111981	Flat No-L-1/222-B, Dda Flat, Category-lig, 1st Floor, Kalkaji, Delhi- 110019/ April 24, 2023	July 02, 2022 Rs. 43,89,403.01/-	Delhi/ NCR	
the	ne above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else e mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per e provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.				
	e : April 28, 2023 ce : Delhi/ NCR		Authorized		

Even mild Covid cases raise arterial stiffness that leads to vascular deterioration: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Even mild cases of Covid-19 Fraised arterial stiffness in young adults that leads to vascular deterioration, according to a study, conducted by an international team of researchers. Arterial stiffness is a marker associated with the ageing and function of our arteries. It also refers to the reduced ability of arteries to expand and contract in response to changes in blood pressure and is linked with cardiovascular disease.

The study, published in the Journal of Clinical Medicine, revealed age and time from Covid infection is associated with increased ageing of the arteries. Researchers found that among people diagnosed with mild Covid, artery and central cardiovascular function were affected by the disease two to three months after infection. Side effects include stiffer and more dysfunctional arteries that could lead to cardiovascular disease development.

"We were surprised to observe such a decline in vascular health, which deteriorated even further with time since the Covid-19 infection. Usually, you'd expect inflammation to decrease with time after infection, and for all the physiological functions to go back to normal or a healthy level," said co-author Dr Maria



Perissiou from the University of Portsmouth in the UK.

"We can only speculate on what causes this phenomenon without further investigation, but emerging evidence suggests that it stems from Covid-19 triggering the autoimmune process that leads to vascular deterioration," she added.

Participants in the study were monitored between October 2019 and April 2022. Arterial stiffness was measured in a group of healthy volunteers before the pandemic. These people were called back after a bout of mild Covid to make the same measurements.

Most were young, less than 40 years old, and healthy. Only 9 percent of the group had high blood pressure, and none had high cholesterol. Two were diabetic, and 78 percent did not smoke. The group was also almost an even split between males (56 percent) and females (44 per-

Competition' PNS NEW DELHI

nation 05



Barsu refinery work will start only with people's will: Shinde

Govt using force to silence people, says Uddhav

TN RAGHUNATHA

Seeking to soothe the frayed nerves of the agitating vil-lagers against the against the proposed Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Project (RRPL), Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde said on Thursday that the state government would not force the controversial project on the local people and that it would go ahead only after taking their consent.

Two days after deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had - amid the stiff resistance from the local villagers, said that his government would go ahead and complete the project at Barsu in Rajapur talúka of coastal Ratnagiri district, Shinde took a conciliatory stand and said that the state government would "not do any injustice" to the villagers living around the proposed project site. On a day when Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray upped the ante over the RRPL and slammed Shinde-Fadnavis gov-ernment for using force to "silence" the villagers protesting against the land surveys being carried out by RRPL teams Shinde said that he had spoken NCP chief Sharad Pawar in matters relating to the Konkan refinery project and assured the latter that the state government would not start the project unless it took the local people into confidence. "We will not do any injustice to the local people and we would not undertake the project unless we have the

local people on board" he said. "We will not do any injustice to the local people nor will use force to make them toe our line. We will not do anything without the consent of the local population," Shinde said "The preprocedures like sinking bores and soil testing soil are being done now. We are not at all starting the Barsu project immediately," the chief minister said. Shinde's statement came a day after the Pawar asked the state government not to thrust the project on the local people and advised the chief minister to initiate a dialogue with the local people opposing the RRPL, Maintaining that like it did

in the case of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway project, the state government would take local people opposing project into confidence bef ore proceeding with project, Shinde said: "There was opposition even in case of Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway project. We took the farmers opposing the land acquisition for the project. Now we are seeing the results of the project". Earlier in the day, former



chief minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray came down heavily on the Shinde-Fadnavis for using force to "silence" the villagers opposing RRPL. He also clarified as to why he was opposing the project after having proposed to the Centre that the RRPL be located at Barsu. Addressing a meeting of the Kamgar Sena workers in

Mumbai, Uddhav said: "Yes. It is true that I wrote the letter to locate the project at Barsu. Why did the Centre not execute the project then. My government then did not force the people to give up their land for the pro-ject. If a refinery is for the pub-lic good, why is it being force on

"My stand on RRPL is sim-ple. I am with the local people. the project is in the interest of the locals, why is it being force it on them? We do not want projects that harm the environment," he said.

Uddhav also wanted to know if "the RRPL is a green refinery" and asked Shinde and Fadnavis to come clean on the

"The Shinde-Fadnavis government claims that it is bring-

ing good projects to Maharashtra. Then why are Maharashtra. Then why are women being detained with the help of the police? Why are people being arrested? If the project ios good for people, why didn't the state government bring projects like Vedanta Foxconn or Tata Airbus here? Why did they send away the Why did they send away the good projects that could have come here?" Uddhav wondered.

It may be recalled that on April 12, 2018, an Indian consortium comprising Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabian Oil Co (Saudi Aramco) for setting an oil refinery and petroleum products complex in Rajapur taluka of Ratnagiri district.

Seeking to allay fears of the local villagers that RRPL posed a massive environmental threat to the area where it is being developed, Fadanavis had said Tuesday: "The project does not pose any threat to the nature. Instead, the project is very ben-eficial for the people in the region, as it will provide one lakh job opportunities. The misinformation campaign has been going on against the project. The Opposition MVA when it was in power, had written to the Centre seeking to locate the project at Barsu. Now the MVA is opposing the project for political reasons".

BJP calls for Bengal bandh as cadre dies in police firing

SAUGAR SENGUPTA 📕 KOLKATA

 $D_{\text{was}}^{\text{ays}}$ after a teenage girl was reportedly raped and murdered at Kaliaganj — triggering a massive political tumult — one more death this time of a saffron worker was reported from the same block bordering Bangladesh.

There was more political upheaval when a BJP support-er was allegedly shot dead by policemen in the small hours of Thursday leading the saffron outfit to call a dawn-to-dusk North Bengal bandh on Friday. This incident took place at Radhikapur neighbouring Kaliaganj town. The Thursday's incident

took place when a police team allegedly raided a BJP panchayat member's house in connection with Tuesday's torching of the Kaliaganj Police Station by local villagers who were protesting against police inaction in the rape-and-murder case.

Having failed to find Bishnu Burman the BJP leader, the police tried to whisk away his father when Mrityunjay Burman the nephew of Vishnu protested leading the police to fire in anger, the mother of the victim said. The incident took place at 2.30 am on Thursday,

sources said. "My son was just request-ing them to spare the old man and we were telling them that none of our family or for that matter our village was involved in the Tuesday's violence ... but still they would not listen to us and suddenly one of them pulled out a gun and shot through my son's chest," the mother of the victim said. Though there was no statement from the police, sources at the subaltern level said that the



team after surrounding it from all sides leading one of them to fire in self defence. The Internet service has been snapped by the spared. North Dinajpur district administration, sources said adding prohibitive orders under Section 144 of the CrPC had been clamped in Kaliaganj and neighbouring Radhikapur village. Even as the Opposition BJP promptly called a dawn-to-

dusk bandh on Friday demanding immediate action against the erring police officials, Union Minister Anurag Thakur launched a scathing attack on the Mamata Banerjee government for the deteriorating law and order situation.

"In Bengal the police act promptly heaping atrocities on the people taking out procession on Ramnavami, whereas they keep silent when the girls are raped ... and this happens in a State where the Chief Minister is a woman," Thakur said adding "the present State of affairs" on how a BJP work-er was shot dead by the police only showed the deterioration of the law and order situation."

State Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari said that the Chief Minister would have to take the responsibility of the

"murder" of the BJP man say ing she had on Wednesday told in a media conference that no person who had taken part in arson at Kaliaganj would be

Taking to Twitter Adhikari wrote, Mamata' police brutally killed a Rajbangshi young man of 33 years at Kaliaganj. Trigger-happy 'Mamata' police raided the house of a BJP Panchayat Samiti Member Bishnu Barman at 2:30 am midnight ... but did not find him. They brutally shot dead a Rajbangshi young man named Mrityunjay Barman... This is tyranny and state terror at its worst form and Mamata Banerjee is merry-making like Emperor Nero while the state is burning and sliding into a phase of civil unrest." The family members of the deceased have demanded a CBI investigation into the case.

The impact of the Friday's bandh is likely to be watched keenly by all the parties including the BJP which has a good support base in the region, TMC which is desperately trying to retain its clout and the Left which is trying to stage a comeback having recovered much of its ground in the past several months, experts say.

ED seizes ₹360 cr FDs of SIC group

PNS 🗖 NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized Rs 360 crore worth of fixed deposits of South India Corporation (SIC), a group company of Chennai-based Chettinad Group, after it conducted searches against it and state public sector unit Tamil Nadu Generation and

Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO). TANGEDCO is a public sector undertaking (PSU) of Tamil Nadu Government. The agency conducted searches on Monday at 10 locations in connection with a money laundering investigation linked to alleged "cheating of TANGED-CO by claiming excessive payments for coal transportation from the Visakhapatnam Port, which amounted to hundreds

of crores? The ED case, filed under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLÁ), stems from an FIR of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption of Tamil Nadu government.

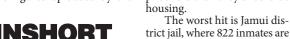
The searched locations included the premises of the former Director of Coal (TANGEDCO), government officials, as well as key man-agement personnel of SIC and Western Agencies (Madras) Private Limited.

"During the search, incriminating documents including digital evidence and property documents were seized. The search also led to recovery of Rs. 360 crore lying as fixed deposits in accounts of South India Corporation, which have also been seized," the ED said in a statement.

३०५० राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधि

Jails have double or more than double their prisoner capacity: Bihar

Patna: Amid a raging debate over the release of 27 convicted prisoners in Bihar, the latest figures released by the state home department underscore the need for decongesting 59 jails where nearly 62,000 inmates are currently lodged. The figures uploaded by the



CBI files FIR against **BECIL** officials over corruption charges

PNS NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered an FIR against Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited General Manager Ramit Lala, consultant Monica Dhawan and others for alleged corruption in social media and website-related works of

different ministries. Consultants India Limited (BECIL) is a public sector enterprise under the Ministry Information and Broadcasting and provides project consultancy services and turnkey solutions of radio and television broadcast engi-

ernment departments that

were floated by BECIL. The agency also received information that Khanna not only assisted Dhawan in managing business affairs but also in negotiating for bribe money with public servants and in payment of the demanded bribe, the FIR alleged.

The FIR alleged that they together favours in awarding work orders and tenders and expediting clearance of pending bills of their company by bribing officials, including Lala. According to the FIR, Dhawan recently approached Lala to ensure that her company gets the order related to the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Tourism, urging him to help her in getting these works in the same manner as he had helped her in getting the work of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Besides Lala, Dhawan, Charu and jmp Khanna, the CBI has also booked the company Fusion Corporate Solutions Pvt Ltd and Vishnu, a private person and driver of Charu Khanna.

8 years' jail to 5 in PLA-Maoist nexus against India unity

New Delhi: The NIA Special liaison office in Kolkata, where Court, Guwahati, on Wednesday convicted five persons to eight years imprison-ment in the 2011 PLA-CPI (Maoist) nexus case related to a criminal conspiracy to threaten the unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of India. Three of the convicted accused

a meeting was held between PLA/RPF and CPI (Maoist) leaders. Modalities were worked out at the meeting for taking unified action for waging a war against the Union of India, the agency said.

A bipartite meeting was also held between PLA/RPF CPI (Maoist) leadershi



INDIA, UK JOINTLY HOLD **MILITÁRY DRILLS**

New Delhi: The seventh edition of joint military exercise "Ajeya Warrior -23" between India and the United Kingdom got underway on Thursday at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom and will last till May 11, army officials said here. The bilateral exercise is a biennial training event conducted alternatively in United Kingdom and India. The last edition was held at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand in October 2021. Soldiers of the 2 Roval Gorkha Rifles from United Kingdom and Indian Army soldiers from Bihar Regiment are participating in ongoing exercise. The Indian Army contingent arrived at Brize Norton on Wednesday by an Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft with indigenous weapons and equipment

COAST GUARD HOLDS 2-DAY SECURITY DRILL New Delhi: The Indian Coast Guard carried out a two-day join coastal security exercise 'Sagar Kavach' along the coast of West Bengal from April 25 to 26 with the objective to evaluate the threats emanating from seaward in present geo-political conditions. Giving details of the exercise, Coast Guard officials said here on Thursday the drill also validated existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of all the stakeholders. Moreover, it aimed at strengthening security mechanism along coast of West Bengal by synergizing efforts of central and state agencies responsible for coastal security. The exercise was also aimed at checking the efficacy of layered security arrangements i.e. air surveillance, deep sea patrol by bigger ships of Coast Guard and Navy and close coast patrol by Coast Guard Air cushioned vessels, boats of Marine Police. Central Industrial Security Force(CRPF), Customs and the Border Security

Force(BSF).

where 822 minate occupying a space meant for 188 prisoners, implying more than four-times the number are being penned in this jail.

state home department on its

website till March 31 pegged

the capacity of 59 jails, includ-

ing eight central prisons, at 47,750. However, 61,891 pris-

oners are languishing in these

prisons. This means the prisons

have nearly 30 per cent more

prisoners than they should be

Öfficials said they were pointing to these statistics to merely underscore the need for reforms in prison management and said the much maligned order to allow remission of sentences to prisoners who have served more than 14 years in jail was one such. The release of gangster-turnedpolitician Anand Mohan Singh from Saharsa jail on Thursday which has attracted much criticism from the opposition is one such case permitted under a jail sentence remission order after the state government recently amended prison rules allowing the early release of 27 convicts including him. PTI | different ministries and gov-

neering by subletting jobs to private contractors and consultants, according to the FIR. The CBI received information that Dhawan, the founder of Fusion Corporate Solutions Private Limited, along with her sister Charu Khanna, who is the business head, and her father I M P Khanna, who is a director in

the company, allegedly pur-sued Lala for clearing bills of already executed works and awarding various tenders of People's Liberation Army (PLA) and two to the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

The NIA had registered a suo moto case on July 1, 2011 on inputs that the PLA, a proscribed terrorist organization, had hatched a conspiracy to destabilize the country with the support of CPI (Maoist). "The CPI (Maoist) leaders had agreed to recognize and support the separatist activities of PLA for the creation of the northeastern state of Manipur, as a separate nation.

The PLA leadership, on its part, decided to support the continuing war of CPI (Maoist) for overthrowing constitutionally elected Government of India," the NIA said in a statement. Investigations revealed that PLA had established a

246 rescued from

Sudan reach Mumbai

Jharkhand for imparting military training to cadres of CPI (Maoist) by PLA/RPF instructors, it said. It further came to light during the investigations that the self styled President of PLA/RPF had also complimented the General Secretary of CPI (Maoist) on carrying out an attack on the security forces on April 6, 2010, resulting in the killing of 76 CRPF personnel in Chhattisgarh.

Investigations also revealed that PLA had provided logistic support to Maoist cadres and both groups were regularly communicating and exchanging emails. The accused persons had travelled to different places within and outside India, and created fake IDs and bank accounts under pseudonymous identities, it further said. PNS

1. 1	Approx. Cost of work NIT- 06A-23-24-W-2	h E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems) 06A-23-24-W-2 Dated 26.04.2023. GZB-SRE (B-Route) Providing 10Km boundary wall in c/w speed raising from 110Km/h to 130Km/h in the locations due to vulnerable location/trespassing/approach of major cities. As per IREPS Notice	
1. 1	Name of work with its location Approx. Cost of work	GZB-SRE (B-Route) Providing 10Km boundary wall in c/w speed raising from 110Km/h to 130Km/h in the locations due to vulnerable location/trespassing/approach of major cities.	
	Approx. Cost of work	wall in c/w speed raising from 110Km/h to 130Km/h in the locations due to vulnerable location/trespassing/approach of major cities.	
24		As per IREPS Notice	
	Earnest Money NIT- 06A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	
	Completion period of work NIT- 06A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	
	Cost of tender on cash/by post NIT- 06A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	
	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	09.05.2023 to 23.05.2023 upto 15:00 hrs Opening of tender 23.05.2023 at 15:00 hrs.	
	Similar nature of work NIT- 06A-23-24-W-2	As per IREPS Notice	
	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can ased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	
NIT - 06A-23-24-W-2 Dated : 26.04.2023			

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



E-TENDER NOTICE

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

A) Fresh-Tender Work: -

SI. No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Tender Amount (in Lacs)
	(E&M)/Sr.M (E&M-IV)/	Annual Maintenance (Internal and External Electrification) of Animal Shelter, Antim Niwas, Muslim Kabristan, Christian Kabristan Sector-94, Noida	

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 11.05.2023 up to 5.00 PM Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 12.05.2023 at 11.00 AM.

B) Re-Tender Work: -

SI. No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Tender Amount (in Lacs)
	83/DGM (E&M)/Sr.M (E&M-II)/2022 -2023/ET	Providing and Fixing of Decorative pole in place of old rusted pole in parks of Sector-23, Noida.	31.93
The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 04.05.2023 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 08.05.2023 at 11.00 AM. Office: Dy. General Manager			
Office: Sector-39, Noida			& M) NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA			

Prolonged droughts caused Indus Civilisation disappearance: Study

entists

ARCHANA JYOTI - NEW DELHI

 $F_{\text{struction of a stalagmite}}^{\text{ollowing climate recon-}}$ found in a cave in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district in India, researchers from Cambridge University said that the evidence shows that a series of severe and lengthy droughts starting at around 4,200 years ago and lasting for over two centuries may have caused the decline of the Indus Civilization cities in the country.

The study published in the journal Communications Earth & Environment says that the researchers identified three protracted droughts—each last-ing between 25 and 90 years during this arid period.

A stalagmite is an upwardgrowing mound of mineral deposits that have precipitated from water dripping onto the floor of a cave. Similar to tree rings, the strata of these stalagmites serve as a record of the

history of rainfall in the area, making them more than just geological marvels. They can also predict devastating multiyear droughts that could occur in the future, according to sci-

The Cambridge University researchers charted historic rainfall by examining growth layers in a stalagmite collected from the Dharamjali Cave which was also being used as a shelter as the researchers found traces of human activity all over it, including chunks of hollowed-out tree trunks used to collect water.

They measured a range of environmental tracers including oxygen, carbon and calcium isotopes — and obtained a reconstruction showing relative rainfall at seasonal resolution. They also used high-precision Uraniumseries dating to get a handle on the age and duration of the droughts. "We find clear evi-

dence that this interval was not a short-term crisis but a progressive transformation of the environmental conditions in which Indus people lived," noted study co-author Prof Cameron Petrie, from Cambridge's Department of Archaeology. "Multiple lines of evi-

dence allow us to piece together the nature of these droughts from different angles - and confirm they are in agreement," said lead author of the research Alena Giesche, who conducted the research as part of her PhD in Cambridge's Department of Earth Sciences.

Giesche and the team identified distinct periods of belowaverage rainfall in both summer and winter seasons. "The evidence for drought affecting both cropping seasons is extremely significant for understanding impact of this period of climate change upon human populations," said Petrie.

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI tleast 246 stranded Indians A tleast 240 su and a line have been evacuated from the strife-torn Sudan, has arrived on Thursday in

Mumbai via Jeddah by a Special Indian Air Force (IAF) flight, as part of the ongoing rescue Operation "Kaveri" launched by the Government.

The IAF C-17 Globemaster aircraft, carrying 246 Indians who had been evacuated from Sudan capital Khartoum, took off from Jeddah this morning and landed here after 3 pm.

With the return of 246 stranded people from Sudan via Jeddah, the total number of Indians evacuated from Khartoum has gone up to 606. The first batch of 360 Indians had arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday evening. "Another #OperationKaveri flight comes to Mumbai. 246 more Indians come back to the motherland," Minister of External Affairs Dr.

S. Jaishankar tweeted. Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan, who saw the stranded Indians off in Jeddah, said: "our effort to swiftly send Indians back home from Jeddah is paying".

Simultaneously, the Indian Navy has launched an evacuation operation to bring back to India the Indians stranded in Sudan. The INS Teg, an antipiracy patrol vessel, was diverted to Sudan port and retrieved 297 Indians and dropped them in Jeddah. "Operation Kaveri" is a rescue mission launched by government to evacuate stranded Indian from Sudan where Sudanese Army and paramili-

tary groups are fighting.

🕋 NEW DELHI | FRIDAY | APRIL 28, 2023

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Murderous Maoists

The Maoist menace is declining, but their attacks shouldn't be downplayed as a sign of desperation

n January 2013, Maoists blew up 10 security personnel at Latehar in Jharkhand. The Maoists even mutilated the bodies of jawans. The security establishment said that the attack was a sign of Maoists' desperation. In another attack in March 2014, the Maoists in Chhattisgarh murdered 16 people in a landmine attack followed up with gunfire. That again, officials said, was a sign of Maoists' desperation. In September 2020, there was a spate of killings by Naxals in the Bastar division in Chhattisgarh. Police from Bastar division, according to a news report, said Maoists were acting out of desperation. Two days ago, they killed 10 policemen and a driver using a powerful 50-kg improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. The blast was so massive that it caused a 10-foot deep, 20-foot wide hole on the road and uprooted trees. And, once again, we are told that this is a sign of Naxals' desperation.



Governments change, time passes, but official excuses stay the same. Needless to say, the excuses are little comfort to the families of District Reserve Guard personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty. The official narrative is that Maoists are losing numbers. Over 400 Maoists have been surrendering every year following the government's rehabilitation policy, Sundarraj P, Inspector General of Police of Bastar range, told a news agency. Their attacks are intended to make the obnoxious presence felt.

That may be true, but the top police and intelligence officers know about it, as evident from their reactions to every Maoist outrage. So, why don't they ensure that standard operating procedures are followed

religiously and precautions taken all the time? There are reports in the media about the possible violations of SOPs in the recent blast. The place where the four-vehicle convoy was hit is just 700 m away from the Aranpur police station. A police official said the crater on the road suggested that the Maoists had dug a foxhole to plant the explosives at night, a new report said. It quoted an unnamed official as saying, "That this could happen undetected so close to the Aranpur camp is a matter of concern." There was an intelligence input about Maoists' presence in the Darbha division, following which more than 200 security personnel had set out after them. There was a shootout, leading to the arrest of two suspects. The personnel were coming back when they were struck by the IED. This is not to say that the security establishment has failed to contain Naxal violence. There has been a 77 per cent decline in such incidents since 2014. From 2,258 in 2009 to 509 in 2021 is indeed good progress. The death rate has also fallen steeply, by 85 per cent. In 2010, the death toll was at the highest, 1,005, which came down to 147 in 2021, according to official figures. The Maoist menace is declining, but that doesn't mean that any setback should be brushed under the carpet called 'a sign of Maoists' desperation.



About proportion and joys of living



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Man is a gregarious animal; he must have social skills to deal with those around him. Unfortunately, these skills are not taught in any institute

s one grows, the number of interactions with others also rises. This basic truth of life led some Greek philosophers to postulate that man is a "gregarious animal." One needs company. The initial company is the parents, then the family, and then the circle of family connects, and so it goes on.

Each individual has his temperament. Someone needs company a little more than others. Some are a little friendlier; some are a little more gregarious than others. The list is long, and their attributes define the individuality of the person.

There is plenty of experience and evidence to suggest that the process of defining personality begins with the collec-tion and selection of the DNA traits of the father and mother. This is a complex phenomenon, and how the selection of the DNA takes place is still to be fully understood.

As the child grows the process of socialisation rolls on. The first language the child converses in is popularly referred to as the mother tongue'. The choice of words and the ability to phrase sentences are also learnt from the context, but in many cases, this can never be fully explained.

This leads to another theory, which postulates that life is there before it shapes into a body and continues after the body is gone. This may be basic to the narrative to explain just one thing: life is eternal and its manifestation is a passing phenomenon. The purpose of this reference is not to get into philosophy but to focus on that part of the existence of the living being that manifests itself in the form of a human body.

The living being in the form of a human body gets defined by the growth of a human body: childhood, youth, middle age, old age, and so on. At each stage of ageing, human interaction becomes more complex, and it becomes nec-essary to be in better control of one's temperament. What could where the context of one's

get affected would be the nature growth matters. The domi-

of person-to-person relation- nant male and female per-

ships, person-to-environment interactions, and more. It is here that so much complexity, research, and scholarship become active factors. An important concept or trait in any human being as soon as the person becomes autonomous in behaviour and conduct, as in the concept of "proportion"

Unfortunately, there is no coursework either in school or college or later on "proportion.'

Some basic concerns include: When to speak? How to choose one's words? In what pitch of the voice to speak? How to listen? When is silence the best communication tool? When should one enter into dialogue? When should one conclude a dialogue?—the list can go on.

All this has to be learnt on one's own, at best with the help of an associate, or by sheer trial and error.



THERE IS PLENTY **OF EXPERIENCE** AND EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE PROCESS OF **DEFINING THE** PERSONALITY **BEGINS WITH THE** COLLECTION AND SELECTION OF THE DNA TRAITS OF THE FATHER

sonalities in one's life are a prime input to this learning. The trouble, however, is that one doesn't often have the choice of selecting one's elders until it's too late. Thus, it is that growing up is the outcome of accidental consequences of a relationship one never chose in the first instance.

By the time one grows to recognise this, one has already burnt many boats. It leads to an the all-important word "proportion" and helps indicate how this learning can only be predominantly self-driven.It is not possible to transfer everything to a school or college curriculum, but it is always possible to create spaces for self-learning in the time one spends in schools and colleges. That is, of course, if one does have the opportunity to go through that experience.

Life can be a joy, it can be confusing, it can be exas-perating, and it can be always on the move, either

singly, in pairs, or combina-

tions. Something can be

both joyful and exasperating at the same time. It is here that perception defines proportion. Like proportion, perception is a slippery word. The same objective reality can be perceived in many different ways by individuals.

Yet seldom is a person taught how to define, refine, or interpret perceptions. Net-net, basic learning is self-learning; hence, one's joys, anxieties, and fears are rooted deep within one. One can hardly be in overall control of matters in such a situation. However, not even being aware of the problem is the biggest tragedy of all. One's joys, fears, anxieties, and more are often the essence of life. Any window that can be seen and inspected better should be a core concern in preparing for life. The rest can follow in due course, as indeed it will.

(The author is an internationally acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal)

A religious procession to celebrate 15th-century saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in Kolkata

Scholarships for higher education abroad



ABHISHEK **BAJAJ**

There are a plethora of scholarships available for Indian students wanting to fund their higher education in other countries

Ursuing higher educa-tion abroad is a dream for many Indian students, but it can also be an expensive proposition. However, there are a variety of scholarship opportunities available to Indian students that can help reduce the financial burden of studying abroad. In this article, we will demystify some of the most common scholarship opportunities for Indian students pursuing higher education abroad.

Government Scholarships: The Indian government offers a range of scholarships to support students pursuing higher edu-cation abroad. The Ministry of Education, Ministry of External Affairs, and various other departments provide scholarships.

Ministry of Education Scholarships: The Ministry of Education offers a range of scholarships to Indian students, including the National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Castes, the National Overseas Scholarship for OBC Students, and the Dr Ambedkar Scholarship.

Ministry of External

University, the US. Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation Scholarship: The Foundation offers scholarships to Indian students for pursuing higher studies at top universities in the US, Europe, and the UK. **University Scholarships:**

Many universities abroad also offer scholarships and financial aid to international students, including Indian students. These scholarships are usually based on academic merit, and some universities may also offer need-

MEA provides scholarships to Indian students under based scholarships, such as the Indian Council for the following. Fulbright Scholarship: Cultural Relations (ICCR)

The Fulbright Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship program that provides funding to Indian students for pursuing graduate studies in the United States.

Chevening Scholarship: The Chevening Scholarship is a UK government scholarship program that provides funding to Indian students for pursuing postgraduate studies in the UK.

External Scholarships: Tata Scholarship: The Several external organizations offer scholarships to scholarship is awarded to Indian students for studying students accepted for undergraduate studies at Cornell abroad. These scholarships

may be based on a particular field of study or may be open to students from specific regions. Some are listed below.

Rotary Peace Fellowship: The Rotary Peace Fellowship provides funding to Indian students pursuing a master's degree in peace and conflict resolution at one of the Rotary Peace Centers.

DAAD Scholarship: The DAAD Scholarship is offered by the German government to Indian students for pursuing postgraduate studies in Germany.

In conclusion, pursuing higher education abroad can be a costly proposition for Indian students, but there are several scholarship opportunities available to help reduce the financial bur-

den. Students should research and apply for scholarships well in advance to increase their chances of success. Additionally, it is important to read and understand the eligibility criteria, application deadlines, and other requirements for each scholarship program.

(The writer is cofounder of Study Metro)

LETTERS TO **THE EDITOR**

PRIYANKA STANDS WITH WRESTLERS

Sir - Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra criticized the government over top wrestlers' protests here on Wednesday, questioning whether the government wants to shield the perpetrators. The Congress general secretary also said that the appeals of sportspeople who promote the country's honour are being ignored, and that "when the arrogance of a party and its leaders" is sky high, such voices are squashed. Her comments come as India's best wrestlers intensified their protest against WFI President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Tuesday, declaring that they will not leave the protest site until the WFI president, who is facing sexual harassment charges, is jailed. The Supreme Court issued notifications to the Delhi government and others on Tuesday in response to a petition filed by seven female wrestlers alleging non-registration of an FIR about sexual harassment charges against the WFI president, stating that these are "serious allegations" that require its consideration. Gandhi expressed his support for the protesting wrestlers, saying that athletes are the pride of the country because when they win gold despite all the challenges and after working tirelessly, "their victory is our victory" and the entire country celebrates. "Women's victories are more significant than men's." She is crying as they sit on the road near Parliament. She also questioned why, after hearing the suffering of a girl during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Opposition leaders are being questioned by the same police, but the appeals of sportspeople who increase the country's honour are ignored. Her comments were in response to a Delhi Police team questioning Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at his home last month about his remark during the Bharat Jodo Yatra that "women are still being

sexually assaulted." The police squad had

requested information about the "victims" to investigate their complaints. Wrestlers such as Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and

AND MOTHER

The patriarch is no more



nhiromani Akali Dal (SAD) lost a five-time Chief Minister of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal, and it was a national loss. He was 95. In his long political and administrative career, as a five-time Chief Minister of Punjab, he made several noteworthy contributions towards the welfare of farmers and other weaker sections of our society. The stalwart is no more and the patriarch is considered to be the father of Punjab

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chairman is now using coercion and intimidation to break the "victims" by giving money. Former Haryana Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Congress leader Udit Raj, and CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, who were barred from joining the protest in January, were welcomed by the wrestlers on Tuesday, a day after they sought support from all quarters. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

PARTY HOPPERS

Sir — Apropos the article 'Will turncoats turn tables in K'taka?' by Kalyani Shankar (May 4), the columnist has underscored the party hoppers as a real niggling pain in the democracy's neck given that they are addicted to switching allegiance at the drop of a hat, particularly when the elections are round the corner, and thus they queer the electoral pitch of their former party they have had a long association with, besides having enjoyed power in its heydays. Ahead of the Karnataka assembly polls on May 10, the ruling BJP is beset with the same phenomenon as a Bajrang Punia have also claimed that the couple of its veterans and stalwarts,

State. In his long and illustrious career, he worked as a part of the people's movement and was considered a part of the Sikh fraternity.

Badal's journey in politics started with that of independent India when he was elected as a sarpanch at the age of 20. The Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) has lost its architect, and the state its great reconciler, a leader who believed in building bridges with disparate ideologies, to keep it on the path of peace. A staunch Akali, he went to jail for various morchas (movements) and was also imprisoned during the Emergency — prompting PM Narendra Modi to call him the Nelson Mandela of India. Though a strong votary of federalism, he never adopted an anti-India stance even during the height of militancy in the state. RIP to the departed soul. CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

conspicuous by their absence in the party's list of contenders, have defected to the Congress or other outfits. To rub it in and most importantly, former State BJP president and six-time legislator, Jagdish Shetter tops this disgruntled lot, largely hailing from the Lingayat community that is considered a monolithic vote bank of the BJP. On the face of it, the antiincumbency trend prevailing in the State also goes against the BJP's electoral prospects. What this all boils down to is that these turncoats are a Sword of Damocles perennially hanging over the democracy's head. I squarely acquiesce with the writer's view that these party hoppers who always see some greener pastures on the other side of the fence largely contribute to the menace to democracy and that what could be a counter to it is the awareness of the electorate and shaming the party hoppers, or otherwise, this vicious circle of negating the public mandate, again and again, will continue to all's chagrin!

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



Affairs Scholarships: The

Scholarship Scheme, which

covers tuition fees, living

Apart from government

scholarships, several private

organizations offer scholar-

ships to Indian students for

studying abroad. These

scholarships are usually

based on academic merit,

financial need, or a combi-

nation of both, as the follow-

ing.

Private Scholarships:

expenses, and airfare.

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FIRSTCOLUMIN THE NEW ARMS RACE IS A **THREAT TO WORLD PEACE**

The shifting sands of geopolitics are leading to the arms race



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

ew data emerging from SIPRI (Stockholm International peace research institute, has confirmed that the world is going through an arms race. The Russia-Ukraine conflict and China's aggressive military spending have meant that the world defence expenditure recorded a new high in 2022. While the US remained at the top spending nearly \$880 billion, closely followed by China at nearly \$292 billion, India also recorded a modest 6% increase in its military spending on a year-on-year basis. Surprisingly, several so far dormant, peace-loving, European countries such as Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland saw sharp increases in their military spending, as a direct response to the war in their neighbourhood. The data points to a reversal of geo-strategic policies by several nations (especially in Europe), as they increasingly feel the need to make their borders more secure, against any unilateral military aggressor. It also directly leads to eating away the lunch of several other global concerns such as climate change, which need to be tackled immediately to arrest the harm that has already been inflicted. It also leads nations to reorient with trusted allies and friends at a global scale



This week also saw the first Shanghai Cooperation Organisation defence ministers' meeting in New Delhi. Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu, as well as Chinese defence minister LiShangfu, made a rare appearance in Delhi. This was the first time the Chinese defence minister visited India, after the mischievous Galwan, medieval-era scuffle which led to both countries losing nearly two dozen soldiers. In the run-up to the defence ministers' meeting top-level military leaders met on the Chinese side of the border, however, no breakthrough was achieved. The Ministry of external affairs in a statement released after the meeting stated "The two sides had a frank and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector so as to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas, which will enable progress in bilateral relations. In line with the guidance provided by the State Leaders and further to the meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in March 2023, they had an exchange of views in a candid manner. In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector. They agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues. India is pushing for immediate Chinese troop withdrawal in the Depsang Bulge area and the Charding Ninglung Nullah, following which troops from both sides can be disengaged. Indian defence minister Rajnath Singh met his Chinese counterpart a day ahead of the SCO defence ministers meeting and re emphasised Indian concerns, as well as the need to return to the April 2020 status, which was unilaterally disrupted by China.

Mental health is now a serious ailment



analys \$ 07

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, public mental health services have to become a State priority to address the growing mental health challenges

*"When the mind is in a stage of dullness, stimulate and awaken it. When the awak*ened mind thus becomes turbulent, calm it down. In the process, recognise the dirt that surfaced. When the mind reaches a state of equanimity, do not disturb it further". — MandukyaUpnishad (3.44)

ecently a 77-year-old NRI came to India to visit Kartarpur Corridor and was found missing from his hotel room in Delhi. On his wife's complaint, Delhi police formed six teams to search him and could only trace him after 24 hours when an army officer informed the police about a suspicious person loitering in a restricted area in casuals wearing hotel slippers. On examination, it was revealed that the man had a problem. He was forgetful, a common for his age. Many people do have such problems,

associate it with aging or some past incidence but seldom consult a Psychiatrist or Psychiatric Social Worker. So is the habit of smoking, stealing, overeating, lying, fid-geting, sleeplessness etc. but the community and common man do not consider them a problem and keep suffering, making fun of himself/ herself or show-

ing pity at times. Health is defined as physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being which has posed a cumulative challenge during covid19 and thereafter. With the loss of lives and livelihoods, the people found themselves in a state of anomie which resulted in an increased pace of depression, anxiety and suicide. India has an estimated 197.3 million people suffering from mental disorders and the majority of them have either no or limited access to mental health services. Thus, the country has a huge burden of mental disorders marred by appalling ignorance with a significant treatment gap. Public men-tal health services have to become a state priority to address the growing mental health challenges.

According to WHO estimates, COVID caused a 25 per cent increase in the prevalence of anxiety and 27 per cent in depression worldwide. An estimated 12 million work days are lost each year due to anxiety and depression costing the world economy nearly \$ 1 trillion. Growing social and economic inequalities and conflicts, violence and public health



ILLNESS **RESULTS FROM** THE DIFFICULTY TO COPE WITH **REAL-LIFE**

SITUATIONS WHICH HAMMER OUT THE PERSON'S PSYCHO-EMOTIVE BALANCE RESPONSIBLE FOR A REASONED **RESPONSE TO**

REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES TAKING PLACE IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE



place in day-to-day life. It has a substantial impact on how an individual believes, interprets, and responds. Various types of mental illnesses differ in their severity and symptoms. Common mental ill-nesses include depression, anxiety, phobias, eating disorders, and stress while critical mental Illnesses include schizophrenia, bipolar dis-orders, manic-depression, clinical depression, suicidal tendency, personality disorder etc.

PANDEMIC EFFECT

It was an ordeal in the true sense when a person suffered extended periods of isolation and loneliness at his/ her own home when one's own near and dear ones were behaving like a stranger with all love lost. It led to a state of seriviolence more often than not, due to frustration and blocked emotions

NCERT survey which covered 3.8 lakh students across the country shows 81% of school students are anxious about studies and exam results. It identified frequent mood swings as an area of concern across grades, gender and types of schools along with body image, and lack of social interaction are several other reasons why school students suffer from bad mental health. The need for an effective school mental health program is felt as never before with the mandatory appointment of a trained school social worker so that mental health concerns of the students can be nipped in the bud.

There is an urgent need for a

online qualified help in the language chosen by the caller. This is going to be a breakthrough towards addressing mental health problems without fear of social stigma and with assured confidentiality. Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 de-criminalises attempted suicide as well as suicide assistance by amending Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has mandated that major mental illnesses will be covered under medical/ health insurance from October 31, 2022, as per section 21(4) of the Mental Health Care Act 2017 and the Insurance Companies must amend their policy document/ bond accordingly. The Act specifically provides that every insurer shall make provisions for medical insurance for the treatment of mental illness on the same basis as is available for the treatment of physical illness." However, it was delayed due to the reluctance of insurance companies but finally, they could fall in line due to the intervention of the Supreme Court of India. It is incumbent on the people to be aware and assertive while buying medical/ health insurance that their policy covers mental illness as well. The states must improve the mental health infrastructure and facilities for treatment. The services of the private sector and community mental health initiatives should be recognised and availed as and when required. Mental Health counsellors must be appointed in Primary Health Centres to attend to patients and link them to appropriate psychiatric services.

The defence minister also met his Russian counterpart, a first visit by Mr Sergei Shoigu, since Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. India needs both Russia and China to be able to find common grounds for a secure, safe , transparent Central Asia, and later the Indo-Pacific.

India has so far maintained warm relations with Russia, despite facing the heat from Europe and the US on bilateral ties. The sanctions imposed by the US and Europe on Russia as punishment for invading Ukraine are limiting its ability to manufacture weapons and making it more isolated on the global stage. Meanwhile, China with whom India's relations have fallen to all-time lows has grown significantly closer to Russia. The recently concluded state visit of Chinese premier Xi Jinping to Moscow reaffirmed the special friendship. India could try to persuade China by influencing Russia, however, the current situation in Russia may prevent it from pushing China harder.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

emergencies are threatening numan well being

Stigma and discrimination prevent many people from getting qualified care. One out of every seven (1:7) persons is suffering from one or the other mental illness. In 2021 people dying from heart attacks increased 6 times over the previous year which has aggravated family mental health concerns such as fear and uncertainties of life and emotional trauma due to loss of intimate relatives.

Gaps in Quality Mental Health Care are in the range of 40 to 95 per cent depending on the geophysical and socioeconomic conditions and cultural beliefs. There are only .75 qualified psychiatrists per 1 lakh population in India. It gives scope for the proliferation of quacks and faith healers including an emerging clan of prayer warriors.

A mental illness results from difficulty to cope with real-life situations which hammer out the person's psycho-emotive balance responsible for a reasoned response to real-life challenges taking

(Dr. P.K. Bajpai is a Principal at Maharaja

Agrasen College, Jagadhri affiliated with Kurukshetra University and Anukriti Bajpai is an Assistant Professor, at Vivekanand Institute of *Professional Studies,* Indraprastha University, Delhi)

ous mental disturbances such as an acute feelings of depression, alienation and suicide. Loss of job and hard-earned money and inefficacy of medicines resulted in hopelessness, helplessness and the state of anomie.

There was a prolonged disconnect with family and friends which was equally affecting frontline workers and patients as they were unable to physically interact with their family members and see or meet with loved ones including infants, ailing parents and life partners. It led to emotional trauma and an existential vacuum.

The constant fear of death led to untimely ageing, fatigue, loss of energy and fear of losing everything. Some stayed back home due to prolonged lockdown and increased their screen time due to monotony and boredom, total disruption of work-life balance and some also resorted to domestic

comprehensive database reflecting on mental health concerns based on the perception of the own selves, self as viewed in the social context, satisfaction with life (personal, family, peer/ social groups and society), emotions experienced, fears and challenges and strategies for coping and managing their emotions etc.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Ministry of Health, Government of India with technical support of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore has initiated the All Accessible Quality Mental Health Care Programme and initiated Tele MANAS on Oct. 10, 2022, on the occasion of World Mental Health Day: (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) with 24x7 toll-free Helplines: 14416 and 1-800-91-4416. This offers

Mann Ki Baat: Reconnecting with the past to cherish legacy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's radio address, within a short period, has managed to reignite popular interest in India's past

orld over heritage is treated as national health on which the national character is shaped Countries take pride in their ancient past, which acts as a pivot for them to establish unique identities in the comity of the global community. Greece, Egypt, Italy, China, Japan and others have reaped unprecedented gains from their ancient pasts. Such nations find their national characters firmly grounded. Also, they receive millions of tourists rushing to sites linked with the national heritage, and contributing billions of dollars of income for the national exchequers.

Somehow, the Indian leadership in the past was apologetic about our past, particularly of the ancient era



This made thieves the world over steal Indian artefacts. This was possible because the Indians were not interested enough in them.

Egypt could market its ancient civilization to milk billions of dollars annually. India despite being home to several of the Indus Valley Civilization sites and excavations paid the least interest in their significance. This disconnect eroded India's wealth and also deprived the people of a unifying national anchor.

Mann Ki Baatin a short period reignited the popular interest in India's past. The stolen artefacts were recovered. The foreign capitals took the initiative to return the Indian artefacts which

(*Author is a policy analyst*) were lying in their museums.

and the pre-Muslim history. This could be made possible after Prime Minister Narendra Modi guided the national imagination to shed a spotlight on India's civilizational wealth.

In the 99th edition of Mann Ki Baat, the PM highlighted a new tradition that has emerged in Kashi (Varanasi), celebrating the historical and cultural ties to celebrate Vijayadashami, RakshaBandhan and Chhath Pooja, and also the connection with the Tamil region. 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat (One India, Great India)'

was, thus, coined by PM Modi to guide the people to acquaint themselves with the roots of India.

'Saurashtra-Tamil Sangamam was also conceptualized to achieve the same understood India's concerns

purpose, which was talked about at length in the Mann Ki Baat. Modi noted that many people from Saurashtra settled in Tamil Nadu centuries ago and are still known as 'Saurashtri Tamil'. This revealed the significance of the oneness of the people, and the ancient past erasing the aberrations of the last few

decades when the regional divide gained prominence. Since 2014, India has retrieved 228 heritage objects from various parts of the world which were stolen or smuggled from India. Before 2014, only 13 objects were returned. During the 86th edition of 'Mann kiBaat', PM Modi reiterated, "How countries like the United States, Holland, Italy, and Canada

about its stolen heritage and helped in bringing back about 200 idols to the country." The Mann Ki Baat

episodes have also played a key role in helping people from within the country and abroad to give a boost to the tourism sector. In the last nine years, the government ensured that the budgetary support to the tourism sector improved from Rs878 crore in 2015-15 to Rs2400 crore in 2023-24. From the Mann Ki Baat, the people got updates and accounts of the efforts to develop tourism circuits from Somnath to Kedarnath, from Ayodhya to Ajmer, and from Varanasi to Velankanni, under the PRASHAD scheme, which also includes the upgradation of

Hazratbal, Ajmer, St Thomas Shrine and Velankanni.

St Luke's Church in Kashmir was renovated and reopened after three decades. The foreign exchange earnings from 2016 to 2019 grew at a CAGR of 7.0 per cent but dipped in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY20, the tourism sector in India accounted for 39 million jobs, which was 8.0 per cent of the total employment in the country. By 2029, it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs. Besides, Mann Ki Baat

proved instrumental in connecting the people with India's forgotten heroes. This was a timely course correction. Some of the personalities in the post-Independence CheramanJuma Mosque, era hogged most of the lime-

light and also the attention of the government. But PM Modi nudged

the people to read and search for the local icons, as he exhorted the audience to write about such heroes to give them deserving places in history. This was met with a massive response as lakhs of people wrote letters and shared anecdotes about the local heroes. The efforts proved instrumental in giving depth to Indian history, and also cultural depth to several regions within the country.

Thus, Mann Ki Baat by all accounts has been a major accelerator in India's rediscovery of past glory, which in the years to come will certainly give a boost to wealth creation and also help shape the national character.



Philippines confronts China over South China sea claims

AP ABOARD BRP MALABRIGO

A Chinese coast guard ship blocked a Philippine patrol vessel steaming into a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, causing a frightening near-collision in the latest act of Beijing's aggression in the strate-gic waterway. The high seas face-off on Sunday between the larger Chinese ship and the Bhilinpine coact guard's BPB the Philippine coast guard's BRP Malapascua near the Second Thomas Shoal was among the tense moments it and another Philippine vessel encountered in a weeklong sovereignty patrol in one of the world's most hotly contested waterways.

The Philippine coast guard had invited a small group of journalists, including three from The Associated Press, to join the 1,670-kilometre (1,038-mile) patrol for the first time as part of a new Philippine strategy aimed at exposing China's increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea, where an estimated USD 5 trillion in global trade transits each year.

In scorching summer heat but relatively calm waters, the Malapascua and another Philippine coast guard vessel, the BRP Malabrigo, journeyed to the frontlines of the

long-seething territorial conflicts. They cruised past a string of widely scattered Philippine-occupied and claimed islands, islets and reefs looking for signs of encroachment, illegal fishing and other threats

In areas occupied or controlled by China, the Philippine patrol vessels received radio warnings in Chinese and halting English, ordering them to immediately leave what the Chinese coast guard and navy radio callers claimed were Beijing's "undis-mutable territories" and iscuing menocified putable territories" and issuing unspecified threats for defiance. Hostilities peaked on Sunday morning in the Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratlys archipelago, the most fiercely contested region in the busy sea channel.

As the two patrol vessels approached the shoal's shallow turquoise waters for an underwater survey, the Chinese coast guard repeatedly warned them by radio to leave the area, which is about 194 kilometres (121 miles) west of the Philippine island province of Palawan. After several radio exchanges, a Chinese coast guard caller, sounding agitated, warned of unspecified adversarial action. "Since you have disre-

garded our warning, we will take further necessary measures on you in accordance with the laws and any consequences entailed will be borne by you," the Chinese speaker said. A Chinese coast guard ship rapidly approached and shadowed the smaller Malapascua and the Malabrigo When the Malapascua maneuvered toward the mouth of the shoal, the Chinese ship suddenly shifted to block it, coming as close as 36 to 46 metres (120 to 150 feet) from its bow, said Malapascua's skipper, Capt. Rodel Hernandez.

To avoid a collision, Hernandez abruptly reversed his vessel's direction then shut off its engine to bring the boat to a full stop. Filipino personnel aboard the vessels - and journalists, who captured the tense moment on camera — watched in frightened silence. But the Malapascua steered just in time to avoid a potential disaster.Hernandez later told journalists that the "sudden and really very dangerous maneuver" by the Chinese coast guard ship had disregarded international rules on collision avoidance. He had the Philippine vessels leave the area after the encounter for the safety of the ships and personnel.

Trump revives threat of skipping GOP presidential debates For now, the RNC is mov-ing forward with the debate

AP MANCHESTER

Donald Trump is again threatening to skip a pres-idential debate. The Republican former president has privately said that a debate in August would be too early and he would not participate, according to two people familiar with his concerns who insisted on anonymity to detail private discussions.

He also has stepped up his public complaints this week, suggesting in interviews and social media posts that his poll numbers are so high he has no reason to compete with the rest of the field. "I see that everybody is

talking about the Republican Debates, but nobody got my approval, or the approval of the Trump Campaign, before announcing them," Trump said in a Tuesday post on his social media network. The emerging spat is a preview of the potential tension that could lie ahead as the Republican National



which is slated to be held in

Milwaukee and broadcast on

Fox News, a network that has

an up-and-down relationship

with Trump. In a Wednesday interview

on Fox, RNC Chair Ronna

McDaniel was asked about Trump's public's complaints regarding the RNC's debate plans and whether she had spo-

ken to him about his concerns.

"I talk to President Trump all the time," McDaniel said.

"We've talked to all the poten-

tial candidates. We've let them

know the schedule. We've

make that decision. I think he'll

do it." Trump, whose political

unprecedented behaviour and

shunning norms he disagrees

with, has skipped debates

until May 9. Voting in Turkiye itself doesn't take place until

idential election five years ago,

a significant majority of Turkish

voters in Germany backed

Erdogan. It is unclear whether

he will receive the same level of

The latest opinion polls in

backing from them this year.

Turkiye showed a slight lead for

Erdogan's main challenger, cen-

tre-left opposition party leader

Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who is

backed by the cross-party

right and a presidential run-off

is needed on May 28, overseas

balloting would take place May

20-24. Erdogan served as

Turkiye's prime minister from

March 2003 to August 2014 and

has held the president's office

In win for UK govt,

court nixes part of

nurses' strike

If no candidate wins out-

Nation Alliance.

since then.

During Turkiye's last pres-

"But every campaign and

announced the debates."

Committee works to oversee an open, competitive primary process while Trump aims to establish himself as the undisputed leader of the party who doesn't need to engage in such traditions

It's an echo of his previous every candidate is going to have campaigns when he often danto make a decision," she contingled the potential of skipping ued. "He's going to have to debates — and sometimes followed through with the threat. arc has been defined by

In the process, he kept the spotlight on himself and turned the GOP establishment and the news media into a foil that resonated with the party base.

Appeals court rejects Trump effort to block testimony

world 08

Washington (AP): A federal appeals court on Wednesday night moved former Vice President Mike Pence closer to appearing before a grand jury investigating efforts to undo the results of the 2020 presi-dential election, rejecting a bid by lawyers for former President Donald Trump to

block the testimony. It was not immediately clear what day Pence might appear before the grand jury, which for months has been investigating the events preceding the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol and efforts by Trump and his allies to subvert the election outcome

But Pence's testimony, coming as he inches toward a likely entrance in the 2024 presidential race, would be a milestone moment in the investigation and would likely give prosecutors a key firstperson account as they press forward with their inquiry.

The order from the threejudge panel of the US Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia Circuit was sealed and none of the parties are mentioned by name in online court records. But the appeal in the sealed case was filed just days after a lower-court judge had directed Pence to testify over objections from the Trump team.

A lawyer for Pence and a spokesman for Trump did not immediately return emails seeking comment, and a spokesman for the Justice Department special counsel leading the investigation declined to comment.

The appeal was decided by Judge Gregory Katsas, a Trump appointee, and judges Patricia Millett and Gregory Wilkins, both appointees of former President Barack Obama. It was not clear if lawyers for Trump might ask the entire appeals court to hear the mat-

Pence was subpoenaed to testify earlier this year, but lawyers for Trump objected, citing executive privilege concerns

Iran seized Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker: US Navy

Dubai (AP): The US Navy said Iran seized a Marshall Islandsflagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday amid wider tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet identified the vessel as the Advantage Sweet. Satellite tracking data for the vessel from MarineTraffic.com showed it in the Gulf of Oman just north of Oman's capital, Muscat, on Thursday afternoon. It had just come from Kuwait and listed its destination as Houston, Texas. "The oil tanker issued a distress call during the seizure," the 5th Fleet said. "Iran's actions are contrary to international law and disruptive to regional security and stability. Iran should imme-

diately release the oil tanker." The vessel's owners could not be immediately reached for comment. Iran did not immediately acknowledge the seizure

Indian-origin

for arranging

sham marriage

man jailed

and Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Thursday's seizure by Iran was the latest in a string of hijackings and explosions to roil a region that includes the

Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil passes. The incidents began after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Also, the US Navy has blamed Iran for a series of limpet mine attacks on vessels that damaged tankers in 2019, as well as for a fatal drone attack on

an Israeli-linked oil tanker that killed two European crew members in 2021.

sanctioned former senior Sri Lankan Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda for a gross violation of human rights during the brutal conflict with the LTTE, penalising a second senior defence official of the island nation in the last three

years The 70-year-old Navy Commander from 2005-2009 became the second senior defence official to be sanctioned by the US for handling the final battle with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009.

He was later appointed Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Japan. In 2020, the US State

Department similarly sanctioned the current chief of defence staff Gen. Shavendra Silva. He was a divisional head of the Army during the final battle and later became the Commander.

The US State Department has designated the former Navy Wasantha Commander Karannagoda for 'a gross viola-

Colombo (PTI): The US has tion of human rights', "US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Wednesday.

US sanctions former Sri Lankan

Navy commander for violations

"The ÚS continues to seek truth and justice for victims of the Sri Lankan civil war", the statement further added.

The US has sanctioned several other defence officers of Sri Lanka for their role in the island nation's war against the LTTE,

however, most of the others were junior officers in designa-Last year the US sanctioned

the military officer Prabath Bulathwatte, "former head of a clandestine Sri Lankan Army platoon known as the Tripoli Platoon". When named, all the prop-

erty and interests of individuals or entities in the US or under the control of the US are blocked, and they and their immediate family members are made ineligible for entry to the US.

In 2021, the US similarly listed two more Sri Lankan soldiers.

Chandana Hettiarachchi, a Navy officer and Sunil Ratnayake, a staff sergeant of the Sri Lanka Army were so sanctioned over accountability for

gross violations of human rights. In a bitterly fought campaign that began in 1983, Sri Lanka's military ended the nearly threedecade brutal civil war in the island nation in May 2009, by killing the leaders of the LTTE. LTTE was fighting for an independent state for the Tamilians

in Sri Lanka's North and Eastern provinces Though the exact date when LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran was killed by the Sri Lankan Army was not known,

his death was announced on May 19, 2009. The then-president Mahinda Rajapaksa on May 18, 2009 declared the end of a 26-year war in which over 1,00,000 people were killed and millions of Sri Lankans, mainly

minority Tamils were displaced as refugees inside the country and abroad.

Turkish citizens abroad begin voting in election

before

May 14.

Berlin (AP): Some 3.4 million Turkish citizens living abroad were invited to begin voting on Thursday in national elections that will decide whether President Recep Tayyip Erdogan can continue governing Turkiye after two decades in power.

The overseas balloting began amid concerns over Erdogan's health after he was forced to cancel election rallies on Wednesday and Thursday. However, the 69-year-old leader was scheduled to attend a Thursday ceremony via video link to mark the inauguration of Turkiye's first nuclear power plant.

The biggest contingents of overseas voters include 400,000 Turks in France and 1.5 million in Germany who can cast their ballots in Turkiye's presidential and parliamentary elections

US-India relationship critical Iran urges Lebanese sides to reach agreement to its future: Eric Garcetti over new President

Washington (PTI): The US-India relationship in the world



senior adviser. "Before I came out to India,

ore (P11): A /3 old Indian-origin man was sentenced to six months in prison in Singapore for arranging a marriage of convenience between his colleague and his niece to gain an immigration advantage, according to a media report.

In 2016, Meeran Gani Nagoor Pitchai asked Abdul Kader Kasim, 55, an Indian national, to marry his cash-58-year-old strapped Singaporean niece, Noorjan Abdul Karim.

As part of the arrangement, Meeran arranged for his niece to become his colleague's sponsor, TODAY newspaper report ed on Wednesday.

Applicants for a short-term visit pass typically require a local sponsor if they want an extension of 89 days from their date of entry to Singapore.

Abdul wanted to extend his short-term visit pass, while Noorian was under financial distress

Abdul paid SGD25,000 to Noorjan and Meeran received SGD1,000 from this amount as Noorjan's ex-husband owed him money, the report said.

Subsequently, the marriage was solemnised on September 17, 2016.

On September 28, 2022, Meeran was arrested by Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers for arranging a marriage of convenience to obtain an immigration advantage, the report said.

In the court on Wednesday, Assistant Superintendent (ASP) Ganeshvaran Dhanasekaran from ICA sought six months' jail for Meeran on the grounds of the need for general deterrence

"Sham marriages are an offence. They are difficult to detect as evidence of sham marriages is difficult to uncover," TODAY newspaper quoted Ganeshvaran as saying.

Meeran's defence counsel Rajan Supramaniam, sought a lesser sentence than the prosecution's proposal of six months' in jail.

Beirut (AP): Iran's foreign minister said on Thursday that Tehran wants Lebanon's rivals to reach an agreement to elect a new president in the crisis-hit country that has been without a head of state since October.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made his comments during his first visit to Lebanon since Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement in China last month to re-establish diplomatic relations and reopen embassies after seven years of tensions that had major repercussions in the tiny

Mediterranean country. The agreement negotiated with China lowers the chance of armed conflict between the Mideast rivals - both directly and in proxy conflicts around the region.

The effects of the agreement include eased tensions



and an exchange of prisoners between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Iran-backed rebels, as well as improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Lebanese groups are deeply divided between an Iranbacked coalition led by the powerful Hezbollah group and a Western and Saudi-backed alliance. The deep divisions in Lebanon have left the country without a president since the term of President Michel Aoun ended in late October.

Ambassador-Designate to India Eric Garcetti has said, while asserting that the two countries have never worked as closely together on a range of issues as they do today.

Garcetti, 52, President Joe Biden's close aide, was officially sworn in as the US Ámbassador to India last month, ending more than two years of delay to fill one of Washington's most critical diplomatic positions.

"There are few relationships in the world that are more vital to the US and India. Our relationship in the world is critical to its future. As President (Joe) Biden has said, India and the US are indispensable partners," Garcetti told a gathering of eminent Indian Americans at the first-of-its-kind US-India Summit organised by Congressional India Caucus's

Co-chairs Ro Khanna and Michael Waltz on Wednesday. Former Mayor of Los Angeles, Garcetti's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Biden. In March, the Senate voted 52 to 42 to confirm Garcetti after his nomination was stalled amid concerns by some lawmakers that he had not adequately handled allegations of sexual assault and

US-India partnership. He stressed just how pivotal this moment is. It is pivotal for the entire planet and especially pivotal for our two countries," Garcetti said. The US and India have never worked as closely together on as many issues as they do

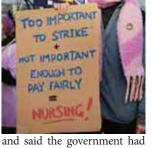
"We are two of the world's leading democracies. We are the world's largest and fifth largest economies," he said.

We are connected through and empowered by the innovative spirit of our incredible people. And together, through the actions we take, we will together shape the 21st century, in this G-20 year and beyond, working alongside my incredibly dedicated colleagues at the US Mission to India," he harassment against a former added.

London (AP): Britain's High Biden about his vision for the Court ruled on Thursday that part of a strike by thousands of nurses planned for next week is illegal, handing a small victory to the government in its bitter dispute with public sector unions. The court said a sixmonth strike mandate given to the Royal College of Nursing by a members' vote expires at midnight on Monday and not, as the union argued, the following

> day. The union had planned to walk out for 48 hours starting at 8 pm (1900GMT) on Sunday. For the first time, the walkout will include nurses working in intensive care, emergency rooms and cancer wards. Judge Thomas Linden ruled that the strike mandate expires at mid-

night on May 1. Health Secretary Steve Barclay welcomed the ruling,



gone to court "with regret, to protect nurses by ensuring they are not asked to take part in an unlawful strike".

Royal College of Nursing General Secretary Pat Cullen said the union would end its strike at midnight on Monday, but that nurses would be "angered" by the ruling.



President Joe Biden surprises South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol with a guitar signed by Don McLean in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington on this Wednesday following the State Dinner. American Pie, by McLean, is one of Yoon's favorite songs AP/PT

UN urges Afghan rulers to reverse bans on women

United Nations (AP): A UN resolution that calls on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to swiftly reverse their increasingly harsh restrictions on women and girls and condemns their ban on Afghan women working for the United Nations is set to be voted on Thursday by the Security Council.

The draft resolution, obtained late on Wednesday by The AP, expresses deep concern at the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban" and reaffirms their "indispensable role" in Afghan society.

It calls on the Taliban to swiftly restore their access to education, employment, freedom of movement and equal participation in public life. The resolution, drafted by the UAE and Japan, is scheduled to be voted on by the 15-member council on Thursday afternoon.

King's coronation part of long evolution for Queen Camilla

AP 📕 LONDON

When Camilla, Britain's queen consort, is crowned alongside her husband next week, the moment will mark the culmination of a remarkable - and painstakingly slow - transformation over five decades of a figure once reviled as the other woman and considered a huge liability to the British monarchy.

With the coronation of King Charles III days away and his first seven months on the throne under his belt, many in Britain have grown to accept Camilla, though some experts and observers say she will always walk in the shadow of

her past. Without really trying too hard, but just by giving it time and going gently, gently, she has



managed to show people the real person that she is - that she's not this villainess, and that she's there to do the hard work," said Ingrid Seward.

"But the most important thing about Camilla is the way she appears to support her husband and back him up."

Camilla, 75, was mercilessly torn apart by the tabloids for years. Seward said she earned respect by putting her head down and steadily getting on with her duties. She's won over

much of the British public with her down-to-earth personality and her charitable work, notably against domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse - causes she says she'll continue to support as queen.

But some say she'll never fully shake her reputation as the third person in the marriage between Charles and Princess Diana.

"I would actually argue that she still is the other woman, and probably will remain the other woman," said Arianne Chernock, a professor specialising in modern British

history at Boston University. "Diana will very much be presence in the room in Westminster Abbey in May 6 - I think it's hard not to see her when you look at Charles and Camilla he said.



of confidence in National Assembly

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday secured a vote of confidence from the National Assembly, with 180 lawmakers expressing "full confidence" in his leadership, in a surprise development amidst an increasing confrontation between the government and the top judiciary. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, tabled a resolution in the lower house stating that the National Assembly of Pakistan "reposes its full confidence in the leadership of" Prime Minister Sharif.

The National Assembly Speaker, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, ordered voting which was conducted with lawmakers rising from their seats in favour of adopting the resolution.

The resolution was supported by 180 lawmakers in the 342-member National Assembly. The prime minister needed 172 votes to become the leader of the house.

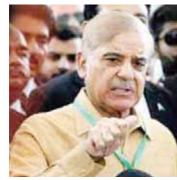
When Sharif was elected as the prime minister in April last year, he had secured the support of 174 lawmakers.

"Consequently, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has obtained the vote of confidence from the National Assembly and commands the confidence of the majority of the members of the National Assembly as prime minis-ter of the Islamic Republic of Speaker Ashraf Pakistan," announced, amid thumping of desks by lawmakers.

Later, Prime Minister Sharif addressed the House and thanked the lawmakers for reposing confidence in him and assured them that he would "always maintain their trust in his leadership".

He also assailed the 2018 elections which he said were rigged to assure the success of Imran Khan. He asked the speaker to probe those elections so that the facts are brought before the nation.

The symbolic vote of confidence is an indication that the prime minister enjoys the full confidence of the lawmakers when it is feared that a three-member bench of



the Supreme Court may target the prime minister for allegedly not implementing the directives to provide Rs 21 billion for provincial elec-

The development comes after the Supreme Court observed that it would not force political parties to hold parleys to end the impasse on the issue of elections.

In a related development, the government and Khan's party indicated to hold talks for which Chairman Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani, invited them. Prime Minister Sharif in his address said that talks were

expected to begin in the evening. "The talks will be held on holding the election in the entire coun-

try on the same day," he said. The latest developments show that the prevailing political instability may continue to haunt the country and its economy and a ruling against the government will increase March the chaos.

On Monday, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb rejected reports that Prime Minister Sharif would seek a vote of confidence from Parliament in the middle of a tussle with the top judiciary. Marriyum took to Twitter to dispel the impression of the vulnerability of the premier and the need to

seek a vote to show that he enjoyed the trust of the majority. She said that no consultation had taken place on the topic, adding that

there was no need for it. Her tweet followed after several media channels reported that Prime Minister Sharif had decided to go to the Parliament and seek a fresh mandate.

SC can't force Pak

govt to hold talks

Sharif secures vote | 'China's CPEC railway to Pak to cost \$57.7 bn'

PTI BEIJING

China's plan to build a railway link to Pakistan through the disputed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) region could cost about USD 57.7 billion, according to an official feasibility study, which recommended the government to go ahead with the project for its strategic significance, despite heavy costs, a media report said on Thursdav.

The proposed 3,000-km railway, connecting Pakistan's port of Gwadar to Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), was assessed by scientists from the state-owned China Railway First Survey and Design Institute Group Co Ltd.

India has protested to China over the USD 60 billion CPEC corridor as it is being laid through PoK. China's increasing number of

projects in Pakistan with billions of dollars in loans raised concerns about the increasing indebtedness of Pakistan, which is reeling under a serious economic crisis. The

CPEC is officially regarded as the flagship project of China's multi-bil-lion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - the pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The Institute Group Co Ltd team, led by its deputy director of capital operations Zhang Ling, said in its study that if the project is taken up, it will be BRI's most expensive transport infrastructure, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday.

Despite the cost, the project had the potential to reshape trade and geopolitics across the Eurasian con-tinent and should be supported, the research team said in a report published by the Chinese-language journal Railway Transport and Economy in April.

The Post quoted the report as saying that "the government and financial institutions [in China] should provide strong support, increase coordination and collaboration among relevant domestic departments, strive for the injection of support funds and provide strong policy support and guarantees for the construction of this project."



The institute is one of the largest of its kind in China and has been involved in many major railway projects at home and internationally, including Indonesia's Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail line

The proposed railway will link China's western regions with the Arabian Sea, bypassing the Strait of Malacca and reducing dependence on the South China Sea, it said, highlighting its strategic importance. The recommendation for the CPEC railway line with such

high costs is significant as China earlier spoke of plans to build an oil oil through the great heights.

The feasibility paper argued while it could improve Pakistan's infrastructure. The study report

pipeline through the mountainous region which raised questions about the feasibility and costs of pumping

that connecting the railway with other transport networks in the region including in Iran and Turkey would also provide a more direct route to Europe for Chinese goods,

through Tibet. also pointed out the railway's poten-

Khan says he has named six Pak PM reiterates support for 'one' China' policy amid Taiwan tension in video plotting to kill him

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan on Thursday reiterated its support for China on the sensitive Taiwan issue as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke to his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang in their first contact

since the latter took charge in Shehbaz congratulated Li and reiterated Pakistan's "unstinting" support to Beijing's "one-China" policy, as well as its stance on Tibet,

Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and the South China Sea, The Express Tribune newspaper, cited an official statement as saying. "As all-weather partners and close friends, Pakistan

appreciated China's peaceful development as a positive factor of international peace and stability, and confident that China will continue to achieve milestones on its journey towards modernisation and

the nearing,

rejuvenation," the Pakistani

prime minister said

The Pakistani premier also thanked his Chinese counterpart for China's "prinages cipled position" on the disputed Jammu and Kashmir issue.

Li, for his part, "praised Pakistan's support for China and reaffirmed his country's continuing support to Pakistan's national development, sovereignty, and territorial integrity"

"China would continue to stand with Pakistan at all times," said the Chinese premier.Beijing sees self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and criticises high-level meetings between Taiwanese and

foreign leaders. Čhina recently held military exercises around Taiwan after its president, Tsai Ingwen, met in Los Angeles US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

Besides political and military support, China has sup-

ported Pakistan financially rolling over earlier loans and approving new financial pack-

Recalling Prime Minister Sharif's visit to China in November last year, and wide-ranging conversations with President Xi Jinping and the Chinese leadership, the two leaders took stock of bilateral cooperation in key areas, including China Pakistan Economic Corridor, The Nation newspaper reported. Pakistan is under severe stress due to low foreign reserves and high inflation. Interestingly, the tele-

phone conversation between the premiers took place as Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir is currently on his maiden visit to China where experts termed the trip as crucial against the backdrop of key geo-strategic developments in the region and beyond.

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday dismissed the claim made by the government that his life is under threat from "foreign agencies", and instead said he has identified a total of six persons within the country, including three fresh ones, who plotted to kill him.

Referring to a new video that he claims his team has sent to his associates abroad, Khan, 70, said that its content talks about the people who want to kill him and would be out in public in case he is assassinated.

"Among the six, three are those whom I had named in the FIR after an assassination attempt on my life in Punjab in November last year," Khan said in a series of tweets on Thursday.

After a gun attack on his rally in the Wazirabad area, some 150 kms from Lahore, in which he suffered bullet injuries to his leg, Khan blamed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and ISI's top officer Major General Faisal Naseer for hatching a plot to assassinate him. "Interior minister (Sanaullah) says my life is under threat from foreign agencies. Let me make it clear to the entire country that the only threat to my life

NATO: Ukraine allies sent 1,550

combat vehicles, 'vast' ammo

is from the 3 people I named after Wazirabad assassination attempt. Same 3, + 3 more I have identified in a video statement, tried to eliminate me on March 18 in ICT Judicial Complex," Khan said.

Khan has not identified the three additional persons named by him.

On March 18, clashes erupted between security forces and supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party outside the judicial complex in Islamabad ahead of his appearance before a court in connection with a corruption case.

In his tweets, Khan categorically said that if he is assassinated, the ones to be blamed would be the ones named in the video. "If any attempt is made now on my life, these same people will be responsible. Just as they tried to pin the blame for the Wazirabad attack on a religious extremist a mere smokescreen - they are now trying to create another deception of foreign agencies," he said. "I want to make it crystal clear to the nation that the only people responsible for any attempt on my life will be the people I have identified. They are petrified I will be elected back to power & hold them accountable, hence their efforts to assassinate me," he said.

Fire breaks out in train, seven killed

Karachi (PTI): At least seven people, including three children and a woman, were killed of an express train in Pakistan's Sindh province, an official said on Thursday.

with oppn: CJP **Islamabad (PTI):** Chief Justice a way for the enforcement of the Constitution," he said. During the

Chinese navy ships head to Singapore for joint drills

Beijing (AP): China's military has dispatched a pair of navy

Kyiv (AP): NATO allies and partner countries have delivered more than 98 per cent of the combat vehicles promised

invasion more than a year ago. Though Zelenskyy said he was encouraged by Wednesday's call and Western

tial impact on neighbouring countries, such as India and there could be disagreements or delays in decision-making related to the project. It cautioned that China may

have to take the entire expenditure unlike its other trans-nation projects considering Pakistan's current economic crisis.

world 09

It also pointed out that Pakistan had experienced security challenges in recent years, including in its western region where the railway will pass through.

Balochistan province, for instance, where Gwadar port is located has been plagued by separatist violence for decades, the latest being two explosions at Pakistan's counterterrorism office in which 13 people were killed, the Post reported.

This could potentially disrupt the construction and operation of the railway and pose a risk to Chinese workers and investments, it said. Besides the CPEC railway, China is also carrying out a feasibility study to build a trans-Himalayan railway to connect Nepal

The incident happened on late Wednesday night when a fire broke out in a businessclass coach of the Karachi Express train shortly after midnight as it travelled from Karachi to Lahore.

Maqsood Kundi, a spokesperson for the Pakistan Railways, said that they were still trying to ascertain how the fire started in the carriage which was later delinked from the rest of the train.

"So far the number of deaths from the incident has touched 7 with three children in it. A woman also died in the incident.

court raised questions over the Supreme Court cannot force government's "seriousness" the ruling alliance to hold regarding holding negotiations negotiations with the opposition over the holding of elecwith the opposition. tions in Punjab province, but ernment taken to show its observed that it appeared that

goodwill? It seems like the the government was "playing government is playing passpass-pass. Amid uncertainty over the pass," Justice Bandial was quot-Punjab Assembly's future in ed as saying by the Dawn spite of Supreme Court orders newspaper. declaring elections to be held

At the previous hearing, the court had asked political on May 14, a three-member bench led by Justice Bandial parties to hold talks on April 26 resumed hearing of the politi-cally-sensitive case. However, and come up with a response by April 27 after giving stake-holders a chance to reach an the hearing was adjourned barely an hour after it started agreement. with Justice Bandial saying

However, no talks were held and the government also refused to comply with the that a detailed order would be issued later. "We are not pushing anyone but only finding out April 4 directive.

take part in joint drill with Singapore's navy and join in a regional maritime security exhibition.

The exercises starting "What steps has the gov-Friday in the Southeast Asian city state come amid China's growing presence in the South China Sea, which it claims sovereignty over virtually in its entirety.

Concerns are especially pronounced in the US, which on Wednesday joined with forces from the Philippines in major exercises in Philippine waters facing the South China Sea that are likely to anger China.

Beijing's more assertive stance comes as its relations with the US and its allies have hit historic lows

durin invasion and war, the military alliance's chief said on Thursday, giving Kyiv a bigger punch as contemplates launch-

ing a counteroffensive. Along with more than 1,550 armoured vehicles, 230 tanks and other equipment, Ukraine's allies have sent "vast amounts of ammunition" and also trained and equipped more than nine new Ukrainian brigades, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

More than 30,000 troops are estimated to make up the new brigades. Some NATO partner countries, such as Sweden and Australia, have also provided armoured vehi-cles. "This will put Ukraine in

a strong position to continue to

An observer looks over an exhibition featuring some of the Ukrainian technologies being used on the battlefield as a part of a presentation of the new so-called BRAVE1 initiative, held in an underground parking lot in Kyiv, Ukraine on Wednesday. AP

retake occupied territory," Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels.

His comments came a day after Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had a "long and meaningful" phone call in their first known contact since Russia's full-scale

in opposing US influence in global affairs, and Xi visited Moscow last month. Stoltenberg said the 31 NATO allies were committed to shoring up Ukraine's mili-tary, adding that taking back land occupied by the Kremlin's forces would give Kviv a forces would give Kyiv a stronger negotiating position if

Russia denies visit to American reporter in visa retaliation

peace talks occur.

Moscow (AP): Russia's Foreign Ministry on Thursday denied a US request for a consular visit to Evan Gershkovich, an American reporter for The Wall Street Journal who is jailed on espionage charges.

The ministry said it reject ed the request for the May 11 visit in retaliation for the US refusing to grant visas to Russian journalists who planned to accompany Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on a trip to the United Nations. Gershkovich has been in custody since his March 29 arrest by Russia's security service on espionage charges that he, his employer and the US government have denied. Gershkovich is the first US correspondent since the Cold War to be detained in Russia on spying charges, and his arrest rattled journalists in the country and drew outrage in the West.

Chopin museum reopens in Warsaw with new items

Warsaw(AP): A museum to Polish pianist and composer Frederic Chopin reopens in Warsaw this week after months of renovations to improve presentation of the exhibits.

The museum, which houses Chopin's last piano, a Pleyel, and manuscripts of his music, will also display new items including letters he wrote to his companion, the writer George Sand, and a satirical drawing she made of him, as well as an oil portrait of Chopin painted by his friend Teofil Kwiatkowski.

The focus of the renewed exhibition is on the original manuscripts, which take the place of previous facsimiles, and on recreating the mood and style of the times they belong to, museum officials said on Thursday.

A large part of the renovation was creating the right technical air and light conditions for exhibiting original,



Romantic-era composer, who spent half of his life in Paris, museum officials said.

and a French father. Seeking to

Chopin was born in 1810

19th century writings and objects.

Popular among Poles and foreign tourists, the museum to Poland's greatest 19th-century musician closed in the fall of 2022 for the renovation and rearrangement works.

Space has also been made Vienna in 1830 and then to for more items that were Paris, where he settled until his owned or linked to the death in 1849.

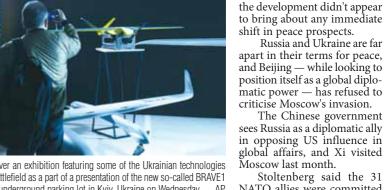
Missing yacht with 3 Russians, two Egyptians reaches safely

Duba (AP): A missing yacht with three Russians and two Egyptians onboard reached safety in Djibouti in east Africa on Thursday, after going missing for days following an attack off the coast of Yemen, its owner said. Owner Dmitriy Chuguevskiy told The Associated Press that the vessel reached Djibouti after being detained for several days by authorities off the coast of neighbouring Eritrea. Bullet holes in the ship after an attack off Yemen had raised the suspicions of Eritrean authorities, Chuguevskiy said. Chuguevskiy shared photos of the yacht, named 30 Minutes, anchored in Djibouti. The vessel had scrapes and

in Zelazowa Wola near Warsaw to a Polish mother what appeared to be bullet holes in its hull. Regional mar-itime officials and Eritrea's develop his talent, he went to Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the vessel.



Santiago presidential candidate for the ruling Colorado Party, takes a selfie with a supporter during a rally in Villa Elisa, Paraguay, on Wednesday. Paraguay's general elections are scheduled for April 30. AP/PTN





Wheat procurement hits **195 L tonnes so far in '23**

Gram Panchayats/ Arhatias

etc. Also in addition to already

existing designated procure-

ment centres, for better out-

ment is also progressing

In addition, rice procure-

A quantity of 354 lakh

reach.

smoothly

PTI NEW DELH

The government on Thursday said that wheat procurement has reached 195 lakh tonnes so far in this marketing year that started in April, surpassing the total purchase made during the previ-

The procurement of wheat during RMS (rabi mar-keting season) 2023-24 has already surpassed the total procurement of RMS 2022-23, an official statement said.

Rabi marketing season runs from April-March, but bulk of purchases happen between April and June.

"In RMS 2022-23, the procurement was 188 lakh tonnes. However, till April 26th, wheat procurement during RMS 2023-24 is 195 lakh tonnes.

"This has largely benefitted the farmers. MŠP (minimum support price) outflow of about ₹41,148 crore has already been made to about 14.96 lakh farmers during the ongoing wheat procurement operations," the statement said.

Major contribution in the procurement comes from three wheat producing states of Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh with procurement of 89.79 lakh tonnes, 54.26 lakh tonnes and 49.47 lakh tonnes, respectively.

tonnes of rice has been pro-cured till April 26, 2023 during kharif crop of 2022-23 kharif "One of the major factors, marketing season, with anothcontributing the progressive procurement this year, is the er 140 lakh tonnes yet to be procured L&T Technology Tech Mahindra Q4 net Services shares profit falls 35% on rally over 8%

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

Services (LTTS) on Thursday jumped over 8 per cent after the company reported an 18 per cent growth in its March quarter net profit. The stock climbed 8.16

post Q4 earnings

per cent to settle at ₹3,729.35 gins on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 8.70 per cent to ₹3,748. At the NSE, it rallied 7.85 per cent to finish at ₹3,717.80. crore in FY22.

The company's market valuation climbed ₹2,971.82 crore to ₹39,384.97 crore. Its overall revenue grew by over 13 per cent to ₹13,718 crore in the reporting quarter, and almost flat when compared L&T Technology Services

on Wednesday reported an 18 to the preceding December per cent growth in its March quarter. quarter net profit at ₹309.6 The engineering vices company's post tax net as against 1.011 billion in the profit in FY23 rose 22 per cent to ₹1,169.8 crore. For the reporting quarter, the company's revenues grew 19 per cent to ₹2,096.2 crore.



grant of relaxation by GOI in quality specifications of wheat Need to improve crop being procured, in view of untimely rains leading to lusproductivity to meet ter loss. This will check any distress sale," the statement said. demand of India and The Central Government has also allowed all the states to world: Tomar open procurement centres at village/ panchayat level and to

carry out the procurement PTI NEW DELHI through co-operative Societies/

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Thursday stressed on the need to improve crop productivity as the country requires to increase farm production to meet domestic requirement and export to global markets.

The Minister inaugurated a Summit on Farm Machinery Technology organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Tractor and Mechanization Association (TMA)

Stock markets settle with gains Logs fourth day of rally

PTI MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended in the green on Thursday, climbing for the fourth straight day, amid fresh foreign fund inflows and intense buying in IT and telecom stocks.

Buying in index majors Infosys and Reliance Industries added to the optimism in the equity market.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 348.80 points or 0.58 per cent to settle at 60,649.38. During the day, it jumped

397.73 points or 0.65 per cent to 60,698.31. The broader NSE Nifty

advanced 101.45 points or 0.57 per cent to end at 17,915.05. "Market traded firm on the monthly expiry day and gained over half a per cent. After the flat start, the Nifty index gradually inched northward and finally settled around the day's high to close at 17,915.05 levels. The majority of sectors contributed to the move wherein realty, IT and auto were the top gainers," said Ajit Mishra, VP Technical Research, Religare

Broking Ltd. From the Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Larsen & Mahindra Toubro, &

Mahindra, ITC, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Titan, Reliance Industries and Nestle were the major winners Hindustan Unilever, Power

Grid, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, State Bank of India, Asian Paints and Wipro were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul,

Japan, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

Equity markets in Europe were trading in the positive ter-ritory. The US markets had ended mostly lower on Wednesday.

"The domestic market is gradually shifting towards a positive terrain, supported by FIIs inflows and positive Q4 earnings from banks. On the global front, the US Q1 GDP number which will be unveiled today is anticipated to moder-ate on a QoQ basis amid concerns over banking contagion and a slowing economy. "The next week's FED pol-

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.62 per cent and midcap index rallied 0.52 per cent.

Among indices, realty jumped 1.57 per cent, telecom-munication climbed 1.16 per cent, IT (1.15 per cent), teck (1.01 per cent), auto (0.83 per cent), metal (0.80 per cent) and capital goods (0.72 per cent). Power emerged as the only

The BSE benchmark climbed 169.87 points or 0.28

per cent to settle at 60,300.58

on Wednesday. The Nifty

down to 0.39 per cent of the

advances from 0.73 per cent at

Citibank's consumer business

and non-banking financial

company (NBFC) consumer

business. The bank paid

₹11,603 crore for the acquisi-

tion announced last year in

March. The sale excludes Citi's

institutional client businesses in

India. Axis Bank is the fourth-

largest issuer of credit cards

with a total base of 8.6 million

cards, and the deal will add

about 2.5 million credit card-

holders, making it one of the

top three card businesses in the

The fall in the bad loans

the end of 2022.

advanced 44.35 points or 0.25 per cent to end at 17,813.60. icy will be keenly monitored," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services

advanced 0.40 per cent to USD 78.07 per barrel.

laggard.

Wipro Q4 net profit dips marginally to ₹3,074.5 crore; board approves ₹12k crore share buyback

PTI NEW DELHI

T major Wipro on Thursday reported a marginal year-onyear decline of 0.4 per cent in net profit to ₹3,074.5 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023 and announced a share buyback of up to ₹12,000 crore

The Wipro board approved the buyback of 26.96 crore equity shares at a price of ₹445 apiece.

"Board...Of Wipro...Has approved a proposal to buyback up to 26,96,62,921 equi-ty shares, being 4.91 per cent of



the total paid-up equity shares of the company, for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹120,00,00,00,000 at a price of ₹445...Per equity share," the company said a regulatory filing.

Members of the promoter

Voltas shares decline nearly 6% after March qtr earnings announcement

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

Shares of Voltas Ltd fell by nearly 6 per cent on Thursday after the air conditioner maker reported a decline of 21.6 per cent in its consolidated net profit in the March 2023 quarter.

The stock fell by 5.41 per cent to settle at ₹808.80 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 5.88 per cent to ₹804.70.

On the NSE, it declined 5.64 per cent to end at ₹806.40 per share.

In volume terms, 2.20 lakh to ₹2,936.76 crore during the shares of the firm were traded period under review, as against on the BSE and over 40.67 lakh ₹2,633.72 crore a year ago.

and promoter group of the company have indicated their intention to participate in the proposed buyback, it added.

Bengaluru-headquartered Wipro - which competes in the IT services space with larger rivals like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys posted a net profit of ₹3,074.5 crore for the just-ended quar-ter, against ₹3,087.3 crore in the year-ago period.

The revenue for March 2023 quarter stood at ₹23,190.3 crore, 11.17 per cent higher year-on-year, according to the filing

provisions made on delayed

collection in the international

The Tata group firm had posted a consolidated net prof-

it of ₹182.71 crore in the year-

ago period, the company said

of Voltas was up 11.5 per cent

Revenue from operations

project business.

in a regulatory filing.

Axis Bank reports ₹57-cr loss in Q4

PTI NEW DELHI

 $P_{\text{Bank on Thursday report-}}^{\text{rivate sector lender Axis}}$ ed a net loss of ₹57 crore for the March 2023 quarter on account of the acquisition of the retail consumer business of CitiIndia. The bank earned a net profit of ₹4,118 crore on a standalone basis in the same

quarter the previous year. ratio helped cut the provisions During the quarter, the and contingencies for Q4FY23 bank's total income increased to to Rs 306 crore as compared to ₹28,865 crore from ₹22,000 Rs 987 crore a year ago. Axis Bank on March 1 crore a year ago, Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing. announced the acquisition of

Interest income grew to ₹23,970 crore during the period under review against ₹17,776 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

The bank's board has recommended a dividend of ₹1 per share or 50 per cent of ₹2 face value for the year ended March 31, 2023.

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) were reduced to 2.02 per cent of gross advances as of March 31, 2023, from 2.82 per cent by the end of March 2022. Net NPAs also came

country. **BUSINESS BRIEF**

SRM-IST TO HOLD NATIONAL MILLET SUMMIT-2023 KATTANKULATHUR: SRM Institute of

Science and Technology - India's preeminent higher education institution in science, engineering, technology, medicine, management, agriculture, and arts and science, along with National



Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship & Management (NIFTEM) Thanjavur - a pioneering Research and Development Institute under Ministry of Food Processing Industries, will organise 'National Millet Summi ' The theme of the two-day even held on May 6 and 7 at SRM-IST, Kattankulathur, is "Millets: Science, Technology, and Innovation" and is being organised as part of the International Year of Millets to focus on technological advancements. strategies for nurturing entrepreneurs, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO), and farmers, encourage startups, and promote skill and employment generation



due to narrowing profit mar-For the entire fiscal, its profit after tax came down to ₹4,831.5 crore as against ₹5,566

clients defer their IT spends. The Mahindra group company hopes that there can be a resurgence in IT spends and all the investments which it has done will come in handy, its

have reported numbers for the March quarter, are speaking about macroeconomic volatilities in the largest market of the US impacting their business as

chief executive C P Gurnani

Gold climbs ₹520; silver jumps ₹440

PTI NEW DELHI

Gold price climbed ₹520 to ₹61,120 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a rally in precious metal prices internation-ally, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at ₹60,600 per 10 grams. Silver also jumped ₹440 to

₹75,340 per kilogramme. "Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at

at HDFC Securities, said.

₹61,120 per 10 grams, up ₹520 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities

In the overseas markets,

year-ago period, and was lower than the \$795 million in new deal wins in the preceding December quarter. A slew of its peers, who

He admitted that the geopolitical scenario and war have pushed it into a difficult situation, but its experience of the past crisis has taught it to never waste a crisis.

were quo ing higher at \$1,999 per ounce and \$25.05 per ounce, respectively

Gold price traded up in Asian trading hours on Thursday.

es on the NSE during the day.

taxes were impacted during the Voltas Ltd on Wednesday current quarter due to provireported a decline of 21.6 per sions made on delayed colleccent in its consolidated net tion in the international project profit at ₹143.23 crore in the business," Voltas said in its March 2023 quarter, due to earnings statement.

"Profit

Tata Steel signs business cooperation agreement with A&B Global Mining

Its total contract value

PTI JAMSHEDPUR

Tata Steel on Thursday said it has signed an agreement with A&B Global Mining to harness new business development opportunities and deliver mine technical services.

The steel major will closely work with ABGM India which will interface with their South African entity to explore business opportunities in India and abroad besides utilise each other's technical and strategic strengths to deliver projects across the mining and metals, including the steel value chain, a company statement said

ABGM will also collaborate with Tata Steel to deliver competitive integrated business solutions to the global mining industry, it said.

"We started offering mine technical services commercially to the mining industry along with our partners, and this agreement will further complement our capabilities and capacities to raise the standards of such services in India in particular and internationally in general for more scientific and sustainable mine development," Tata Steel vice president (raw materials) D B Sundara Ramam said.

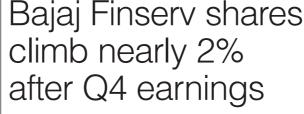
He also mentioned the company is in the



mining business for more than a century with its natural resource division, providing various exploration and mine planning services to its captive mines for sustainable practices.

A&B Global Mining managing director Devendra Vyas said, "We are pleased to be working in collaboration with Tata Steel to deliver mine planning, engineering and project management services, including customised end-toend solutions to clients."

He also said this agreement is the foundation for a strong partnership and compliments the company's efforts to diversify its services to wider stakeholders in the industry and accelerate growth across commodities and geographies.



PTI NEW DELHI

Chares of Bajaj Finserv Ltd on Thursday climbed nearly 2 per cent after the company reported a 31 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit for the March quarter.

The stock gained 1.90 per cent to settle at ₹1,359.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 2.97 per cent to ₹1,374.30.

On the NSE, it climbed 1.82 per cent to end at ₹1,359 per share.

In volume terms, 1.39 lakh shares were traded on the BSE and over 39.82 lakh shares on the NSE during the day.

Bajaj Finserv Ltd (BFL) on Thursday reported a 31 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit at ₹1,769 crore for the



fourth quarter ended in March 2023

The company had posted a net profit of ₹1,346 crore during the corresponding January-March period of 2021-22.

The total consolidated income during the March 2023 quarter increased to ₹23,625 crore, as against ₹18,862 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year, BFL, the holding company for the various financial services businesses under the Bajaj group, said in a regulatory filing.

Sebi to auction properties of 3 firms to recover investors' money on May 30

PTI NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Thursday said it will auc-tion properties of three firms — Infinity Realcon, Bishal Group of companies and Sumangal Industries — next month to recover money illegally raised from investors.

A total of 26 properties of three companies will be auctioned at a reserve price of over Rs 21 crore, according to a public notice issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

Of the 26 properties, 13 relate to Infinity Realcon, 10 belong to the Bishal Group of companies (Bishal Abasan India Ltd, Bishal Distillers Ld, Bishal Agri-Bio Industries Ltd, Bishal Horticulture and Animal Projects Ltd) and three of Sumangal Industries.

These properties include land parcels, single-storied

buildings, a residential building and a flat located in West Bengal. Inviting bids for the sale of properties in the recovery proceedings against the three companies and their promoters and directors, Sebi said the auction will be conducted online on May 30 from 1030 hours to 1230 hours.

Adroit Technical Services has been appointed as the eauction service provider.

The regulator has asked the bidders to make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims, among others, before submitting their bids.

Tesla Power USA inks pact with IOCL to sell batteries at petrol pumps

PTI NEW DELHI

Tesla Power USA on Thursday said it has inked an agreement with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to sell and service batteries at the state-owned firm's petrol pumps. The partnership will enable Tesla Power to sell and service batteries at over 36,000 IOCL petrol pumps across India, the US-based firm said in a statement. "This will be the first



Indian Oil Corporation Ltd Executive Director, I/C (RS-NE), Vigyan Kumar (2R) and other officials during the announcement of a strategic alliance between Tesla Power USA and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) for battery distribution and sales, in New Delhi on Wednesday

national-level tie-up with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd for battery distribution. To start with, Tesla Power USA batteries will be available at the select IOCL fuel pumps in the Delhi-NCR region, which will be subsequently expanded to other states," it added.

Kavinder Khurana, MD, Tesla Power USA, said his company currently has over 5,000 distribution points in India and aims to double it in 2023

Icra expects tyre sector revenues to grow by 7-9% in FY24

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

Ratings firm Icra on Thursday said it expects a revenue growth of 7-9 per cent for tyre industry in the current fiscal.

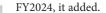
The rating agency pegs the domestic tyre demand growth at 6-8 per cent for FY2024, supported by stable growth in the replacement segment and sustained demand momentum in the OEM segment, Icra said in a statement.

The rating agency noted that it expects the demand momentum in the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) segment to continue in FY2024 with an esti-



mated growth of 8-10 per cent.

Replacement demand, which forms around two-thirds of tyre demand, is likely to witness mid-single digit growth in



"ICRA projects a 7-9 per cent growth in industry revenues for FY2024 with domestic growth outpacing exports," Icra Assistant Vice President and Sector Head Nithya Debbadi said.

Segment-wise, commercial vehicles shall benefit from the increasing traction in the infrastructure and construction segments, she added.

Strong underlying demand and preference for personal mobility will continue to drive passenger vehicles and aid in a recovery in the two-wheeler segments, Debbadi said.



sport 11

Former Czech

soccer head

gets prison

Barcelona loses to Rayo, fails to increase league lead

Barcelona couldn't take advantage of Real Mad-rid's setback, losing to Rayo Vallecano and missing a chance to increase its Spanish league lead.

Barcelona lost 2-1 at Vallecas Stadium, keeping its gap to second-place Madrid at 11 points with seven matches remaining. It could have taken a huge step toward securing its first league title since 2019 if it had won a day after Madrid's 4-2 loss at Girona.

Barcelona's lead remains comfortable, though, especially with Madrid focused on the Champions League semifinals against Manchester City and the Copa del Rey final against Osasuna.

"They played a great match and deserved the win," Barcelona defender Ronald Araujo said. "We still have an 11-point lead, it's a good advantage, and now we have two consecutive games at home and we have to win them.

Barcelona's next league games are against Real Betis and Osasuna at Camp Nou Stadium. It was coming off a home win against Atletico Madrid that ended a three-game winless streak. "It wasn't a good game for us," Barcelona coach Xavi said. "We are upset because it was a



Champions Leagues spots,

To celebrate its 120-year

reached 14 points.

good opportunity for us. It's not vincing 3-1 win against Mallorca at home. over yet.

Rodrigo De Paul, Álvaro It was the second win in three games for Rayo, which Morata and Yannick Carrasco stayed in ninth place. It scored scored for Atletico, which cut its gap to second-place Madrid to three points. Second place is with Álvaro García in the 19th minute and Fran García in the 53rd. Barcelona got on the board especially important because it guarantees a spot in the lucra-tive Spanish Super Cup in Saudi late with Robert Lewandowski, who had scored only two goals in his last 10 matches entering Arabia the meeting with Rayo. Atletico's gap to fifth-place Betis, the first team outside the

ATLETICO REBOUNDS Atletico rebounded from

its loss at Barcelona with a con-

anniversary, Atletico played at the Metropolitano Stadium with a blue-and-white uniform reminiscent of its origins.

OTHER RESULTS

In a key match in the fight against relegation, Almeria won 2-1 at Getafe to move to 15th place, three points clear from the relegation zone. Getafe dropped to 17th, one point above the relegation zone. Celta Vigo was up to 12th

after a 1-0 home win against lastplace Elche



Liverpool beats West Ham 2-1, not giving up on top-4 finish

AP LONDON

iverpool is not giving up on La top-four finish in the Premier League, however unlikely it seems

A 2-1 win at West Ham on Wednesday was a third straight victory for Jurgen Klopp's team and it was sealed by Joel Matip's header from a corner in the 67th minute at the Olympic Stadium.

Lucas Paqueta put West Ham ahead with a fierce strike from outside the area in the 12th minute, only for Liverpool to equalize through Cody Gakpo off another long-range strike six minutes later.

Liverpool climbed to sixth place and six points behind fourth-place Manchester United, which has two games in hand -the first coming at Tottenham on Thursday

"If we win all our games we will be in Europe," Klopp said. "People ask me about the Champions League but that's not in our hands as we don't play any of the teams above us. It's important we keep going, playing good football and at the end of the season we will see how

many points we have.' West Ham manager David Moyes was angry at the final whistle after a handball by Liverpool midfielder Thiago Alcantara wasn't given as a penalty. The ball hit the substitute's arm as he lowered it to the ground to break his fall.

"You will probably hear some rubbish of how he had to break his fall but he lunged for the ball," Moyes said. "I think it's a penalty kick. The hardest thing to take is the disrespect from VAR that they didn't say to

the referee that it's worth a look. Someone in VAR didn't have enough football knowledge to know that could be close.

Some fans came onto the field after fulltime and stewards struggled to deal with them. West Ham also had a goal

by Jarrod Bowen disallowed for a narrow offside against the winger.

Liverpool has found its form in recent weeks, beating Leeds 6-1 and Nottingham Forest 3-2. "Maybe the boys have found

their feet back, and I liked the football we played," Klopp said. The first half was the best we have played in ages. It was con-

vincing, it was us. "We've had games this season where people have not recognized us and today we showed it is still in us, and I'm pleased with that

term for fraud AP PRAGUE The former head of the Czech Republic soccer association was convicted of fraud on Thursday and sentenced to six years in prison. Prague's Municipal Court also fined Miroslav Pelta 5 mil-lion Czech crowns (\$235,000)

and banned him from an executive position for five years. The court issued the verdict in a retrial of the case after it handed Pelta the same sentence in 2021. An appeals court can-

celed that ruling and returned the case back to the original court. In the same case, the court also sentenced Simona Kratochvilova, a former deputy education minister, to six-and-a-half years in prison, banned her from working in public offices for six years and fined her 2 million Czech crowns (\$94,000).

A state prosecutor demanded nine and 10 years in prison for Pelta and Kratochvilova, respectively.

The two have denied wrongdoing and still can appeal. The case dates to 2017 when police raided the association headquarters and the offices of FK Jablonec, a provincial soccer club partly owned by Pelta.

Prosecutors said the reason for the raids was investigating fraud involving Pelta in connection with state subsidies

Man City lets their hair down to confirm Premier League dominance

AP MANCHESTER

Erling Haaland undid his ponytail Eand released his flowing blond locks moments before finishing off Arsenal in a purported Premier League title decider that turned into a procession for Manchester City.

The defending champions certainly let their hair down at Etihad Stadium with a swaggering perfor-mance that left little doubt about who the top team in England is. Not that there has ever really been a debate.

Backed by the riches of Abu Dhabi and led by arguably the world's best coach in Pep Guardiola, City has established an era of domination in the Premier League that is starting to mirror that of France (with Paris Saint-Germain) and Germany (with Bayern Munich)

Complete the job — and City is the big favorite after Wednesday's 4-1 victory that trimmed the gap on Arsenal to two points with two games in hand - and the team will have won three

straight titles and five of the last six in

On the field, City continues to swat away all-comers with a thrilling style of play that has become more varied since the arrival of Haaland, who rivals PSG forward Kylian Mbappe as the best striker in the world.

No wonder Arsenal's young players have stumbled with City - propelled by Haaland's goals and Guardiola's strategy - chasing them down with a now-familiar winning run.

The league title looks to be heading to the Etihad once again. And the treble - Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup — appears to be well within City's grasp. "They were exceptional, and it's

extremely difficult to reach that level," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said.

It's a level that might even allow City to break new ground in the Champions League, a trophy the club has never won. A two-legged semifinal meeting with Real Madrid awaits next month when City might yet meet its match, given the Spanish team's aura and history in the competition.

But City looks a more rounded and



AP SAO PAULO

A Brazilian dictionary has added "Pelé" as an adjec-

tive to use when describing

someone who is "exception-

al, incomparable, unique.

West Ham in the team's next two games, is another matter. In that case, he will rely on his delivery into Haaland from deeper areas to make the differ-

That's the thing with City: Every base is covered. The sight of Phil Foden and Riyad Mahrez coming off the bench against tired legs highlighted the strength in depth, with currently only Nathan Ake unavailable because of injury.

City can finally take the lead off Arsenal by winning at Fulham on Saturday - Arsenal doesn't play again until Tuesday, at home against Chelsea until Tuesday, at home against Chelsea — and the big hope for Arteta's team is that City gets sidetracked by those games against Madrid on May 9 and 17. A trip to Everton comes in between them, while away matches against Brighton and Brentford to finish the league season could prove difficult

league season could prove difficult. Then again, Arsenal has the tough-est game left for either of the title challengers — at Newcastle on May 7 — so City could yet get further respite.

"We have been through tough and tough



Chelsea loses a 5th straight game to deepen crisis AP LONDON "It is the same story -

Chelsea sunk to a fifth straight closs since the appointment

keep going and keep working. This isn't an easy moment in the season when a club is used to of Frank Lampard as interim winning a lot." Chelsea began only g

Ben Chilwell drew perhaps the

only ripple of anticipation from

around Stamford Bridge during

the first half with a powerful

burst down the left, taking the

ball on after a clever first-time

intercepted, and the only sniff of

Chilwell's low cross was

pass from Conor Gallagher.

ria's most compe itive league. OK, there are question marks surrounding the foundations of this remarkable trophy run, with City facing more than 100 charges of alleged wrongdoing and failures to co-operate with a Premier League investigation into the club's finances.

For the moment, though, that's with the lawyers.

Joshi, Chawrasia,

Avani gualify for

Asian Games golf

 $B_{\text{and amateur Avani Pra-}}^{\text{engaluru duo Pranavi Urs}}$

shanth tied for the first place at

10-under 206 and will join Aditi

Ashok in the Indian women's

team for the Asian Games in

China in September this year.

despite a late bogey on 17th.

In the men's section Khalin

SSP Chawrasia who played

Joshi completed a wire-to-wire

to win with a final round of 4-

under 68 that gave him a total

at the 2016 Olympics also shot

of 13-under 203 for 54 holes.

Golf Union-run trials.

the second place.

Pranavi and

PTI 📕 KOLKATA

just short against Madrid in the semifinals last season.

Much of that is down to Haaland, who now has 33 goals in the Premier League - a record in a 38-game campaign - and 49 in all competitions after netting the fourth against Arsenal. City has been transformed by the presence of the Norway striker, who

Blas and Nantes

much more to his game than simply scoring goals.

He also had two assists for Kevin De Bruyne, the star of the show and a player who has made a habit of coming good in the final months of the season. As if opposition defenses don't have enough to worry about with Haaland alone, De Bruyne - English

's player of the last three seasons - has burst into life with three goals and five assists in his last four league games. His link-up play with Haaland is getting better by the week and he was unstoppable against Arsenal in his roving midfield role.

Whether De Bruyne gets that much space against opponents who will sit back against City, like Fulham and

stage in the season in the past, so we know what to do in certain scenarios, City defender John Stones said. "It's just experience, and everyone still has that hunger.'

Wealth, outrageous talent, a winning mentality. No wonder teams are finding it virtually impossible to stop City, as Arsenal has just discovered.

at Stamford Bridge in the Premier League. The visitors led through Cesar Azpilicueta's first-half own-goal and substitute Bryan Mbeumo added a second when he ran half the length of the field unchallenged to slam home a finish and extend Chelsea's winless slide at home to six games in all competitions.

Chelsea has scored just one goal in its last seven games and failed to win any of its last eight.

If, as looks increasingly possible, Mauricio Pochettino is confirmed as the permanent successor to Graham Potter by the time the team plays Arsenal on Tuesday, Chelsea will have had four different managers since its last victory.

Chelsea, six points behind 10th-place Fulham, might struggle now just for a top-half finish in the Premier League.

"This club has been through many, many good moments in recent times and this moment is tough," said Lampard, who has lost three Premier League games and twice in the Champions League to Real Madrid since being brought back as manager on a temporary basis. "We would love a magic wand and a magic moment but it doesn't come in

football because the Premier

League is tough. We have to fight

for our moment.

attacking intent from either side inside the first 20 minutes evaporated without threat. N'Golo Kante appeared on the right touchline as Chelsea sought a way through, bending over an inviting cross. Up from the back and free inside the box, Thiago Silva got his head to the ball but his attempt lacked

power, finding only the gloves of David Rava. The first genuine test for the Brentford goalkeeper came on the half-hour mark, with Kante controlling the ball inside the box from Wesley Fofana's cutback and laying it off for Enzo Fernandez. The World Cup winner, still in search of his first

goal since his record-breaking move to Stamford Bridge, shot too close to Raya, who tipped it behind.

Mathias Jensen's corner got a flick from Mathias Jorgensen, and Azpilicueta knew little about it as the ball deflected off the Chelsea captain and bounced

past Kepa Ārrizabalaga.

most of his career - and many Brazilians celebrated the decision by the publishers of one of the country's most popular dictionaries.

'The expression that was already used to refer to the best at something is already eternal in the pages of the dictionary," Pelé's social media channels said after the announcement.

of the King of Soccer into the Portuguese language.

Algeria, Egypt among 4 bids | Club vs country tension looms ahead of Women's World Cup

ACup in July, club vs. Country tensions surfaced Wednesday when national teams were urged not to summon players for training camps until the FIFAmandated release date.

The European Club Association cites its members' concern about "the current widespread practice" by national federations to call up players early in breach of mandatory rest periods

FIFA rules require players in the 32 Women's World Cup squads to report to national teams on July 10, which is 10 days before the start of the month-long tournament in Australia and New Zealand.

That deadline for clubs to release their players is more than five weeks after the UEFA Women's Champions League final on June 3 that caps the European season.

The ECA warning follows one year after some national teams opened camps in May for

Brazilian dictionary adds Pelé as adjective, synonym of best

> Examples: He is the Pelé of basketball, she is the Pelé of tennis, she is the Pelé of

Brazilian theatre, he is the Pelé of medicine. The Pelé Foundation, Santos FC - where he played

The dictionary entry reads: "The one that is extraordinary, or who because of his quality, value "We made history together and put the name or superiority cannot be matched to anything or

Pelé means THE BEST'." Pelé spent nearly two decades enchanting fans and dazzling opponents as the game's most prolific scorer with Brazilian club Santos and the Brazil national team.

to host 2027 African Cup

AP CAIRO

Algeria and Egypt are among four bidders competing to host the 2027 African Cup of Nations, the Confederation of African Football said Thursday. Botswana and a co-hosting

project between neighbors Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania also entered the contest. They now have a May 23 deadline to submit a confirmed bid with guaranteed government support. CAF previously said its

executive committee will choose both the 2025 and 2027 tournament hosts at the same time

"before September this year." Algeria is also in the 2025 contest, which includes Moro-

cco, South Africa, Zambia and a Benin-Nigeria co-host bid. Guinea was removed as host by CAF last year. Algeria hosted the Africa Cup in 1990 and Egypt last staged the competition in 2019. Botswana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have never hosted the tournament.

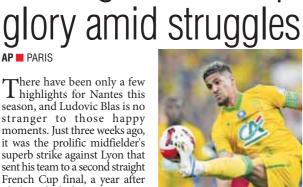
AP NYON (SWITZERLAND)

head of the Women's World

a July 6 start in the 2022 European Championship, including ov eventual winner England.

> ECA head of women's football Claire Bloomfield said the issue was "a serious concern for player welfare." "The issue of early call-ups is a hangover from the game in its amateur form and is detrimental to the future success and growth of

> women's football," she said. Bloomfield said clubs want "constructive and direct communication" soon with stakeholders including federations.



chasing French Cup

struggling since he joined during the winter transfer window, Blas' metronomic regularity in

Pranavi, trailing Avani by one shot after the second round of the trials at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, carded 3-under 69 Avani, still leading by one when she came to the 18th, bogeyed the final hole to fall in will be 50-50. a tie with Pranavi in the Indian

For Nantes, a historic powerhouse in French soccer, the match is a breath of fresh air in an otherwise season of struggles. With six matches left to play in the league, the eight-time French champions are above the relegation only on goal difference after

68 and totalled 11-under 205 for Joshi and Chawrasia will join Anirban Lahiri and Shubhankar Sharma in the men's striker Andy Delort said.

French Cup final, a year after Blas' penalty kick gave Nantes its first trophy in 21 years. Blas and his teammates are returning to the Stade de France on Saturday to take on Toulouse in another French Cup final.

AP PARIS

time in a row, that's what I wish for everyone. And it can give us extra strength to finish the championship well and stay in the top division," Blas said. "Considering our situation, it

failing to win their last nine matches. "We have to change, and look for positive things on

Saturday, look for a win to give us more confidence," Nantes While Delort has been

midfield and eye for goal have "To lift the trophy a second



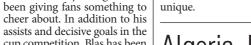
goals this season. According to French league statistics, Blas has scored more goals than any other midfielder since joining Nantes in 2019.

With 229 French league matches under his belt, Blas is no longer just a prospect. His performances have caught the attention of rival teams, but his expected transfer to Lille did not happen last year. The 25-yearold midfielder who started his career in Guingamp is now widely expected to leave this summer.

athlete of all time; exceptional, incomparable,

anyone, just like Pelé; nickname of Edson Arantes

do Nascimento (1940-2022), considered the best



The announcement by the Michaelis dictionary on Wednesday is part of a campaign that gathered more than 125,000 signatures to honour the late soccer great's impact beyond his sport. The three-time World Cup champion died in December at age 82 after a fight against colon cancer.



JAISWAL, SPINNERS GUIDE RR TO 32-RUN WIN OVER CSK next two to deep extra cover and

PTI 📕 JAIPUR

Promising Yashasvi Jaiswal once again displayed his talent as he conjured up a brilliant half-century before Rajasthan Royals spinners choked Chennai Super Kings to register a comfortable 32-run win and move to the top of the IPL table here on Thursday.

Jaiswal (77 off 43) continued his rich form with his third fifty of the tournament before Devdutt Padikkal (24 not out) and Dhruv Jurel (34 off 15) provided the final flourish to register the highest total -202 for five - at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium. Spinners Adam Zampa

(3/22 in 3 overs) and Ravichandran Ashwin (2/35) then shared five wickets between them to restrict CSK to 170 for 6 despite Ruturaj Gaikwad (47) and Shivam Dube's (52) best efforts. With the win, the Royals

moved to the top of the table, while CSK drop down to third. In contrast to RR, CSK

openers found the going tough before Gaikwad, who was dropped on four, broke the shackles and hit Jason Holder (0/49) for a four over mid on before cracking a six over deep backward square leg in the fourth over. RR skipper Sanju Samson

PTI BENGALURU

IPL.

The

Kolkata Knight Riders leg-Spinner Varun Chakravarthy feels he is reap-

ing the benefits of focussing

more on accuracy than using

"different variations" in the

Chakravarthy was the pick of

the KKR bowlers in his side's

21-run win over Royal

Challengers Bangalore here

on Wednesday with figures of

my accuracy rather than working on different varia-

tions. Another aspect I was

working on was revolutions on the ball. I was working

with AC Prathiban. He's my

spin coach back in Chennai, so it definitely worked,"

"I have worked more on

3/27 from his four overs.

31-year-old



intensified the pressure by bowling spin from both ends and the move paid dividends.

Devon Conway (8) continued to struggle and with the required run rate increasing he was forced to hit a Zampa delivery flat to Sandeep Sharma at mid off. Unperturbed by the wicket,

Focussing more on accuracy than

variations, says KKR's Chakravarthy

Gaikwad kept stealing bound-aries every over to keep the scoreboard ticking before Zampa struck once again to get rid of the dangerman. CSK were 72 for two at the

halfwav mark. Ashwin (2/35) then snared

the wickets Ajinkya Rahane (15) and "Impact Player" Ambati

Rayudu (0) to further dent CSK's chances But Dube had different

plans. He upped the ante, hitting some much-needed sixes to give CSK a glimmer of hope.

The all-rounder brought his third consecutive half century with the help of four sixes and two fours. However, he couldn't

take his side over the line. Earlier opening the innings, Jaiswal started on an aggressive note, hitting boundaries all

around the ground. He targeted Akash Singh (0/32), hitting three fours in the

Hetmyer (8) packing. Padikkl and Jurel then very first over. The youngster hit added added 48 runs towards the first ball of the match wide over cover and then send the the fag of the innings.



deep midwicket for the same

The Rajasthan opener then went on to collect 18 runs off Singh's second over. Jaiswal sent

the ball to the boundary three times and also launched one for

a six over long on. With Tushar Deshpande (2/42) and Singh being pun-ished, CSK skipper MS Dhoni

introduced spin in the form of

Maheesh Theekshana (1/24),

who bowled a good opening

spell. Jaiswal, however, raced to

party, hitting a few boundaries.

Together the two stitched an 86-

run opening stand before the Englishman's sedate 27-run

knock was brought to an end by

to restrict the boundaries after

the wicket and then fashioned a

mini batting collapse. Returning

for his second spell, Deshpande

dismissed skipper Sanju Samson

(17) and also got the prized wicket of Jaiswal, who was bat-

ting with aplomb, in the 14th

over. Theekshana then returned

to send the big-hitting Shimron

The CSK bowlers were able

Ravindra Jadeja (1/32).

Jos Buttler too joined the

his half century in 26 balls.

result.

✓olkata Knight Riders open-Ker Jason Roy was on Wednesday fined 10 percent of his match fee for breaching the

KKR to 200/5 against Royal Challengers Bangalore has admitted to the breach.

1 offence under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct," IPL Media stated.

The incident happened during KKR's 21-run win over at the M.



KL Rahul's strike rate in focus again as LSG face PBKS in crucial mid-table clash

their game as the tournament

ing Prabhsimran Singh and

Matthew Short need to stay

longer in the middle while

the dangerous Liam

Livingstone is yet to come into his own after two games.

Mumbai Indians why Punjab

paid Rs 18.5 crore for his ser-

vices and his contribution

with both bat and ball holds

key for the team. Arshdeep

Singh has been brilliant both

with new and old ball while

the team will need to take a tough call in choosing

between Nathan Ellis and

Kagiso Rabada, who has

played only a couple of games so far. A lot more is

expected from leggie Rahul Chahar in the middle overs

as he has managed to take

only two wickets in seven

Punjab Kings: Shikhar

Dhawan (c), Arshdeep Singh,

Baltej Singh, Rahul Chahar,

Sam Curran, Rishi Dhawan,

Nathan Ellis, Gurnoor Brar,

Harpreet Brar, Harpreet

Singh, Vidwath Kaverappa, Liam Livingstone, Mohit Rathee, Prabhsimran Singh,

Kagiso Rabada, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, M Shahrukh Khan, Jitesh Sharma (wk),

Shivam Singh, Matthew Short, Sikandar Raza,

Lucknow Super Giants: KL Rahul (c), Kyle Mayers, Deepak Hooda, Krunal Pandya, Amit Mishra, Nicholas Pooran (wk),

THE TEAMS (FROM):

games.

Stand in captain Sam Curran showed against

The top-order compris-

progresses.

PTI MOHALI

Lucknow Super Giants would be looking to move on from an inexplicable batting performance when they take on Punjab Kings in a crucial mid table clash in the Indian Premier League here on Friday.

Halfway into the competition, both teams have four wins from seven games and would be aiming to find consistency in the tight race to the IPL play-offs.

Though Lucknow pitch has not been ideal for batting, skipper K L Rahul's strike rate became the talking point again as his team failed on Saturday last to chase down 136 against Gujarat Titans from a commanding posi-tion. Rahul has a strike rate of 113.91 so far in the competition and can surely do

better on that front. Though 200 has not yet been scored at the PCA Stadium in the season so far, the pitch here should be friendlier for the batter compared to the 22 yards in Lucknow.

The absence of pacer Mark Wood, who has not played since April 15 due to illness, has weakened the LSG attack considerably and the team would be wishing for his early return. Wood still remains the leading wicket taker for them despite missing three games.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, would look to return to winning ways at home after a couple of losses. Full time captain Shikhar Dhawan has missed the last three games due to a shoul-der injury but could return for the LSG fixture.

"He is recovering well and could be in action tomorrow," said a team source.

Punjab Kings, who have been guilty of throwing it

whatever Abhishek Nayar (KKR assistant coach) tells, it always works for me. They

part of India's disappointing campaign in the T20 World Cup in the UAE, had a forgettable IPL last year when he took only six wickets in 11 in every ball you bowl and

games.

both have played a very good role in my comeback."

Chakravarthy, who was

Maxwell, Mahipal Lomror and Dinesh Karthik, said he had prepared well for the



"I did watch videos of previous matches when I played against RCB. I could see technical aspects of their batsmen, where they were targeting. I was focusing on that," said Chakravarthy who is in top

Sunrisers Hyderabad all-Washington four among most wicket tak-Sundar was on Thursday ruled ers this season so far with 13 scalps from eight matches. out of the remainder of this IPL You have to be confident due to a hamstring injury, dealing a big blow to the struggling team.

even if you slip in your con-

Washington Sundar ruled out of remainder of IPL due to hamstring injury

> ability for the rest of the IPL. Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the IPL 2023 due to a hamstring injury. Speedy recovery, Washi," the franchise tweeted.

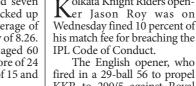
The 23-year-old bowling all-rounder has played seven matches so far and picked up three wickets at an average of 48.66 and an economy of 8.26. With the bat, he managed 60 runs with a highest score of 24 not out at an average of 15 and a strike rate of 100.

The Tamil Nadu player had also faced injury during the last IPL, suffering split webbing in his bowling hand.

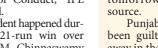
SRH are currently languishing at ninth spot in the 10-team standings with two wins and five losses out of the

Roy fined for Code of Conduct breach in KKR-RCB match

PTI BENGALURU



"Roy admitted to the Level



Naveen ul Haq, Ayush Badoni, Ayesh Khan, Karan Sharma, Yudhvir Charak, Yash Thakur, Romario Shepherd, Mark Wood, Swapnil Singh, Manan Vohra, Daniel Sams, Prerak Mankad, Krishnappa Gowtham, Jaydev Unadkat,

Atharva Taide.

Chakravarthy said at the post-

"More than that, tactics, the crucial wickets of Glenn translate in your bowling.

ne franchi Sundar's injury and his unavailso far.

ches they have played

Stadium, here.

away in the p a conscious effort to raise and Mayank Yadav.

Pakistan wins toss from NZ, opts to field in 1st ODI

AP RAWALPINDI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam won the toss against New Zealand and elected to field first in the first one-day international on

Thursday. An inexperienced New Zealand made a stunning comeback to draw the Twentv20 series 2-2 after Mark Chapman smacked a scintillating century in the fifth and final game on Monday.

Chapman was included in the five-match ODI series after he smashed 290 runs in the T20 series and was dismissed just once.

New Zealand, touring Pakistan without eight frontline white-ball players busy playing in the Indian Premier League, included Henry





for the ODIs. The Black Caps went in with three fast bowlers - Adam Milne, Matt Henry, Blair Tickner - and Rachin Ravindra and Ish Sodhi as their spin options. Pakistan included three

frontline fast bowlers -Nicholls, who was flown in Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf.

Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf and Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz as the spinners.

Pakistan had a setback when batter Haris Sohail was ruled out of the series opener after injuring his left shoulder during practice on Wednesday. The team said Sohail felt discomfort on Thursday and will continue his rehabilitation.

Rawalpindi will also host the second ODI on Saturday. Karachi hosts the remaining three games next week.

LINEUPS:

Pakistan: Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam (captain), Shan Masood, Mohammad Rizwan, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah,

${ m Y}^{ m oung}$ wicket-keeper batter Richa Ghosh and Jemimah Rodrigues have been elevated

PTI NEW DELHI

PTI NEW DELHI

to B category in the BCCI central contracts for the 2022-23 season while the likes of Shikha Pandey and Taniya Bhatia have been dropped. The contract period runs

from October to September but the BCCI made the announce-

ment on Thursday. A player in A category gets paid Rs 50 lakh over and above match fees and Rs 30 lakh and Rs 10 lakh are allotted for B and C category respectively.

The board has kept only three players in the highest category and they include skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, star batter Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma

All three have been retained in the same category while spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad has been demoted to B category. Leg spinner Poonam Yadav, who was in the

BCCI central contracts: Richa, Jemi get promotion; Shikha dropped

A category last year, doesn't have a contract at all after falling down in the pecking order. She last played for India in March 2022.

Veteran pacer Shikha Pandey, who had made a sur-prise comeback for the T20 World Cup in South Africa, finds herself without a contract and so does wicket-keeper Taniya Bhatia. Pacer Renuka Thakur, who

did not have a contract last year, has been bracketed straight into the B category after a stellar season.

Richa Ghosh and Jemimah Rodrigues have moved up from C to B category. New entrants in Category C include pacer Meghna Singh, batter Devika Vaidya, opener S Meghana, Radha Yadav, left-arm pacer Anjali Sarvani and batter



Yastika Bhatia.Harleen Deol and Sneh Rana remain in the lowest category while injury prone all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar has been demoted to C from B.

The BCCI, which announced equal pay for women cricketers last year, has kept the number of contracted to 17.

The full list:

Category A: Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandha and Deepti Sharma.

Category B: Renuka Thakur, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Richa Ghosh, Rajeshwari Gayakwad.

Category C: Meghna Singh, Devika Vaidya, S Meghana, Anjali Sarvani, Pooja Vastrakar, Sneh Rana, Radha Yadav, Harleen Deol and Yastika Bhatia.

Madushka, Mendis double tons maintain Sri Lanka control Mathews at midwicket off

AP 📕 GALLE

 $\mathbf{N}^{\mathrm{ishan}\,\mathrm{Madushka}\,\mathrm{and}\,\mathrm{Kusal}}_{\mathrm{Mendis}\,\mathrm{converted}\,\mathrm{cen}}$ turies into maiden doubles by baton-charging the Ireland bowlers as Sri Lanka sustained control of the second Test here on Thursday.

At stumps on day four, Ireland was 54 for the loss of openers James McCollum (10) and Peter Moor (19) and still 159 runs from making Sri Lanka bat again.

McCollum was brilliantly bowled by offspinner Ramesh Mendis and Moor was dismissed when Angelo Mathews held a superb low catch at

short extra cover.

Sri Lanka was pushing for a 100th test win and series sweep with the benefit of home advantage and a fifth-day pitch. Propelled by Madushka's

205 and Mendis' 245, Sri Lanka declared its first innings on 705-3 - a new ground record immediately after Mathews notched his 15th and fastest

century. The previous highest total at Galle was 638 by Bangladesh in 2013.

Mathews was unbeaten on 100 off 114 balls after hitting four sixes and six boundaries Dhananjaya de Silva, who replaced an injured Dinesh

Chandimal, was 12 not out.

Sri Lanka started the day on 357-1, still 135 runs behind Ireland's first innings total of 492, and batted with complete control and clear intention to bump Ireland out of the match.

The first session saw Mendis reach his ninth Test century, and his second in a row against the Irish.

Mendis and Madushka added 132 runs on the morning of day four and seven runs after lunch before Andy McBrine ended their stand by removing Madushka for 205.

A length ball pitching around leg stump hit Madushka in front. The umpire was



unmoved but a video review was decisive. The Madushka-Mendis stand was worth 268 runs and Madushka hit 22 pay a big price. While Madushka played a boundaries and one six in his nearly eight-hour vigil.

"I always look to play risk-free cricket. That helps me get the double century," Madushka said.

"I scored 1,000 runs in the last domestic season and also a double century and a century against England Lions early this year to earn this place in the national side. I am happy I got to bat at the top." The Irish should have had

third wicket soon after but James McCollum dropped attempt and Mendis was gone for 245.

Mendis stitched 133 runs for the third wicket with Mathews, who was happy to continue piling up quick runs.

composed innings, Mendis batted ruthlessly, hitting 11 sixes, one short of the world record by Pakistan great Wasim Akram against Zimbabwe, and 17 fours.

Graham Hume. Mathews,

dropped on 1, made the Irish

Mendis surpassed the previous highest number of sixes by a Sri Lankan - Kumar Sangakkara's eight against Bangladesh in 2014 - and was out at long off going for a 12th

Matthew Humphreys completed the catch at the second

Chandimal was batting on 13 when he injured his right shoulder following a hard land-

ing while diving to the crease. He was taken to hospital for an X-ray. This is the first time four Sri Lanka batters scored centuries in the same innings, and only the third time in test history after India and Pakistan. Beside Madushka, Mendis, and Mathews, skipper Dimuth Karunaratne made 115 on day