

OPINION 6

DESIGN CITIES THAT WELCOME ALL

WORLD 8

TRUMP PLEADS NOT GUILTY TO ELECTION CHARGES

MONEY 10

CURBS ON LAPTOP, PC IMPORTS TO CHECK IT HARDWARE LOOPHOLES

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY AUGUST 5, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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SC stays Rahul conviction, paves way for LS re-entry

Trial judge gave no reason for 2-yr jail: Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the conviction of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a 2019 defamation case over his Modi surname remark, thereby paving the way for the revival of his Lok Sabha membership.

Rahul had persistently refused to apologise for his remark and urged the Supreme Court to stay his conviction in the criminal defamation case, asserting his innocence.

The bench, consisting of Justices BR Gavai, PS Narasimha, and Sanjay Kumar, noted that the trial court judge had convicted Rahul without providing any reason, except for mentioning an admonishment by the apex court in a contempt case.

The top court had previously closed the contempt proceedings against Rahul relating to his "chowkidar chor hai" remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in connection with the Rafale case after the senior Congress leader offered an unconditional apology and was warned to be more careful in the future.

The bench said, "Regarding the conviction, it is to be noted that the maximum sentence for an offence punishable under section 499 (defamation) of the Indian Penal Code is two years of imprisonment or a fine or both, and the trial judge has awarded the maximum sentence of two years."

"Other than the admonition by the Supreme Court in a contempt case, no other reasons were given by the trial judge for this conviction. It is significant because it is only due to this maximum sentence imposed by the trial judge that the provisions of the Representation of People Act have come into play.

"Had the sentence been one day shorter, these provisions would not have been applicable, especially considering that the offence is non-cognizable, bailable, and com-



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge at AICC headquarters

Ranjan Dimri

poundable. The trial court judge was expected to provide some reasons for imposing the maximum sentence. Despite the appellate court and high court dismissing the stay on conviction through voluminous pages, these aspects were not considered in their orders," the bench explained.

Referring to its earlier order in the contempt case involving Rahul, the apex court observed that while filing his affidavit in the contempt petition, he should have been more cautious.

The apex court further noted that Rahul's conviction and subsequent disqualification not only affected his right to continue in public life but also impacted the rights of the electorate who had elected him to represent their constituency.

"Though the utterances were not in good taste, a person in public life is expected to exercise caution while making public speeches. Taking these factors into consideration, along with the absence of any reasons given by the trial judge for imposing the maximum sentence, the order of conviction needs to be stayed pending final adjudication," the bench declared.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Rahul, emphasised that his client is not a hardened criminal and has never been convicted despite several cases filed against him by BJP workers.

Cong celebrates



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A jubilant Congress celebrated the triumph of their leader Rahul Gandhi in the Supreme Court on Friday, facilitating his reinstatement as a Member of Parliament with slogans like — "Phir Se Chalegi Sawalon Ki Andhi; Jab Sansad Mein Lautenge Rahul" (the storm of questions will revisit when Rahul will be back to Parliament).

Congress workers gathered outside the AICC office in the national Capital as well as the regional offices across the country with party flags and cutouts of Rahul and his images from the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Big celebrations were reported from the States where the party is in power. The Congress official

Twitter handle shared a picture of Rahul and captioned it, "Aa Raha Hun...Sawaal Jaari Rahenge" which translates to "coming... questions will continue."

Rahul, himself in his initial remarks post the court pronouncements said, "Come what may, my duty remains the same. Protect the idea of India."

Celebrations broke out at the Congress headquarters in the Capital and in Wayanad, where Congress workers distributed sweets in celebration of the comeback of their MP.

Congress MP and leader of the party in Lok Sabha Adhir Rajan Chaudhary, along with other Congress leaders, was seen celebrating the SC judgment outside the Parliament, raising slogans of victory.

Continued on Page 2

Gyanvapi: SC won't forbid ASI's survey

Non-invasive scientific study to determine if structure was built on temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday declined to stay the Allahabad High Court's order permitting the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a scientific survey at the Gyanvapi mosque complex to determine if the 17th-century structure was built upon a pre-existing temple, despite objections from the Muslim side that the exercise would "reopen wounds of the past".

The bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, stressed that the ASI must avoid any invasive actions during the survey.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the ASI and the Uttar Pradesh Government, assured the court



A team of ASI arrives to conduct scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises, in Varanasi, on Friday. ASI began survey to determine whether the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple

PTI

that the survey would not involve any excavation or harm to the structure.

"It is clarified on behalf of the ASI, represented by the solicitor general, that as a matter of fact, the entire survey will be completed without any excavation at the site and without causing any destruction to the structure," the bench stated.

The court acknowledged that the evidentiary value of the ASI's scientific survey would be subject to examination during the lawsuit, including cross-examination, and thus, the report of the ASI alone would not conclusively determine the

disputed matters.

The bench concurred with the High Court's view on the role of court-appointed commissioners and ordered that the survey be conducted using "non-invasive" methods. The ASI's report will be submitted to the trial court, and the final decision will be made by the district judge.

During the hearing, the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid committee, representing the Muslim body, expressed reservations about the ASI survey at the Gyanvapi mosque, asserting that it delves into history and "reopens wounds of the

past". Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi argued that the ASI's exercise of "digging into history" violates the Places of Worship Act and infringes upon fraternity and secularism.

The bench responded, "You can't oppose every interlocutory order on the same ground, and your objections will be decided during the course of the hearing."

On Thursday, the High Court dismissed a petition filed by the Gyanvapi committee, challenging a district court order directing the ASI to conduct the survey to determine if the mosque was built upon a pre-existing temple. On the same day, the mosque panel approached the Supreme Court against the HC order, and the Hindu side also filed a caveat.

The mosque's "wazukhana", where a structure claimed by Hindu litigants to be a "shivaling", will not be part of the survey following an earlier Supreme Court order protecting that spot in the complex. Hindu activists contend that a temple existed at the site earlier and was demolished in the 17th century on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

HC ex-judge Jayant Nath DERC interim chairperson

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the ongoing feud between the Delhi Government and the Lieutenant Governor over the appointment of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) chairperson, the Supreme Court on Friday appointed former Delhi High Court judge Justice Jayant Nath as the interim chairperson of the Commission.

Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, leading the bench, directed the LG and the Chief Minister of Delhi to consult with Justice (ret'd) Nath to determine the honorarium payable to him.

The bench, which also included Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, acknowledged that both the counsel representing the Delhi Government and the office of the LG had jointly requested the court to nominate a former judge to assume the responsibilities of the DERC chairperson.

Continued on Page 2

202 held, illegal houses in Nuh's riot-hit areas razed

PTI ■ GURUGRAM/CHANDIGARH

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday said 202 people have been arrested so far and 80 taken into preventive detention in connection with the communal clashes in Nuh.

He also said the way bullets were fired from hillocks and stones collected on rooftops of buildings indicates that Nuh violence was pre-planned. In all, police have so far filed 102 FIRs in the matter.

"I want to assure you that anyone involved in the violence won't be spared. It is a big game plan... every person had a lathi in his hand. Were these being distributed for free? Someone must have arranged these. Bullets were being fired. From where did weapons come...? We will go to the depth of the matter," Vij told reporters in Ambala, adding, the detainees are being questioned.

Meanwhile on Thursday authorities bulldozed about 250 shanties in Tauru town and other "encroachments" in Haryana's Nuh district, as the State's Home Minister Anil Vij indicated that demolitions can also be part of action against those involved in communal clashes.

These include shanties in



A group of women sits on a roadside as RAF personnel stand guard to maintain law & order during Friday prayers, at Badshahpur area in Gurugram on Friday

PTI

Tauru town demolished on Thursday evening and seven houses on Friday which were along the route on which a VHP procession was attacked earlier this week.

But even though Nuh Deputy Commissioner Prashant Panwar denied that the demolition was linked to the recent violence, Vij later hinted otherwise. "Ilaj mein bulldozer bhi ek karavayi hai (bulldozer is part of the treatment)," the Minister said at a press conference in Chandigarh.

Nuh officials said most of the houses demolished on Friday were on the way to the Nalhar Shiv temple where the

violence occurred during the procession.

The official said five acres of forest department land behind the Nalhar Shiv temple was freed of encroachments, besides six acres of forest land in Punhana, one acre of land in Dhobi Ghat and two acres of land in Nangal Mubarikpur.

Nuh Superintendent of Police Varun Singla and Deputy Commissioner Prashant Panwar have been transferred. Singla was on leave when communal clashes broke out in the district on Monday. Narendra Bijarniya, who was holding the additional charge in Singla's absence, is the new SP of Nuh.

When will disqualification be revoked?

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

With Parliament set to debate the no-confidence motion against the Government next week, Congress leaders are demanding the immediate reinstatement of Rahul Gandhi as an MP in Parliament. All eyes are now on the Lok Sabha Secretariat as to when it decides

to restore Rahul's Lower House membership.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Rahul was disqualified as an MP within 24 hours after the Gujarat court verdict. Now let us see in how many hours he is reinstated. This judgment has come from Delhi... The distance between the Supreme Court and Parliament is hardly a kilometre... So I hope he

is reinstated perhaps by night... whether it is done today... how much time it will take... we have to see... We will await his (Speaker's) order."

Soon after the court order, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury met Speaker Om Birla and urged him to restore Rahul's membership.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat said it will consider revoking

the suspension of Rahul upon receiving a copy of the Supreme Court order.

Rahul could return to Parliament as early as on Monday, subject to the issuance of a formal notice by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

The notice will say his suspension from the Lok Sabha has been removed following the Supreme Court decision.

Continued on Page 2

Modi to lay foundation stone for facelift of 508 rly stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a historic initiative, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for the redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the length and breadth of the country on Sunday.

These 508 stations are spread across 27 States and Union Territories, including 55 each in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, 49 in Bihar, 44 in Maharashtra, 37 in West Bengal, 34 in Madhya Pradesh, 32 in Assam, 25 in Odisha, 22 in Punjab, 21 each in Gujarat and Telangana, 20 in Jharkhand, 18 each in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, 15 in Haryana, and 13 in Karnataka.



among others.

The entire Railways machinery is working to pull off this mammoth logistical exercise what is slated to be the biggest ever foundation stone laying exercise in one go as the PM will lay it through the virtual programme. Spread across nearly all the States, these stations vary in size and importance, encompassing both well-known landmarks and lesser-known railway heads.

Among the stations to be

redeveloped are Chandigarh, Delhi Cantt, Kalka, Faridabad, Jammu Tawi, Rewari, Rohtak, Raipur, Bilaspur, Khajuraho, Jodhpur, Kota, Bharatpur, and Bhuj in North India. In the Northeast, stations like Assam's Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Lumding, and Meghalaya's Mendipathar are included. Bihar's Muzaffarpur, Bapudham Motihari, as well as Shornur and Kasargod in Kerala, are also part of the redevelopment programme.

The redevelopment plan will be carried out at a cost of more than ₹24,470 crore. The master plans are being prepared for the development of these stations as "City Centres," with proper integration of both sides of the city.

Manipur curfew relaxed, unlawful bunkers removed

Mob loots weapons from police armoury; 25 hurt in fresh clashes

PTI ■ IMPHAL

The Manipur police on Friday said joint forces have conducted search operations in vulnerable and fringe areas of the strife-torn State and destroyed seven illegal bunkers after fresh violence broke out across various districts.

The State Government, however, relaxed the curfew in Imphal East and West districts for seven hours from 5 am to facilitate common people to purchase essential items, officials said.

"Security Forces conducted search operations in the vulnerable and fringe areas of the State. Joint security forces con-

ducted operation in Koutruk hill range and destroyed 07 (seven) illegal bunkers," the state police said on Twitter.

Following the violence in several districts of the ethnic riot-hit State, the administration had on Thursday imposed a total curfew in the twin districts of Imphal as a precautionary measure, withdrawing relaxations announced earlier.

The curfew was relaxed on Friday from 5 am to 12 pm "to facilitate the general public to purchase essential commodities, including medicines and food items," according to orders issued by district magistrates of Imphal East and West.

A 35-year-old woman was



injured late on Thursday in an exchange of fire between unidentified gunmen and State forces at Terakhongsangbi in Bishnupur, a district official said.

The woman, identified as Aribam Wahida Bibi, suffered a bullet injury on his hand and she has been undergoing treatment at a hospital in Imphal, he

said.

Earlier on Thursday, a mob looted the armoury at the headquarters of the 2nd India Reserve Battalion (IRB) located at Naranseina in Bishnupur district, officials said.

More than 19,000 rounds of bullets of different calibres, an AK series assault rifle, three 'Ghaatak' rifles, 195 self-load-

ing rifles, five MP-5 guns, 16 9mm pistols, 25 bulletproof jackets, 21 carbines, 124 hand grenades among others were looted by the mob, they said.

Over 25 people were injured in clashes as Army and RAF personnel fired tear gas shells in Kangvai and Phougachao areas in Bishnupur on Thursday to stop processions from proceeding to a proposed burial site, violating restrictions on gatherings.

The Kuki-Zomi organisation, Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum, had planned the burial of 35 people, who were killed in ethnic riots in the state at a site in Haolai Khopi village of Churachandpur, resulting in tension in many districts.

The High Court of Manipur had ordered that the status quo be maintained at the proposed burial site.

Shivpal may contest LS poll against Modi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party leader Shivpal Singh Yadav, the uncle of party president Akhilesh Yadav, is likely to be the candidate of Opposition alliance INDIA from Varanasi against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister Modi will be contesting the Lok Sabha election for the third consecutive time from Varanasi in 2024. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Varanasi in 2014 and 2019.

Sources close to Shivpal Yadav indicated that if the opposition alliance approves, he is willing to contest from Varanasi.

Shivpal Yadav, however, said here on Friday that INDIA candidate would contest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the coming Lok Sabha election from the Varanasi parliamentary seat.

It is also being speculated in SP that Shivpal Yadav may also contest the Lok Sabha



election from Azamgarh. Mulayam Singh Yadav had contested and won this parliamentary seat in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Akhilesh Yadav was also elected from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat.

Shivpal Yadav claimed that the SP will win at least 50 seats in Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. There are a total of 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP.

The SP had contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party and won only five

seats, while the BSP won 10 seats.

Targeting Suheldev Bhatti of Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar who joined the National Democratic Alliance recently, Shivpal said, "Rajbhar has lost the trust of the people. He is very ambitious and a person with an unstable mindset who can say anything anytime to anyone."

The SBSP had contested the 2022 UP assembly elections in alliance with the SP. He, however, walked out of the alliance soon after the polls.

Bombay HC stunned as Justice Deo announces resignation in courtroom

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Justice Rohit B. Deo, the second senior-most Judge of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, announced his resignation in the open court room on Friday taking the legal circles by utter surprise.

Justice Deo was a part of the bench that had discharged Delhi University former professor G.N. Saibaba and five others in the Maoist link case in October last year, before the Supreme court suspended the HC bench's discharge order a few days later.

Making a brief announcement about his resignation, Justice Deo -- who was due to retire as the High Court judge in December 2025 -- apologised to the lawyers present and said he could not work against his self-respect.

Justice Deo -- who was heading a division bench along with Justice M. W. Chandwani at the time of his announcement about his resignation -- told all those present in the court room in Nagpur: "I am sorry to tell



you that I have submitted my resignation. I can't work against my self-respect...."

It may be recalled that on October 14, 2022, a division bench of Justice Deo and Justice Anil Pansare had discharged Prof. G. N. Saibaba, a former Delhi University faculty, and five others accused in an alleged Maoist links case.

While discharging Saibaba and five others, the HC bench had said that due process of law cannot be sacrificed at the altar of "perceived peril to national security". The bench directed the convicts to be released forthwith from jail unless they are accused in any other case.

The HC bench said the sanction order issued to prosecute the accused in the case under the stringent provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

(UAPA) was "bad in law and invalid", allowed the Prosecution to obtain proper sanction to try them again.

Later on April 19, 2023, the Supreme Court set aside the Nagpur HC bench's order and remanded the case back with specific directions to assign it to another bench for hearing it afresh.

While suspending the order passed by the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, the Supreme Court noted that the high court had not gone into the merits of the case or that of the trial court judgment convicting them or "the seriousness and gravity of the offences for which the accused were convicted".

"The HC did not look into merits, but found a shortcut," the bench said in its observations.

The apex court said: "...the offences are very serious against the sovereignty and integrity of the country" and further said that it "is prima facie of the opinion that a detailed scrutiny is required so far as the impugned judgment and order passed by the High Court is concerned".

Wayanad celebrates with rallies, dance after Rahul's SC verdict



PTI ■ WAYANAD

Sweets came out first, much before jubilant Congress workers took out rallies -- many of them dancing -- in all the seven Assembly constituencies of the Lok Sabha segment to celebrate the legal victory of the "Prince of Wayanad". The scenes were more or less the same across the constituency on Friday, 4 August, soon after television channels aired the Supreme Court verdict, staying the Surat trial court's conviction of Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 "Modi surname" defamation case.

Wayanad has been expecting - and waiting for - this moment, ever since the Lok

Sabha secretariat disqualified him on 23 March, after the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate HH Varma sentenced him to two years in jail - the maximum possible sentence in a defamation case, and also the minimum required to disqualify a convicted MP from the House.

All political parties in Kerala, barring the BJP, had then condemned the disqualification.

"Ramifications of the trial court's order are wide. Not only was Rahul Gandhi's right to continue in public life affected but also that of the electorate who elected him," the Supreme Court said while staying the order on Friday.

Mamata hails SC order on Rahul

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In what was being read as a shrewd and smart move by Mamata Banerjee the Bengal Chief Minister on Friday delivered a Congress-bashing tool to the BJP even as she congratulated Rahul Gandhi following the Supreme Court order staying his conviction in a 2019 defamation case over his alleged remark on the surname 'Modi'.

"I am happy with the news about the MP-ship of



Rahul Gandhi. This will further strengthen the resolve of the INDIA alliance to unitedly fight for our motherland and win. A victory of the judiciary!" Banerjee tweeted. This, even as her party MP Mohua Moitra added more sting to the Chief Minister's

comment saying, "The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice."

Incidentally the Bengal unit of the Congress Party in unison with the CPI(M) has been engaged in a fierce turf war with the TMC and had shown remarkable results in the recently-held panchayat elections winning a little more than 21 per cent votes and finishing just 1 per cent behind the BJP clearly threatening the saffron outfit's place as the principal Opposition party.

The State BJP leaders immediately lapped up Banerjee's statement to nail Pradesh Congress' alleged hypocrisy even as its leaders cried "Bengal mein kutte ... Dilli mein dosti (battle in Bengal and friendship in Delhi)" asking the "Congress supporters and voters who are being murdered... whose houses are being burnt down and whose women are being insulted every day by the TMC goons" to stand behind the BJP

in its fight against the TMC's corruption and goonda raj.

"This is the same Mamata Banerjee who lost no opportunity to attack Rahul Gandhi ... this is the same Congress and particularly Adhir Chowdhury who promised not to bow before the Trinamool Congress ... and relying on his promise the poor supporters of the Congress fought against the TMC goons often getting murdered in the process ... and now they are embracing each other in Delhi just to wrest power," said BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya asking the Congress supporters to reject the tri-colour outfit and join the saffron party.

"Only the BJP can provide you relief from the TMC misrule ... only BJP will honestly fight against the misrule perpetrated by Mamata Banerjee ... neither the CPI(M) nor the Congress will fight against the TMC," he said.

Raigad cops register FIR against ECLFL for abetting Desai's suicide

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Two days after the debt-trapped Bollywood Art director Nitin Desai committed suicide, the Raigad district police on Friday registered a First Information Report against ECL Finance Limited (ECLFL) that had lent money to Desai and five of its officials for allegedly abetting the suicide.

On a day when Nitin Desai's funeral was held at his Karjat studio, the Khalapur police in Raigad district -- acting on a complaint lodged by the deceased art director's wife Neha Desai -- registered the FIR under IPC sections 306 (abetting suicide) and 34 (common intention) against the ECLFL and five of its officers.

In her complaint, Neha Desai had alleged that the ECLFL officers were harassing Desai for the outstanding loans, and owing to the mental stress caused by the harassment, her husband had ended his life.

Fifty-seven-year-old Desai was found hanging at his N.D. Studios at Karjat in Raigad district in the early hours of Wednesday, a week after the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) ordered the initiation of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against his company



over repayment of accumulated debt totalling to Rs 252 crore. A preliminary report of an autopsy conducted at Mumbai's Sir J. J. Hospital on Thursday confirmed that Art Director Desai had committed suicide 'by hanging'.

In a related development, the Khalapur police are looking into the unsubstantiated claim that made by one of the associates of late Art Director Babu More that Desai had left behind a 'recorded suicide message' in which he has named certain businessmen and persons who might have allegedly abetted his suicide.

Desai was reportedly under tremendous mental pressure over the insolvency proceedings launched against him. He had reportedly confessed to his close aides that some businessmen were allegedly harassing him over financial matters, which might have led to his

taking an extreme step.

Earlier on Thursday, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis -- who holds the State Home portfolio -- had said in the Maharashtra Assembly that the police would look into all the angles and circumstances leading to Desai's suicide.

"We will investigate all angles whether he was pressurized. We will see if any things can be done for him as far as the studio is concerned. At present I can't make any announcement on it. We will also investigate the people whom he used to meet too," Fadnis had said.

It may be recalled that the Mumbai branch of the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) had in its July 25 2023 ordered initiation of "Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)" against Nitin Desai's company

ND's Art World Private Limited for an unresolved debt totalling Rs 252.48 crore. The NCLT had appointed Jitender Kohari as the interim resolution professional to carry out the steps mentioned under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

The petition against ND's Art World Private Limited was originally filed by financial creditor CFM Asset Reconstruction Private Limited against corporate debtor ND's Art World Private Limited over the unresolved debt. The unresolved debt of Rs 252.48 crore was later assigned to M/s Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company Limited in 2020.

ND's Art World had obtained a loan of Rs 150 crore from ECL Finance Limited (ECLFL) in November 2016. Various security documents securing the loan were also executed by debtors, Nitin Desai, his wife Naina Desai, and KND Investments and Finance Private Limited.

Later in 2018, the company again borrowed Rs 31 crore from ECLFL. The total loan, therefore, aggregated to Rs 181 crore. ND's Art World was classified as SMA-2 in the books of the ECLFL on March 30, 2020, because of irregular and delayed payments of principal instalments.

Form No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/1458/2022
Exh. No. 16950
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
ICICI BANK LIMITED VS HIMANSHU GUPTA

Publication Form No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/121/2022
Exh. No.: 18417
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
ICICI BANK LIMITED VS KAMLESH GUPTA

To, (3) DEFENDANT NO. 3- M/S AVALON GROUP HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT 9TH FLOOR, S.A.S. TOWER, NEAR MEDI CITY, SECTOR 38, GURUGRAM, HARYANA - 122001 ...DEFENDANT NO. 3 SUMMONS

To, (3) NINEX DEVELOPER LTD. RES. OFFICE F/05, NINEX CITY MART, SOHONA ROAD, SECTOR 49, GURUGRAM, GURGAON, HARYANA Also At: GOPI RAM BUILDING, VILLAGE SULTANPUR, NEW DELHI, NEW DELHI, DELHI SUMMONS

WHEREAS, OA/1458/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 16/03/2023. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 5632674/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).

WHEREAS, OA/121/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 08/06/2023. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 1,24,17,034/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under: (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under: (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;

(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application; (iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;

(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application; (iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;

(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 17/07/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 24/03/2023.

(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by way of sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 19/08/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 09/06/2023.

Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons

Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons.

49% surge in conjunctivitis check-up among youths

New Delhi: As the country witnessed heavy rainfall and flooding over the past few weeks, there was a substantial increase in overall ophthalmology consultations, surging from 1 per cent last year to 2.6 per cent this year. Most cases are linked to conjunctivitis among young adults aged between 25 and 35 years, with an increase of 49 per cent, according to a study by MediBuddy, digital healthcare platform.



छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) 492002

// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली की अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथा संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि: **सेसर देवरहा लाईन स्टोन क्वारी (प्रो. श्री रामगोपाल विक्रमगोपाल, ग्राम- देवरहा, तहसील- जाजगीर, जिला- जाजगीर-चापा (छ.ग.)) द्वारा कुल क्षेत्रफल - 4.995 हेक्टेयर में प्रस्तावित चूना पत्थर (गोण खनिज) उत्खनन क्षमता - 1,50,000 टन प्रतिवर्ष के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृत हेतु लोक सुनवाई बाबत छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल में आवेदन किया गया है।** उक्त प्रस्तावित परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति / सुझाव / टीका-टिप्पणी इस अधिसूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के भीतर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छ.ग. पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, बिलासपुर में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। इस परियोजना के लिए पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 06/09/2023 को समय प्रातः 11:00 बजे, स्थान- नवीन शासकीय प्राथमिक शाला परिसर देवरहा, तहसील-जाजगीर, जिला- जाजगीर-चापा (छ.ग.) में नियत की गई है। सूचित हो कि लोक सुनवाई के दौरान भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली के ऑफिस मेमोरेण्डम F No. 22-25 / 2000-IA, III दिनांक 14.09.2020 तथा कोरोना वायरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन कराया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथासंशोधित) के प्रावधानों के अनुसार डाफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट कार्यपालकसार की प्रति (हिन्दी व अंग्रेजी में) एवं इसकी सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) जन सामान्य के अवलोकन / पठन हेतु कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला- जाजगीर-चापा, मुख्य कार्यालय अधिकारी, कार्यालय जिला पंचायत, जाजगीर, जिला-जाजगीर-चापा, अनुविभागीय अधिकारी (रा.), कार्यालय अनुविभागीय अधिकारी (रा.) जाजगीर, जिला-जाजगीर-चापा, महाप्रबंधक, कार्यालय जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र चापा, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, व्यापार विहार पं. दीनदयाल उपग्राम पार्क के पास, बिलासपुर, मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी, कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिसर, चापा, जिला जाजगीर-चापा (छ.ग.), सरपंच / सचिव, कार्यालय ग्राम पंचायत- देवरहा, पिपौडा, जर्वे, बिराहनी, लच्छनपुर, मडवा, तेंदुभाटा, पीथमपुर, गौध, तहसील- जाजगीर, जिला - जाजगीर-चापा (छ.ग.) डायरेक्टर, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन, मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, वायु विंग, जोरबाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, मुख्य वन संरक्षक, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, अरण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) में रखी गई है।

सदस्य सचिव छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

Cong celebrates...

From Page 1
"Victory, Victory! Rahul ji ki victory!" they said. "Aaj nahi toh kal, nahi toh parson sachai ki jeet hoti hai. But my path is clear. I have clarity in my mind about what I have to do and what is my work. I thank the people who helped us. I also thank the people for their love and support," Rahul said in the Press conference following Supreme Court's decision. Rahul said, "I know what my path is. Thank everyone who supported us." Along with the former Congress chief, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge termed it a joyous day for the party and a win for democracy, constitution & truth. "I welcome SC's decision, it is an example that justice can be served...It is not just Congress leader Rahul's win but the entire country's...He is a person who fights for truth, national interest, the rights of youth & the price rise in the country...Rahul was disqualified within 24 hours. < Let's see in how many hours he is reinstated," Kharge said at the Press conference and exchanged sweets with Rahul, Adhir, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh, and Gandhi scion's lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi.

When disqualification will be...

From Page 1
If Rahul returns to the Lok Sabha by Tuesday, he may take part in the debate on the no-confidence motion. "Rahul may speak on the motion if the Speaker restores his membership by Monday or Tuesday," Congress leader Tarun Gogoi told The Pioneer. However, he mentioned that it has now to be seen how the Lower House administration responds to the judicial orders, and a favourable decision is taken. "Hope we don't see any partisan activities," he added. Rahul's case has parallels to a recent case of Lakshadweep NCP MP Mohammed Faizal. While a trial in a murder case was ongoing, Faizal was elected to the Lok Sabha in 2019. On January 11 this year, a Sessions Court sentenced Faizal and to 10 years in jail and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh each on them in the attempt-to-murder case. On January 13, the Lok Sabha Secretariat notified Faizal's disqualification as an MP under Section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 - the same provision under which Rahul was disqualified following his conviction. Hours ahead of the hearing in the Supreme Court on March 29, the Lok Sabha Secretariat, in an order, said, "In view of the order dated 25.01.2023 of the High Court

HC ex-judge...

From Page 1
"Accordingly, we request Justice Jayant Nath, a former judge of the High Court of Delhi, to discharge the duties of the office of chairperson of DERC," the bench stated. During the hearing, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, representing the Delhi Government, proposed that the court appoint a person to the post without revealing the names put forward by either side. "Please pick up anybody your lordships like," Singhvi suggested, with agreement from the counsel representing the LG office.

Wayanad celebrates with rallies, dance after Rahul's SC verdict

announced a by-election to fill the Lakshadweep seat. On January 25, two days before the scheduled by-poll, the Kerala High Court suspended Faizal's conviction and his 10-year sentence. The EC subsequently announced that it had decided to "withhold" the by-election in Lakshadweep. Following this, as he was not reinstated as an MP, Faizal went to the Supreme Court against the Lok Sabha Secretariat's "unlawful action." Hours ahead of the hearing in the Supreme Court on March 29, the Lok Sabha Secretariat, in an order, said, "In view of the order dated 25.01.2023 of the High Court of Kerala, the disqualification of Mohammed Faizal P P notified vide Gazette notification no. 21/4/(1)/2023/TO(B) dated the 13th January 2023, in terms of the provisions of Article 102(1)(e) of the Constitution of India read with Section 9 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, has ceased to operate subject to further judicial pronouncements." Hence, the Lok Sabha Secretariat on March 29, 2023, issued a notification to restore the membership of Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal P.P after three months of legal tussle. This, however, happened on the day and hours before the Supreme Court was to take Faizal's matter.

Shah's speech on Services Bill revealed animosity: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has strongly criticized the speech by Home Minister Amit Shah in Lok Sabha on Delhi Services Bill and asserted that it revealed the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) deep-seated animosity towards Arvind Kejriwal and the AAP.

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha condemned the Home Minister's choice of words, deeming them unfit for a position of such high authority, drawing a poignant comparison to the standards upheld by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Raghav Chadha pointed out that Amit Shah's speech inadvertently underscored the effective governance delivered



by AAP since 2015. He contended that the introduction of the Delhi Services Bill was a strategic maneuver by the BJP to curb AAP's growing influence following their resounding victory in the 2015 elections, which had left the BJP bereft of political power in Delhi.

Expanding on this per-

spective, Raghav Chadha went on to express his astonishment at the BJP's sudden embrace of historical figures like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, individuals whom the BJP has frequently criticized in the past.

Chadha wryly noted that while referencing these luminaries, the BJP should take heed from the ideology of stalwarts like L.K. Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had championed the cause of full statehood for Delhi.

Turning his attention to the coalition formed by AAP and other parties, he vehemently stressed the unity of the India Bloc, brushing off BJP's attempts to sow discord among the allies. He emphatically re-

firmed their collective commitment to contest the upcoming 2024 elections with unwavering strength and determination.

He also took a swipe at the BJP's confidence in securing victory in the 2024 elections, interpreting it as a veiled attempt to evade accountability for unfulfilled promises. He highlighted the growing public discontent over issues such as job creation, economic growth, and social welfare initiatives, which BJP had pledged to address.

In terms of national stability and communal harmony, Raghav Chadha criticized the BJP for what he characterized as the party's role in exacerbating communal tensions in states like Haryana and

Manipur. He urged the electorate to reject the BJP's politics to safeguard the future well-being of the nation.

Raghav Chadha lamented the recent suspension of AAP MPs from Parliament, raising poignant questions about the BJP's motives behind these actions. He asserted that this was indicative of the BJP's unwillingness to engage with voices that diverge from their own.

In a somewhat defiant tone, he drew parallels between the privilege motion initiated against him and similar actions taken against esteemed leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Indira Gandhi, and Dr. Manmohan Singh, suggesting that being included in this list was a matter of pride

Screen ration card applications for payment of dole: HC to AAP Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the city government to conduct a survey of all pending ration card applications to see if the applicants were entitled to receiving an allowance under the food security law.

Delhi government counsel, in response to petitions seeking approval of applications for issuance of ration cards, said about three lakh people are in the waiting list to get a ration card.

Justice Subramonium Prasad noted that under section 8 of the National Food Security Act, 2013, any person who is entitled to a ration card is also entitled to receive such food security allowance from the state government in terms of the rules and asked the authorities to assess if the petitioners had such entitlement.



The food security law provides for monetary allowance to the beneficiaries who don't have a ration card. It is computed on the basis of a formula that takes into account the minimum support price of foodgrains in a particular market season.

"It is well settled that if a person comes to a Court and gets a declaration of law in his favour, it is expected that the State shall extend the benefit to all similarly placed persons

without them having to approach the Court," the court said in a recent order. "The State Government is, therefore, directed to conduct the survey of all pending applications to see as to whether they would be entitled to receive the allowance under Section 8 of the Food Security Act," it ordered.

The court asked the authorities to complete the exercise as expeditiously as possible and file a status report in the matter before the next date of hearing.

Petitioners Shabnam and Kanta had moved the high court in 2020 and submitted that the ration card limit under the National Food Security Act, 2013 approved for Delhi is 72,77,995 out of which only 72,22,236 applicants have been approved and a large number of applications filed by those like the petitioners were pending.

Court denies Sisodia interim bail in Delhi excise policy case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday deferred hearing for September 4 on the interim bail pleas of AAP leader Manish Sisodia in two Delhi excise policy cases being probed by the CBI and ED.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti perused the medical records of Sisodia's wife, and said she is "fairly stable" and, therefore, it will consider the interim bail pleas of former deputy chief minister along with regular bail pleas in the cases.

Sisodia has sought interim bail on grounds of his wife's ill health. On July 14, the top court had sought responses of the CBI and the ED on the interim bail pleas of Sisodia in the cases. Sisodia, who held the excise portfolio among the many that he handled as the deputy chief minister, was



arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on February 26 for his alleged role in the "scam". He has been in custody since then.

The ED arrested him in a money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on March 9 after questioning him in Tihar Jail. Sisodia resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28. The high court had denied him bail in the CBI case on May 30, saying having been the deputy chief minister and excise minister, he is a "high-profile" person who has the potential to influence the witnesses.

No Friday namaz at G'gram Jama Masjid

Gurugram: No Friday namaz was held at Gurugram's Jama Masjid and the smaller mosques saw thin attendance, days after the city witnessed scattered incidents of violence after the communal clash in neighbouring Nuh district.

Police said there was no fresh incident of violence in the city but several Muslim organisations had asked members of the community to offer namaz at home and avoid gathering at designated public places which resulted in thin attendance at the mosques that were open.

"The Jamiat-e-Ulema and other Muslim organisations had called upon people to offer namaz from home," Assistant Commissioner of Police, Crime, Varun Dahiya said. Six people, including two home guards and a cleric, died in the clashes that erupted in Muslim-dominated Nuh when a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was attacked by mobs on Monday. The toll includes a cleric

who was killed in an attack on a mosque in Gurugram.

In the wake of the violence, heavy police and central forces were deployed near mosques and open places designated for namaz here on Friday, but the Jama Masjid and the Anjuman Masjid, where the cleric was killed, were closed.

"After the violence in Nuh, Sohna and Gurugram, around 70 per cent of Muslim community people migrated from Gurugram.

Mosques in Sarai Alawardi, Chauma, Sheela Colony, Devi Lal Colony and the Idgah near Rajiv Chowk were open and some people gathered there to perform namaz," president of the Muslim Ekta Manch of Gurugram Haji Sahjad Khan said.

"No untoward incident was reported from Gurugram as we had earlier appealed to people to offer Friday prayers from home and nearby mosques," he said. **Staff Reporter**



Congress workers celebrate after the Supreme Court stayed the conviction of party leader Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 criminal defamation case over his 'Modi surname' remark, restoring his status as an MP, in New Delhi on Friday. **Ranjani Dimri | Pioneer**

Court grants Tytler anticipatory bail in 1984 riots case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Friday granted anticipatory bail to Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in a case related to the Pul Bangash killings during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Special Judge Vikas Dhull also imposed certain conditions on Tytler, including that he will not tamper with evidence or leave the country without its permission. The judge granted the relief on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and one surety of the like amount. Three people were killed and a gurdwara was set ablaze in the Pul Bangash area of the national capital on November 1, 1984, a day after the prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. A city court had on July 26 summoned Tytler on August 5 after taking cognisance of a May 20 charge sheet filed by the CBI in the case. While seeking the



relief, Tytler's lawyer had told the court his client was anticipating arrest and he should be granted bail. "The exact time of the crime was not ascertained by the probe agency and multiple closure reports were filed in the case... Delhi Police twice and CBI once said nothing was found against Tytler," Tytler's advocate Manu Sharma told the court. He said the CBI, after having filed a closure report in the case, submitted a charge sheet against Tytler on the basis of the statements of some new witnesses just 11 months before the Lok Sabha elections.

Man stabbed to death, 1 injured during scuffle in Seemapuri

NEW DELHI: A 19-year-old man was stabbed to death while another person got injured in northeast Delhi's Seemapuri as a petty fight between two minor boys from a coaching institute escalated with others getting involved next day, police said Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Rohit Meena said their first received information around 9.20 pm on Thursday that two persons with stab injuries were admitted to the GTB Hospital.

He said when police reached the hospital, Harshit Bhardwaj (19), a resident of DLF Bhopura here, was already declared brought dead, while Shadab (22), a resident of Kalandar Colony here, was undergoing treatment.

He said it all started on Wednesday when Bhardwaj's younger brother, who is a minor, got into an argument with another juvenile and both slapped each other, the DCP said. **Staff Reporter**

RRTS corridor: 2 special steel spans installed in Delhi's Kondali

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation has installed two special steel spans for the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor in the Kondali area here, according to officials.

These steel spans (of bridges) are part of a total of six special span structures that are being installed to cross the Ghazipur drain from New Ashok Nagar towards Anand Vihar. "The combined length of the six special steel spans is 360 metres. Out of these six, two



special steel spans have been successfully installed and work on the third is being done. These two special steel spans (weighing 540 tonnes) have been installed in the Kondli

area, near the New Ashok Nagar RRTS station," a National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) official said. The 82.15-km Regional Rapid

Transit System (RRTS) is a semi-high-speed rail corridor with 24 stations between Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi and Meerut. The special steel spans are being installed where the corridor will cross the Ghazipur drain.

It will also cross over a road near Kondli Chowk. Out of these six special steel spans, three spans are each around 70 metres long and the remaining each are 50 metres long weighing 380 tonnes. "The spans installed parallel to the Ghazipur drain are about 70 metres long and 14 metres

wide. It was placed on pillars, at a height of about six metres from the ground level with the help of big cranes.

Another four spans to be installed in the area are under construction, out of which construction of another 70-metre-long span is almost 50 per cent complete," the NCRTC said. It said a little ahead of these spans, in the direction of Khichripur, an underground ramp is also being constructed, and it will connect this elevated section to the Anand Vihar station through underground tunnels.

Hubby-wife jump off 7th floor of unused building

Noida: A married couple on Friday killed itself jumping off the seventh floor of an unused building, police here said. Police said they were yet to confirm the cause of the suicide by the couple, both aged around 40 years.

The man was working as a watchman in a building in Sector 59 and had been living

in its premises with his wife for the last eight years, an officer said.

"We received information around 1 pm that a watchman and his wife had jumped off the seventh floor of a building. They were taken to a hospital but were declared dead by doctors," an officer from the Sector 58 Police Station said.

The couple hailed from north-east Delhi's Chand Bagh area. Their children lived with their relatives there and not in Noida, the officer added. Their bodies have been sent for a post mortem and further legal proceedings in the case are being carried out, including a probe into the reason behind their committing suicide, police said.

DCW issues notices to city police over sexual assault of two minors

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) has issued notices to the DCPs of south and north-west police districts in connection with sexual assault of two minors in their jurisdiction. A three-and-half-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted at a school in south Delhi's Panchsheel Enclave area, police said on Thursday.

The accused, a resident of Old Gautam Budh Nagar in UP has been arrested and sent to judicial custody, police added.

In another incident, an eight-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a juvenile boy in northwest Delhi's Adarsh Nagar area, police said. The girl is under treatment at a city hospital where Malial met her. **Staff Reporter**

300 rolls of Chinese manjha seized in Delhi; 2 arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two men and recovered 300 rolls of banned Chinese manjha from them, officials said on Friday. The accused have been identified as Mohammad Faizan (22), a resident of Jama Masjid area, and Yaman (19), a resident of Lal Kuan, they said.

Police got information that two people involved in the business of sale/purchase of nylon-based banned Chinese manjha would come near Outer Ring Road, Sarai Kale Khan with a consignment of the banned string, a senior



police officer said. A raid was conducted and the two were apprehended. They were found in possession of five cartons of 300 rolls of prohibited manjha,

the officer said. Faizan disclosed that he had bought the cartons from supplier Jahangir of Sadar Bazar, Meerut and the same were to be delivered to Yaman.

In 2017, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned Chinese manjha in the national capital as it posed a risk to people and animals by cutting through their skin.

In February this year, the Delhi High Court directed the crime branch of the city police to investigate the manufacturing, sale, purchase and storage of Chinese synthetic manjha, used for kite flying, in markets and shops here.

Ambedkar Model UN conference held in Delhi Assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The inaugural Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Model United Nations (DBRAMUN) Conference is being hosted by the Kejriwal Government's Schools of Specialized Excellence-Humanities with the participation of nearly 180 student delegates from seven humanities ASoSEs. The first session of the conference was held on Friday at the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

The MUN aims to empower students to enhance their leadership, negotiation, and public speaking abilities, as well as to raise their awareness about international issues. This preparation is intended to equip them to become responsible, empathetic, and proactive

global citizens. Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel and Education Minister Atishi attended the first day of the Model United Nations and engaged in discussions with the students on various topics.

While addressing the students Atishi said, "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students of our Delhi government schools to be in the central hall of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, where important decisions related to Delhi are taken by the elected representatives of the state.

It is crucial to understand the significance of these chairs in the Delhi Legislative Assembly because when we sit here, we represent the interests and well-being of many people.

Whatever we discuss here has an impact on the lives of numerous individuals residing in Delhi.

This experience will cultivate a sense of responsibility to bring about impactful reforms in various fields such as education and climate change." She added that having a Model United Nations provides students from Delhi government schools with the chance to think beyond textbooks and engage with issues that affect millions of lives.

"If students at such a young age have the opportunity to discuss global issues that impact society, I believe that the time will soon come when some of the participants from this group will occupy seats in the central hall of this Delhi

Legislative Assembly for real and make meaningful decisions for the people of Delhi," she remarked. The Education Minister continued, "Several crucial decisions, such as allocating 25% of the budget for children's education in Delhi, were made in this hall.

Thanks to this decision, Delhi government schools have undergone a transformation, providing students with world-class education. I hope that soon, students from this Model United Nations will step forward and advocate for similar decisions to bring about meaningful societal change."

During the interaction, Delhi Legislative Assembly speaker Ram Niwas Goel shared the history and functions of the assembly and said,

"Participating in events like the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Model United Nations not only broadens your horizons but also prepares you to be informed and responsible citizens.

Your engagement in such meaningful discussions reflects the essence of democratic values and encourages active participation in shaping the future of our society."

The two-day Model United Nations, students will discuss crucial global topics like climate change, refugee crisis, and nuclear disarmament, similar to UN representatives. The students of ASoSEs at DBRAMUN 2023 have formed three committees, which will engage in deliberations on respective topics in both formal and informal groups.

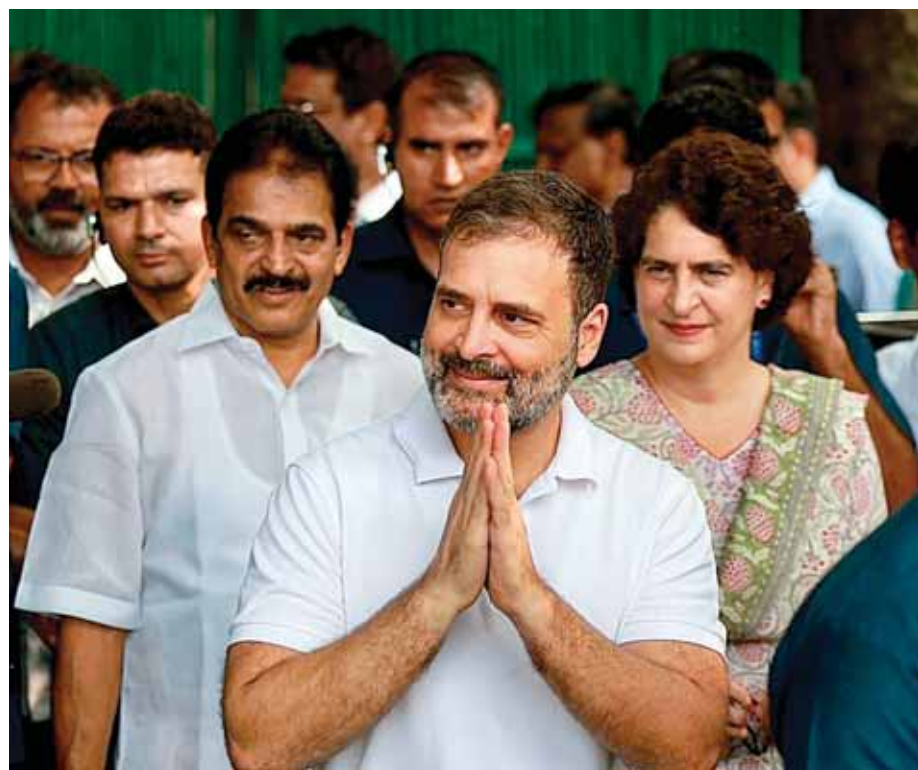
OPP HAILS SC RELIEF TO RAHUL

Opp bloc says it will strengthen people's faith in democracy

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top leaders of the Opposition bloc INDIA on Friday hailed the Supreme Court order staying the conviction of Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case and asserted that the decision reinforced people's trust in the Indian judiciary and democracy and it will further strengthen the resolve of the alliance to unitedly fight and win against the BJP. The Supreme Court on Friday stayed Gandhi's conviction in the 2019 defamation case over his Modi surname remark, paving the way for revival of his Lok Sabha membership.

A three-judge bench of Justices B R Gavai, P S Narasimha and Sanjay Kumar said no reason was given by the trial court judge while convicting Gandhi except that he was admonished by the apex court in a contempt case. Applauding the stay by the apex court, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav expressed his delight through



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at AICC headquarters after the Supreme Court stayed his conviction in the 2019 criminal defamation case over his 'Modi surname' remark, restoring his status as an MP, in New Delhi on Friday. Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi are also seen. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

a tweet, in Hindi, ending with the Sanskrit saying: "Satyamev Jayate (Truth alone triumphs)" and the hashtag "INDIA", denoting the recently formed coalition of parties opposed to

the BJP. "Honourable Supreme Court's judgement on Rahul Gandhi ji is commendable." "But for this shock, the BJP's network thriving on slander would have continued with

the conspiracy to eject many other Opposition leaders from the legislature," Yadav tweeted. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal welcomed the SC stay in the case and said it rein-

forced trust in the Indian democracy. "I welcome Hon'ble Supreme Court's intervention in an unjust defamation case against Rahul Gandhi ji. "It reinforces people's trust in Indian democracy and the judicial system. Congratulations to him and to the people of Wayanad," the AAP national convener said in a tweet. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin hailed the Supreme Court verdict saying it affirmed belief in the judiciary. "Justice prevails! #Wayanad retains #RahulGndhi!" he said in a tweet. "Welcome the Hon'ble #SupremeCourt's decision staying the conviction of dear brother Thiru@RahulGandhi in the criminal defamation case," the Chief Minister said. "This decision re-affirms our belief in the strength of our judiciary and the importance of safeguarding democratic values," he said.

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav said that by staying the sentence, the SC has boosted people's faith in the Indian democracy and judiciary. "The arrogant flag of BJP's negative politics should bite the dust," he said in a tweet. Back in Wayanad, Congress workers welcomed the Supreme Court verdict staying the conviction of Rahul Gandhi and expressed hope

that the Lok Sabha secretariat would soon reinstate Rahul Gandhi as their MP. Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah congratulated the people of Rahul Gandhi's constituency. "Congratulations to the people of Wayanad upon having their representation in the Lok Sabha restored. #RahulGandhi #SupremeCourtOfIndia," he said. Another former chief minister and PDP president, Mehbooba Mufti, said she was glad that Gandhi will be back in the Parliament fighting for the "idea of India."

"I welcome the SC verdict staying @RahulGandhi's conviction in a case that had no legs to stand upon. Glad that he will be back in Parliament fighting for the idea of India," Mufti said in a tweet. The CPI termed the stay on the defamation case "victory of truth against forces of deceit."

"Supreme Court's stay in the defamation case against @RahulGandhi & restoration of his status as MP is victory of truth against forces of deceit. The speed of his disqualification was indicative of attempts to intimidate opposition. However, truth cannot be suppressed for long," CPI general secretary D Raja said in a tweet.

PMLA: ED arrests Shashikant Kumar in Kotak fraud case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has arrested Shashikant Kumar on money laundering charges in the Kotak Mahindra Bank fraud case. The ED initiated investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by Gandhi Maidan police station, Patna under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

It was alleged in the chargesheet that 13 fraudulent transactions totaling to Rs 31.93 crore from the bank account of Competent Authority for Land Acquisition (CALA) cum District Land Acquisition Officer (DLAO) were executed and funds were siphoned off using bank accounts of various shell/dummy entities causing huge loss to government exchequer.

During ED investigation, Sumit Kumar, the then bank manager, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Boring Road Branch, Patna was arrested by ED on July 10. ED investigation revealed that Shashikant Kumar was one of the close associates of Sumit Kumar in siphoning off government funds, the ED said.



"Shashikant Kumar arranged entities and their bank accounts for routing of funds and subsequently facilitated conversion of the same into cash. He assisted Sumit Kumar and his associates in transfer of funds using hawala channels," the ED said.

As a result of an open Look Out Circular (LOC), Shashikant Kumar was detained at the Bhubaneswar airport by the Bureau of Immigration, Bhubaneswar on July 31 while he was returning from Dubai.

He was later handed over to the ED and was arrested in Bhubaneswar on August 2 and later on produced before the Special PMLA Court, Patna on Wednesday. The arrested accused Shashikant Kumar was sent to judicial custody till August 7 and later on the PMLA court through its order on Friday remanded him to ED custody for six days.

Early warning system cut flooding in WB since 2018

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ PNS

The country's first comprehensive city level early warning system, Flood Forecasting and Early Warning System (FFEWS), installed in West Bengal's Kolkata in 2018, has started yielding results. Today due to the highly-advanced warning system, the flooding has been reduced in about 4,800 hectares of land since 2018. It is now expecting further flood reduction in over 6,000 hectares.

The project ensuring flood-resilient Kolkata has found special mention in Niti Aayog's recently released 'Compendium of best practices in water management' report as it helped successfully minimize damage before and during disasters. Before the installation of the system, West Bengal's capital which is high-



ly prone to recurring flooding has been grappling with the flood disaster and its destructive outcomes.

There are several reasons. "Urbanization challenges like encroachment of water bodies, inadequate storm water drainage systems, inadequate solid waste management block the tidal channels, Deltaic

topography and extreme rainfall, besides lack of flood preparedness.

"The aim of the FFEWS was to improve flood resilience of the city, monitor and disseminate flood risk data interventions." The system has been implemented with the help of the Asian Development Bank.

The city level FFEWS is designed to visualize the real time information on temperature, air quality and water stagnation and other climate related data using 400 ultrasonic sensors fixed at key points across the city such as hot-spots identified as vulnerable to inundation during flood events, canals, pumping stations, traffic junctions, and schools. These send real-time data to a cloud-based dashboard.

Community has been involved through installation of shopfront sensors in commer-

cial areas as the project captures real time information on flood and air quality and uploads on a centralised cloud server for processing.

"This data collected can be visualized in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform while warnings can be disseminated to the public through mobile notifications, radio and television broadcasts.

It has also helped reduce impacts from flood-induced traffic congestion as well as cut down economic loss and impacts on livelihood of the locals. There has been improved flood awareness and safety at community level also there is an access to environmental and inundation data at the shop or building-level.

According to a new report, while close to two-thirds of India's population is exposed to

extreme flood events, only a third of these individuals are covered by flood early warning systems (EWSs).

The report also found that while 12 states were highly exposed to extreme flood events, only three of these have a high availability of such systems while eight have low availability, "indicating a gap in the planning for installing flood monitoring and forecasting stations". Worldwide, a large effort is underway to build global capacity for early flood warnings.

Following a 2022 UN report showing that only half of the countries in the world are covered by multi-hazard early warning systems, UN Secretary-General António Guterres had announced that the UN would launch a \$3.1 billion dollar "Early Warnings for All" initiative to fill the gaps.

Inter-Services Org (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill 2023 passed in LS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed a crucial Bill to hasten up synergy and jointness among the three Services to fight modern day war. Known as the Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill - 2023, it will transform the armed forces and pave the way for setting theatre commands.

The Rajya Sabha may take up the bill for discussion next week. The bill seeks to empower Commander-in-Chief and Officer-in-Command of Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs) with all disciplinary and administrative powers in respect of the personnel serving in or attached to such

organisations. Currently, the Armed Forces personnel are governed in accordance with the provisions contained in their specific Service Acts - Army Act 1950, Navy Act 1957 and Air Force Act 1950.

The enactment of the Bill will have various tangible benefits such as maintenance of effective discipline in inter-services establishments by the Heads of ISOs, no requirement of reverting personnel under disciplinary proceedings to their parent Service units, expeditious disposal of cases of misdemeanour or indiscipline and saving of public money and time by avoiding multiple proceedings.

The Bill would also pave the way for much greater integration and jointness amongst the three Services; lay a strong foundation for creation of Joint Structures in times to come and further improve the functioning of the Armed Forces.

Introducing the Bill in the Lok Sabha, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh termed it as part of a series of military reforms being undertaken by the government.

He described the bill as an important step taken towards integration and jointness among the Armed Forces to face the future challenges in an integrated manner.

The 'ISO Bill - 2023' shall be applicable to all personnel of regular Army, Navy, and Air force, and to persons of other forces as notified by the Central

Government, who are serving in or attached to an Inter-Services Organisation.

This Bill empowers the Commander-in-Chief, Officer-in-Command or any other officer specially empowered in this behalf by the Central Government with all the disciplinary and administrative powers in respect of personnel serving in or attached to their Inter-Services Organisations for the maintenance of discipline and proper discharge of their duties, irrespective of the service to which they belong.

The Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command means General Officer/Flag Officer/Air Officer who has been appointed as Commander-in-Chief of Officer-in-Command an Inter-Services Organisation.

To maintain Command and Control in absence of the Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command, the officiating incumbent or the officer on whom the command develops in absence of a C-in-C or O/C, will also be empowered to initiate all disciplinary or administrative actions over service personnel, appointed, deputed, posted or attached to an Inter-Services Organisation.

The Bill also empowers Commanding Officer of an Inter-Services organisation to initiate all disciplinary or administrative actions over personnel appointed, deputed, posted or attached to that Inter-Services Organisation.

SC stays suspension of Andaman CS, fine on LG



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the order of the Calcutta High Court suspending Andaman and Nicobar Islands Chief Secretary Keshav Chandra and imposing a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Lt. Governor DK Joshi for not complying with an earlier order on releasing benefits to workers.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the chief secretary and the LG, and stayed the order of the Port Blair bench of the high court.

"We will stay these directions. You (the petitioners) must have gotten the judges really riled up to get this... We are keeping it on next Friday," the bench said.

In a significant development, the High Court suspended Chandra and imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on the LG (which he has to bear from his own fund) on Thursday for not complying with an earlier order on releasing benefits to workers. An order passed on December 19 last year had awarded higher pay and DA to nearly 4,000 Daily Rated Mazdoors (DRMs) employed by the island administration.

Additional chargesheet filed against 4 PFI men

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday said it has filed a supplementary chargesheet against four persons in the case relating to unlawful and anti-national activities of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) in Patna.

The NIA filed the fresh chargesheet before the NIA Special Court, Patna against Md Tanweer alias Md Tanweer, Md Aabid, Md Belal and Md. Irshad Alam, all residents of East Champaran district of Bihar, the anti-terror probe agency said.

"The four accused PFI cadres were operating, along with other accused, in the planning of violent criminal acts by arranging arms and ammunition and in propagating the outfit's ideology and agenda of violent extremism," it said. They have been charged under vari-



ous sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, and Arms Act, 1959. A total of 15 accused, including the four chargesheeted on Friday, have been arrested so far for promoting the unlawful activities of PFI and channelizing illegal funds from abroad to the PFI members/accused persons in this case.

As per NIA investigations, Md. Irshad Alam is a member of the Criminal Syndicate which was involved, along with other PFI cadres, in a criminal conspiracy related to attack and kill a youth belonging to a particular community, with intention to spread terror and communal hatred.

'New HIV drug formulation may help improve treatment outcomes for kids'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New HIV drug formulation containing three medications - dolutegravir, abacavir and lamivudine - in a single fixed dose combination (FDC) formulation designed for treating HIV kids improves treatment outcomes for children worldwide, says a study.

Published in The Lancet HIV, the study researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus have helped confirm the dosing, safety and effectiveness of a drug formulation designed for treating children with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

The dosing based on the concentrations of each medication in the blood was also appropriate, they say. "This is the first FDC containing dolutegravir that can be used for children from 13 to 88 pounds," said Kristina Brooks, PharmD, an



assistant professor in the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at CU Anschutz. "HIV treatment in children has historically been challenging as it requires the use of multiple tablets and liquids that don't always taste the best, and can be challenging to administer."

Dolutegravir, abacavir and lamivudine have been shown to be safe and effective worldwide to treat HIV. Brooks and Jennifer Kiser, worked with a team of investigators through the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) Network. They looked at both an existing immediate release

tablet and a new formulation of dispersible release tablets containing all three drugs to see if it would yield the same positive results they have seen in adults and adolescents. "57 children were enrolled across five weight bands in four countries, of which 54 children used the new combination over 24 weeks.

In 98 percent of the participants who continued the study drug, the amount of HIV in the blood remained suppressed below 200 copies/mL at week 24. The safety, tolerability, and effectiveness of these formulations look very positive," Brooks said.

Child-friendly FDC formulations for HIV are limited. Brooks said this new formulation could help enable continuity of treatment, improve treatment outcomes and make it easier for caregivers responsible for dispensing drugs.

Murmu to open 'Festival of Libraries' at Pragati Maidan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Whether you love reading books or not, chances are that you are going to bury yourself in the bookworm heaven at Pragati Maidan in the national Capital where a unique 'Festival of Libraries 2023' is all set to be opened by President Droupadi Murmu on Aug 5.

Organised by the Union Ministry of Culture, the festival will include exhibitions, book-author sessions, workshops for children, and panel discussions on the digitisation of libraries. It aims to facilitate the formulation of action-oriented policies for the development of Model Libraries



in India, right down to the village and community levels. The festival will mark the launch of a special ranking system for libraries across India, further promoting excellence and innovation in the library sector. The event will culminate with a valedictory function which will be graced by Vice President of

India, Jagdeep Dhankhar. Noteworthy highlights include the launch of a crowd-sourced Directory of Libraries and the signing of a Tripartite MoU between three prominent libraries: Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna; Rampur Raza Library, Rampur; and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Arabic Persian Research Institute, Tonk, for long term collaborative events, commencement of celebration of 250 years of the Rampur Raza library, Launch of the Sassy Library Series with the plot based on Rampur Raza Library, and the release of a set of Cursive Writing Books in the 22 vernacular languages.

NIA makes another arrest in WB explosives seizure case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested one more person in the West Bengal electric detonators and explosives seizures case, taking the total arrests to eight. The arrested accused Islam Chowdhary is an alleged key conspirator in the case.

Chowdhary, a resident of district Birbhum, West Bengal was picked up from his Baralipara house, where the NIA also seized Rs 1,50,000 in cash, bank transaction documents, paper slips with mobile numbers, SIM cards, three mobile phones and various incriminating documents, the NIA said in a statement. NIA's investigation of two other

accused, Merajuddin Ali Khan alias Meraj Khan and Mir Md. Nuruzzaman alias Romeo, led to the latest arrest of Islam. Meraj and Prince were arrested by the agency on June 28.

"Investigations have revealed that Islam was a key conspirator and facilitator in the supply of the explosives in the case (RC-43/2022/NIA/DLI), registered by NIA in September last year after seizure of a huge cache of electric detonators, Nonels (non-electric detonators) and explosives," the NIA said. Initially, around 81,000 electric detonators were seized from a vehicle in Md. Bazar Police Station area in Birbhum by a team of Special Task Force (STF), West Bengal. PNS

Abhishek Singhvi likely to initiate debate on Delhi Services Bill

New Delhi: Senior Congress leader and lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi is likely to initiate the debate from the Opposition side on the Delhi Services Bill when it comes up for consideration and passage in Rajya Sabha next week, sources said on Friday.

Singhvi had represented the Delhi government in the Supreme Court in the matter related to control of administrative services. The contentious Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 to replace the ordinance on transfers and postings of senior officers in the Delhi government was passed by Lok Sabha on Thursday amid a walkout by opposition parties.

The bill will now go to Rajya Sabha where the ruling alliance is evenly poised with the opposition in terms of strength. The ruling alliance, however, has the assurance of fence sitters such as the Biju Janata Dal of Odisha and the YSR Congress Party of Andhra Pradesh. Both the parties supported bill in Lok Sabha. PTI

Oz to host QUAD Malabar naval drills

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Australia for the first time will host the Malabar series of naval drills involving the Quad combine nations including the US, Japan, India and Australia from August 11 to 22 off Sydney. Japan had hosted the annual event last year.

China has all along criticised the Quad formation claiming it will lead to militarisation of the strategically important Indo-Pacific region. The Malabar series of exercises began in 1992 and the upcoming drill will take place in the southern Pacific region, it was learnt.

India is likely to deploy its stealth frigate INS Sahyadri and destroyer INS Kolkata besides P-8 I long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft for the exercise, sources said here on Friday.

The exercises highlight the convergence of views among the participating countries on maritime issues and their shared commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.

PM to lay foundation for redevelopment of 5 stations of Varansi div tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava said that on August 6 Prime Minister Narendra Modi would lay the foundation stone for beautification and redevelopment of five stations of Varansi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) including Banaras and Varansi City selected under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). Talking to reporters at his office here on Friday, he said that at these stations airport-like facilities would be provided to passengers and on the development on these five stations of Varansi division including Banaras, Varansi City, Ballia, Azamgarh and Deoria Sadar, about ₹250 crore would be spent.

The DRM said under the ABSS, passenger facilities will be improved and expanded at Banaras station, the same will be done at a cost of over ₹53 crore. According to him, the first entrance will be given a more attractive look and the circulating area will be improved. "Under this scheme, work will be done to widen the approach road of Banaras station, improve the drainage system in the circulating area of the first entrance, construct state-of-the-art toilet facilities and improve the service build-



DRM NER VK Srivastava addressing a press conference in Varansi on Friday

ing. Nine lifts, two escalators and 12 metres wide foot over bridge (FOB) will be constructed for the convenience of passengers," Srivastava said.

He further informed that more facilities would be added at both the entrance sides of the station apart from installation of international signage and attractive facade

lighting which would enhance the beauty of the station. "Due to these works, the passengers coming to Banaras station will have a special experience and the journey will become memorable," he said.

According to the DRM, under the ABSS, passenger facilities will be improved and expanded at Varansi

City station at a cost of over ₹59 crore. Under this scheme, the Varansi City station building will be given an attractive look. "Improvement works in the circulating area, approach road and platform number 1 of this station will be done. Waiting hall and toilets will be equipped with modern facilities and for the

convenience of the passengers, provision of a 12 metres wide FOB with five lifts, four escalators will be made at this station. Facade lighting will be installed to enhance the beauty of the station," he said, adding that similar works would also be done at Azamgarh, Ballia and Deoria Sadar stations.

BJP leaders to attend events at 18 stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Dilip Singh Patel said that the senior party leaders, including MPs and MLAs, will attend the programmes at all the 18 stations of 16 districts of party's Kashi region when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi would inaugurate the redevelopment works of more than 500 stations across the country on August 6 under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS).

He said under ABSS, three stations of this parliamentary constituency of the PM will be redeveloped and they are Banaras, Varansi City (both of NER) and Kashi (NR). He informed that the projects at these three stations to be given a new makeover will be redeveloped with ₹463.2 crore which includes ₹350 crore for Kashi station, ₹53.33 crore for Banaras and ₹59.87 crore for Varansi City. He said the functions at all the 18 stations of the Kashi regions will be attended by party's MPs, MLAs, ministers, people's representatives and party office-bearers apart from the workers from different Mandals, Shakti Kendras and booths.

Vasanta College gets A+ grade

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The glorious 100 year history of the Vasanta College for Women, affiliated to Banaras Hindu University (BHU), got a recognition when it was given A+ grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) recently. This college, which is famous for its unique contribution towards women's education, is the real embodiment of the thinking of eminent philosopher J Krishnamurthy.

The college located near Ganga river on the north of the city got this recognition as it implemented the environmental protection, water harvesting, plastic-free campus, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, National Service Scheme (NCC), preservation of folk language etc successfully as per the direction of National education Policy (NEP)-2020 apart from providing facilities like vending machine, gym, girl students conversation, satisfaction level of parents and their hostel visit, campus, classroom, seminar room and innovation. Seeing all these developments at this school when the NAAC team visited the college premises recently was very impressive.

Principal Prof Alka Singh said this college which has imbibed the spirit of BHU's founder Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, is yet to

take many steps in the direction of preparing a generation of global girl students full of national interest, quality education and education of human values. "The college has always been giving importance to continuous development in its teaching method with love for its tradition, history and heritage," she said. She praised the role of IQAC cell coordinator Prof Seema Srivastava in getting A+ grade terming it as commendable. She said the contributions of Prof Archana Tripathi, Prof Meenakshi Viswal, Prof Asha Pandey, Dr Preeti Singh, Dr Yogita Berry, Dr Vrihaspati Bhattacharya, Dr Rajeev Jaiswal, Mehtab and others were important in helping the college get the recognition. Prof Rekha Kalita Bhardwaj along with Prof Latha Pillai and Prof Jaya Bhasin watched the presentation of Indian knowledge tradition very carefully as in this parameter the college got 3.41 marks. Looking at the historical background of the college, quality education with better resources and facilities, it got 3.41 out of 4 marks. "The role of the college in maintaining the Gurukul tradition, ashram system, natural heritage and aesthetics of the campus with sustainable development was appreciated," she said, adding that the result of the day and night hard work of the brilliant students, scholars, teachers of the college came in the form of A+ grade.

First phase of IMI 5.0 from Aug 7

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The first phase of Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0 will start in the district from August 7 and continue till August 12. In this three-stage vaccination campaign, regular vaccines will be given to children in the age group of zero to five years and Td vaccines to pregnant women. The second phase will run from September 11 to 16 and the third phase from October 9 to 14. CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said preparations for the campaign have been completed and a target has been set to vaccinate 15,112 children and 2,508 pregnant women. Talking to reporters on Thursday, the CMO said regular vaccination sessions are being conducted in the district every Wednesday and Saturday. Despite this, for some reason many children

and pregnant women are left out. For this, the IMI 5.0 campaign will be run in three phases and special emphasis will be given to cover children and pregnant women who have been left out from regular vaccination. The CMO said in view of the campaign, all superintendents and in-charge medical officers have been directed to cover high-risk areas, slums and remote areas. "Along with this, a 'door-to-door' survey (head count survey) has been done through ASHA workers. Children up to five years of age and pregnant women who have been left out of vaccination will be identified and their vaccination will be ensured," he said, adding that the vaccination protects children and pregnant women from serious diseases as well as complications of vaccine-preventable congenital diseases and it develops immunity in

children. He appealed that all family members should vaccinate all children from birth to five years and pregnant women on time. District Immunisation Officer (DIO) Dr AK Maurya said the coverage of vaccinated children and pregnant women under the campaign will be entered on the e-Kavach portal and the immunisation sessions will also be organised at Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) apart from in VHNSD sessions and private clinics. "Cooperation of Mahila Arogya Samitis and Municipal Corporation will also be taken along with the Child Development Services and Nutrition (ICDS) Department. Emphasis will be laid on 'Paanch Saal, Saat Baar Chhote Na Tika Ek Bhi Baar' in the campaign. Technical cooperation of WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, TSU organisations will be taken in the campaign," he added.

DM seeks suggestions from parties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate/ District Election Officer (DM/DEO) S Rajalingam held discussions with representatives of all political parties regarding the amendment proposal for polling places in the district as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India. In the meeting held at the Rifle Club here on Thursday, the political parties expressed their consent on the proposal presented by all Electoral Registration Officers (EROs). The DM sought suggestions from the parties, if any, regarding allocation/amendment of polling places by August 10. Rajalingam appealed to the parties to provide necessary cooperation to the booth level officers (BLOs) in the voter verification work being done from house to house by deploying their representatives in respective areas. Finding the work of voter list amendment and revision of the district unsatisfactory, the DM directed all the EROs/AEROs to review the daily progress of booth-wise BLOs. "Action should be taken against the BLO supervisors for poor performance," he said, giving strict instructions to get the voter list revision work done on the basis of linkage, deletion, addition of new voters, electoral population (EP) ratio, gender ratio etc within a week on all the parameters fixed by the Election Commission.

Bulldozers roar once again

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Bulldozers once again roared in Prayagraj. This time the target was illegally occupied property worth crores of rupees in the Muslim-dominated area of Kareli. The illegal occupants were Saif and Faiz, close associates of Ali, elder son of slain mafia don Atiq Ahmad. The action was initiated by the Avas Vikas Parishad amidst heavy deployment of police force on Friday. This land belonged to Ghazala Begum of Agra but around 1990, the Atiq gang had allegedly grabbed the property and built shops there. When Ghazala asked land grabbers to release her land they asked her to pay a goonda tax of ₹50 lakh. According to her, Ali had asked Saif and Faiz not to shift from the place because he wanted to establish his office there. On the complaint of Ghazala's sister, the Kareli police had registered an FIR against Ali and his close associates. In connection with this case, the Avas Vikas Parishad sought help of the Prayagraj Development Authority and the police for razing illegal constructions to earth on that plot of land in GTB Nagar Kareli near Sania Complex. The JCB machines pulled down the constructions on the above grabbed land. The building had accommodated a juice centre and a glass shop. The shop owners were given time to remove their goods from the shops, before they were demolished. Meanwhile there is preparation to declare reward on Ashraf's wife Ruby alias

Zainab. Soon this action can be taken by the police. Zainab is absconding in the Umesh Pal murder case and has been evading the police for nearly five months. She is wanted in the Umesh murder case along with her sister-in-law Shaista Parveen and sister-in-law Ayesha Noori. A reward of Rs 50,000 has been declared on Shaista. Sources say that these days Zainab is engaged in arranging money by taking advantage of the focus of the police on Shaista and other shooters Guddu Muslim, Sabir and Armaan. She had made a plan to sell three benami properties. On the condition of anonymity, an officer said that talks are going on with the higher officials in this regard. After this, further action will be taken. Sources add some henchmen of Atiq and Ashraf are helping Zainab from behind the scenes. Instead of being in direct contact with Zainab, these henchmen are in contact with her absconding brother Saddam. These henchmen are also helping the absconding Zainab and Shaista financially. Recently, there were also reports that after the death of Atiq Ashraf, there has been a rift between their wives. There is a rift in the relationship between the two and Zainab wants to take over the entire property alone. However, after the benami property deal came to the fore, it has become clear that it was just a rumour. Sources even say that this news was deliberately blown up so that the police's attention towards Zainab and her family gets reduced.

STATEMENTS RECORDED: The two-member judicial commission team probing the encounter cases of Arbaaz and Vijay Chaudhary alias Usman have recorded the statements of police officials involved in the encounters. The commission is headed by retired high court judge Rajiv Lochan Mehrotra and has former IPS officer DG Vijay Kumar Gupta as its member. After the killing of lawyer Umesh Pal and two of his police gunners on February 24, Prayagraj police claimed to have gunned down two criminals — Arbaaz and Usman — in separate encounters on February 27 and March 6 in Dhoomangraj and Kaudhiyara police circles respectively. Following the encounters, the state government had set up a two-member judicial commission to probe the case. Meanwhile the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Lucknow, has confirmed that bullets were fired from the carbine of one of the police gunners of lawyer Umesh Pal at the time of the attack on them by henchmen of gangster Atiq Ahmed on February 24. The carbine was later recovered by the police from the site of the incident. Police sources said the FSL report submitted with the Prayagraj police on Thursday, has revealed "firing residue", confirming that firing was executed by the weapon. However, police probing Umesh Pal murder claimed that it was yet to be ascertained as to who had actually operated this carbine at the time of the incident. After examining

the video footage of the February 24 incident, police have claimed that shooter Vijay Chaudhary alias Usman was seen opening the first fire on lawyer Umesh Pal and one of his police gunners. Video clips also showed that the assailants first targeted Umesh Pal and then his gunner, who fell on the ground after being shot while Umesh was seen running towards a passage towards his home. The video clips also revealed that another shooter, Gulam, had picked up the carbine while the injured police gunner was lying on the ground. Gulam, however, threw it on the ground before escaping from the spot. The police had recovered the carbine, its magazine and cartridges separately. Preferring anonymity, a senior police officer said "The FSL report of the carbine seized on the spot by the police on the fateful day has revealed that firing was also executed from the weapon. However, it is yet to be ascertained as to who had actually operated this weapon at the time of the incident — the police gunner who was carrying it or shooter Ghulam. We will thoroughly study the report to take up further investigations." Police sources claimed that the FSL report has also revealed that at least two bullets were fired from the weapon (carbine). The FSL report has already confirmed that the two 0.45 bore Colt pistols recovered from two separate places — the partially demolished old office of slain gangster Atiq Ahmed at Chakia and Kasari Masari area in the city — were the ones used in the murder of lawyer Umesh Pal and two of his police gunners.

Outreach activity for students organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Dr Garima and Dr Chandana Basu, currently working in the Centre for Genetic Disorders in Institute of Science, BHU organised an outreach activity for class XI and XII students of Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) located on the BHU campus. Genetics is often thought of as a tough nut to crack and complex to understand. The primary aim of the event was to create awareness among students about the fundamental principles of genetics and genetic diseases through innovative approaches of sto-

rytelling, comics and hands-on activity. By fostering a greater understanding of these topics, the organisers aimed to promote more inclusive and empathic behaviour among youngsters. This outreach event was sponsored by Indiabiocience under 3rd outreach grant award. "One such activity involved creating DNA models using colourful jellies, making complex structure of DNA accessible and enjoyable to understand. Additionally, a comic-story-based learning approach and colourful illustrations were used to understand the intricacies of the DNA double helix," Dr

Garima and Dr Chandana said. The event culminated with a lively and engaging crossword session, testing the students' newfound knowledge. Participants enthusiastically participated in crossword showcasing their understanding of genetic concepts and their applications. Prizes were distributed. Dr Garima Jain, one of the organising scientists said, "It was a pleasure to engage with the bright young minds at KV. By promoting genetic awareness, we hope to inspire these students to pursue careers in science and contribute to the field of genetics in future."

Lecture on leadership in technology industry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Senior Director (Engineering) at Redbus (Ibibo group) and an accomplished professional Ravikumar Kumarasamy delivered a guest lecture on 'Leadership in Technology Industry' at Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU) here on Thursday. Sharing his valuable insights Kumarasamy said that life is all about challenges which lead to thought-provoking discussion about emerging trends, opportunities, and future disruptions in the technology industry and hence gaining actionable strategies to excel in the rapidly changing digital landscape.

"Rapid advancements in technology have reshaped industries, societies and economies worldwide, driving the need for strong and effective leaders who can navigate through," he said. Focusing on organisational culture, he quot-



A technology industry expert delivering a lecture at IM-BHU in Varanasi on Thursday.

ed Peter Drucker by saying "culture eats strategy for break-

Cong leader hails SC verdict on Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Hailing the decision of the Supreme Court in Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's case, provincial president (Prayagraj Zone) and former Uttar Pradesh Minister Ajay Rai said the people have their full faith in the judiciary and finally the SC has also proved the trust of the judiciary in the hearts and minds of the common people of the country by giving its just and legal judgment in the case of Rahul Gandhi. He said that Rahul Gandhi is not only a leader of the Congress but he is also the voice of the people of the whole of India. "Today it has been proved by this historic decision of the Supreme Court of the country that all the wrong decisions were taken against Rahul at the behest of the central authority," he said.

New barrack reconstructed for women prisoners in Varanasi District Jail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a separate new barrack for women prisoners in Varanasi District Jail has been reconstructed. On the other hand, on the initiative of Jail Superintendent Dr Umesh Singh, the male prisoners have done this work with their skill, which is being praised everywhere. Women prisoners will be able to stay with their children in this barrack. There will also be a health checkup room, library and creche for children in the women's prison complex. The barrack is proposed to be inaugurated by a senior judge of the Allahabad High Court on August 6. Sensitive to the safety and respect of women, the state government is also very serious about the human rights of women prisoners. Its hallmark is being seen in the Chowkaghat District Jail here. On the instructions of the CM, Director General (Jail) SN



A new barrack for women prisoners ready at District Jail in Varanasi.

Sabat started taking steps towards improving the condition of prisoners in the jail and then the jail superintendent took the initiative to build a new shelter for women prisoners in the old closed hospital premises of the jail using the skills of male prisoners.

Dr Umesh Singh said the Varanasi District Jail was constructed in 1853 and at present the barracks had the capacity to accommodate 20 female prisoners. However, there are 111 female prisoners, including 12

who are also staying there along with children. In view of problems being faced by such female prisoners, a new barrack has been built at the place of the old prison hospital. He said with the construction of this new barrack, many difficulties of women prisoners will be removed. According to him, in this new barrack there will be a separate room for health checkup of women prisoners apart from a library and a crèche which has also been made for overall development



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Gita misinterpreted

Christopher Nolan's blockbuster Oppenheimer has invited the wrath of the right-wingers

Recently, a controversy has arisen surrounding the portrayal of J Robert Oppenheimer, a physicist and director of the Manhattan Project, in cinematic production. This controversy has stirred outrage particularly among certain sections of right-wing Hindus, raising questions about the intersection of historical representation, cultural sensitivities and ideological perspectives. Moreover, this controversy brings to light the broader issue of misinterpretation, which also extends to ancient texts like the Bhagvad Gita. The Oppenheimer film centres around the portrayal of J Robert Oppenheimer, a key figure in the development of the atomic bomb during World War II. Oppenheimer's contribution to the creation of a weapon with unprecedented destructive power are historically documented. However, like any historical figure, his legacy is open to interpretation. The controversy arose when the film depicted Oppenheimer using a quote from the Bhagvad Gita—"Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds"—to reflect on the consequences of the atomic bomb. This quote is often attributed to Oppenheimer himself, as he famously uttered it upon witnessing the first successful test of the bomb. However, the film's portrayal of this event, juxtaposed with the Bhagvad Gita quote, has ignited anger among the right-wingers. Though filmmakers often take liberties in depicting historical facts and get backlash for it, Oppenheimer is different.



The outrage among right-wing Hindus is somewhat justified. Attributing a quote to Gita, out of context and mouth by a person who was responsible for the worst human tragedy in the world, is preposterous and does no good to the film or its maker. If they were looking

for a moral justification for Oppenheimer, this was certainly not the best of choices. Though the film does portray him as a complex personality jolted by the events of World War II and Hitler's pogrom against Jews. But becoming a bigger monster is not justified in any way. Albert Einstein was also a Jew but never supported Project Manhattan. Gita does not sanction mindless killings of innocents. It does sanction war but that is to uphold righteousness and truth. Associating the Gita quote with the creation of a weapon of mass destruction is indeed a distortion of Gita's intended message. Furthermore, some right-wing Hindus view this controversy as part of a larger narrative that they perceive as undermining Hindu culture and values. The Oppenheimer film controversy echoes a broader issue of misinterpretation, which also extends to ancient texts like the Bhagvad Gita. The Gita, a conversation between Prince Arjuna and the deity Krishna, imparts profound teachings about duty, righteousness and spirituality. However, like any ancient text, its interpretation can be influenced by cultural, linguistic and historical contexts. Gita's message is much broader and encompasses a holistic approach to life, duty and self-realisation. Misinterpretation of texts is fraught with devastating consequences, be it Gita or Quran; it is as good or bad as the person holding it.

PICTALK



A farmer plucks ladyfingers at a field, at Kanachak area on the outskirts of Jammu

Design cities that welcome all

The pace of planning and principles governing urban spaces must match the burgeoning demand and should be for everyone not just the rich



SAURAV PANDEY



KISHLAYA MISHRA

Indian cities are the growth engines for the economy and favoured destinations of aspiring Indians in search of upward socio-economic mobility. However, the top-heavy urbanisation distribution in our country is inadequate to accommodate the growing need for urban facilities for the public. The million-plus cities end up taking a disproportionate share of the working population in various sectors. This creates a poor standard of living for large sections of our public living in slums but also hinders the development of the city itself with encroachments and "illegal" land use. Urban development must support not only providing opportunities but also safety, security and equitable access to urban facilities in dignified ways. The decongestion will rely on how the existing cities are reorganised along with the creation of intervening opportunities between these cities and their rural hinterland.

Our overcrowded cities face ecological and physical hazards like floods, fires, accidents and building collapses along with social hazards of crimes and diseases. The worst impacts are felt by the vulnerable sections of the urban population who often have nowhere else to go. Most of them have found ways to informally negotiate with the civil administration and police to "illegally" occupy city spaces and their resources. But there is a need to create such cities where there is space for all and resources are responsibly shared. For that we not only need infrastructure in the city-region (city along with its fringe and satellite towns) but also a new legal framework for the occupancy of city spaces.

With the increase in urban occupancy, the rights over public space have gained prominence as it has been subject to conflict. Mostly the conflict is between slum dwellers and the persons for whom that public space is meant. According to the 2011 census, 17.4% of the population lives in slums, this shows the approximate ratio in



which public spaces have been occupied. In legal terminology, the occupancy of public space can be termed as encroachment. These encroachments have led to a burden on public resources.

In his classic essay "The Tragedy of the Commons", Garrett Hardin explained how a shared resource is likely to be overexploited and destroyed as each user when they act rationally and in their self-interest, act against the common good. To tackle such encroachments, many times evictions are ordered. Though there is a shift from forceful eviction and now the authorities have to give notice in advance and meaningful engagement is mandated before any settlement could be evicted (Ajay Maken case).

Merely seeing slum dwellers from the lens of encroachers won't do justice to their contribution to the city as many are employed in the non-organised sector, which also contributes to the development of the city, eg



MERELY SEEING SLUM DWELLERS FROM THE LENS OF ENCROACHERS WON'T DO JUSTICE TO THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY AS MANY ARE EMPLOYED IN THE NON-ORGANISED SECTOR

- Domestic help, drivers, hawkers and vendors, labours etc. This helped them to sustain their lives, therefore in Olga Tellis's case, Hon'ble Supreme Court held the "Right to Livelihood" as a facet of the "Right to Life". Further, in Chameli Singh v State of U.P., Hon'ble Supreme Court recognized the right to shelter as a component of the right to life under Article 21. This shows that jurisprudence has evolved and Article 21 has subsumed the various facets important for a dignified life.

Since urbanisation is both desirable and inevitable, it is imperative to leverage on the natural growth of sprawls and newer growth centres. Satellite towns around big cities and efficient public transportation among them will make commuting easier at larger distances from city centres. Better road networks around the million-plus cities in the form of peripheral highways and expressways will

reduce the burden of criss-cross transportation on the central business districts. Focusing on the local economies of tier-2 and tier-3 towns will provide the choices of staying back in these towns and also create jobs in rural areas around them. Income stability and security, urban amenities and local branding create a sense of pride in lower-tier cities and towns. Thus reducing migration to just a few cities as is the scenario currently.

The glaring gap between the carrying capacities of our cities and the populations that they precariously support must be bridged. This requires accelerated transport arteries out and around existing urban centres, the creation of new urban centres and a dynamic legal framework that governs the land use and occupancy of our cities.

(Saurav Pandey is an IAS officer (West Bengal Cadre) & Kishlaya Mishra is a Delhi-based advocate)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REACHING OUT TO MUSLIM WOMEN

Sir — Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has asked National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MPs from Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand that his government's decision to ban triple talaq has boosted the overall sense of security for Muslim women, hence he has asked BJP leaders to reach out to them during the upcoming festival of Raksha Bandhan. Modi may have forgotten that there's no provision for the celebration of Raksha Bandhan in the Muslim community, and it is not advisable to pressure any Muslim women to do the same. Moreover, Raksha Bandhan is a purely religious practice of Northern Hindus, where Hindu women tie 'raakhi' on men's wrists, signifying them as their protectors, so it may stir further controversies. Can PM Modi allow this with the Muslim boys as well? Then there is a good message. Let Hindu girls consider Muslim boys as their true brothers and Muslim boys must respect Hindu girls as their true sisters. But he directed this religious practice unilaterally singling out the women folk. Whatsoever, as per PM Modi's thinking, if this rational mentality prevails among both Hindus and Muslims, no hatred and brotherhood remain. If both the communities follow the policy of treating all religions equally then it's a perfect harmony among all religious people. If both Hindus & Muslims respect each other's religions, people will lead a peaceful life. But sad to say PM Modi's meetings are being held to boost synergy within the NDA, now expanded to 38 parties, in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls (as he asked MPs to go to the masses with a positive message about the government's work and advised them to spend maximum time reaching out to people), not for the harmony among all religious people. **Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad**

POLARISATION IN MANIPUR

Sir — The Manipur ethnic violence is a sordid tale of pushing people towards

The sad demise of Nitin Desai



The entire film industry was shocked to learn about the sudden demise of art director Nitin Desai, whose eventful and successful life came to an abrupt end. Financial stress to the tune of Rs 252 crore loan default might have led him to take his own life. A photography graduate from J.J. School of Arts in Mumbai, had a hawk's eye and imagination that fulfilled the ever-growing demand of Bollywood's ambitions which helped transport it to a new world that he created. He gained worldwide acclaim for his lavishly designed studio sets that formed part of

the blockbuster films like Devdas 2002, Lage Raho Munnabhai (2006), Once Upon a Time in Mumbai 2010, Devdas, Lagaan, and Jodha Akbar among others earned him a prominent place in the film industry.

Who could have thought that an illustrious career spanning over two decades would come to an end in this manner? The renowned and sprawling studio spread over 52 acres that he built for numerous films in 2005 at Karjat in Raigad district in Maharashtra sounded a death knell for him as he was found dead on its premises. A sad truth about life is that death casts its shadow on everyone, no matter what success you achieve, in the end, nothing remains with you. Some fail to cope with financial pressure while others come out of it. Can a stressful situation be turned around? Nonetheless, with a penchant for innovation and a willingness to work hard, he will continue to live on in the hearts of fans and industry alike through his legacy.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

polarisation to achieve political and ideological gains by the ruling dispensation. If one digs deep into the whole episode of Manipur, there will be endless questions that will keep coming to the fore like water gushing out of a pipe. Could the people of the State see these horrors coming? Why is it that it is the women who have been subjected to shocking and ghastly violence when the general perception of the State is that of a rare region where matriarchal values are held in high esteem? The unabated violence in Manipur cannot be explained away by citing the historical Meitei-Kuki divide but has been one 'organised' and 'fuelled' by the local government with the aid of its big brother in Delhi. Why are the people of the country forced to face falsities, lies, and shamelessness on Manipur violence? Is it because we gave power to the politics of hate that champions the ideology of hostility and division? It evokes insurmountable anger as

an entire State has been burnt to ashes in pursuit of the lust for power that blinds everything.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

RUSSIA'S WHEAT FOR INDIA

Sir — Russia's decision to supply wheat to India will boost the nation's domestic wheat stock, addressing potential shortages. Despite being the largest wheat producer, India may still need to import wheat from Russia due to fluctuating demand, climate uncertainties affecting production, and the need to meet specific market requirements. Importing also allows India to capitalize on favourable global wheat prices, ensuring food security and stable costs for consumers.

Rajpal Singh Chouhan | Ujjain.

Oral rehydration can be a lifesaver

Consuming ORS is the simplest way to tackle mild to moderate dehydration. Prolonged dehydration can be fatal, writes NUPUR PATIL

Summer and dehydration often go hand in hand if one does not take adequate measures to keep the body hydrated. Mild to moderate dehydration can be easily treated by consuming a glucose and electrolyte solution called oral rehydration salts (ORS) solution. Oral rehydration is when we take ORS orally to maintain the fluid and electrolyte balance that is hampered due to an illness or extremely hot weather conditions. Read ahead to know everything about this wonder drink meant to replenish the body.



WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE AN ORS?

An ORS is a definite no for someone dealing with a kidney disorder and those on a fluid-restricted diet. They need to consult with their treating doctor when faced with dehydration. In addition, as people with diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease need to watch out for the intake of sugar and salt, they need to be cautious about consuming ORS as excessive ORS intake may cause toxicity in the body besides disturbing the blood sugar and electrolytes level.

TAKEAWAY

The rule of thumb to keep the body hydrated is to drink adequate amounts of water throughout the day. Besides, consuming an ORS is the simplest way to tackle mild to moderate dehydration that might result due to vomiting, diarrhoea, high fever, and sweltering weather. Remember, taking ORS is not a replacement for consulting a doctor as severe dehydration may cause life-threatening complications. (The author is a nutritionist and a fitness expert)

treatment. One should not drink fruit juices or eat foods with added salt while taking this product unless directed by the doctor. It is worth mentioning that while oral rehydration is an effective first-line treatment for mild to moderate dehydration, severe dehydration requires immediate medical attention. If symptoms persist or worsen, it is crucial to seek medical help promptly.

HOW TO PREPARE AN ORS?

It is best to consume commercially available ORS solutions as they have the right amount of ingredients. These can be purchased from a pharmacy, grocery store, or online platforms. However, if one is unable to grab these

readymade preparations, one can try homemade ones that are prepared in a jiffy. When making ORS at home, it's crucial to use clean and safe drinking water. Using unclean water can make things worse because it might have harmful germs that can cause diseases. So, always make sure to use clean water to prepare ORS to stay safe and healthy. Boiling water is the surefire way to ensure that the water is safe for consumption. Once boiled, allow the water to cool down. To a litre of water, add 6 level teaspoons of sugar and half level teaspoon of table salt. Stir the solution well. Sipping this throughout the day when facing diarrhoea and vomiting helps compensate for the lost fluid and electrolytes in the body.

WHEN TO CONSUME AN ORS?

This solution is for those who want to make up for the lost fluids and electrolytes. Significant loss of electrolytes and fluids can occur during diarrhoea, vomiting, intense workouts, fever, and sweltering weather. It is important to maintain a healthy balance in such cases by taking ORS. It involves drinking water with modest amounts of sugar and salts, specifically sodium and potassium. The dosage of ORS is based on one's medical condition and response to



FIRST COLUMN

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Spiritual growth requires patience, dedication, and a commitment to progress



SWAMI ANAND ARUN

In the fast-paced digital era we live in, social media has become an integral part of our lives, especially for today's youth. While these platforms offer numerous benefits, such as connectivity, information sharing, and networking, they also present some challenges, particularly when it comes to maintaining a healthy balance between online engagement and nurturing spiritual growth. Social media platforms have revolutionized the way we communicate, allowing us to connect with friends, family, and like-minded individuals across the globe. The instantaneous nature of these platforms fosters real-time information sharing and keeps us updated on the latest trends, news, and events. As a result, the emergence of a culture of comparison arises, where individuals compare their lives, achievements, and spiritual journeys with others. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and a sense of spiritual inadequateness. Many social media interactions tend to be superficial and fleeting. Engaging in surface-level discussions may hinder individuals from exploring deeper philosophical and spiritual concepts that are crucial for personal growth. Moreover, the endless stream of content can be overwhelming, diverting attention away from essential aspects of life, including spiritual growth and introspection. Mindless scrolling can become a hindrance to inner peace, preventing individuals from taking the time to reflect on their thoughts and emotions. Mindful usage of the internet involves approaching social media usage with intention, awareness, and self-regulation. The first step towards mindful scrolling is developing self-awareness. Understanding how social media affects our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours empowers us to make informed decisions about our usage. Regularly assessing how much time we spend on these platforms and how it influences our mental state is crucial to ensure we maintain a healthy digital lifestyle.



Once self-awareness is cultivated, setting boundaries becomes essential. Establishing specific time frames for social media use and designating technology-free zones in our daily lives can help young individuals stay connected to their spiritual journey. The most significant advantage of the digital age to spirituality is the ease with which seekers can access spiritual teachings and practices from spiritual leaders worldwide. The teachings of Ramana Maharishi, Yogananda, Vivekananda, Buddha, and all spiritual masters through the ages are now easily accessible. It is up to us to avail of these resources. No longer limited by geographical barriers, individuals can now embark on their spiritual journey independently using the wealth of resources available online. By mindfully selecting the content they consume, individuals can deepen their spiritual understanding and make informed choices in their lives. It can be easily achieved by maintaining a balance with real-life practices. Engaging in meditation, self-reflection, and attending physical spiritual gatherings can complement the virtual experience, enhancing a deeper connection with oneself and others. Integrating meditation, yoga, and pranayama into daily life allows individuals to overcome worldly distractions. Meditation, yoga, and pranayama encourage individuals to turn their attention inward. As individuals become more spiritually inclined, they are less swayed by the temporary pleasures and distractions of the material world.

Social media's instant gratification culture can promote the pursuit of quick fixes to complex spiritual questions. However, true spiritual growth requires patience, dedication, and a commitment to steady progress. Though this evolving nature of spirituality provides abundant possibilities for one's personal growth and assessment, embracing imperfection and authenticity in both virtual and real-life interactions can only lead an individual to genuine connections in their meaningful journey of life. Hence, with utmost mindfulness and positive choices, an individual can get the most out of digital platforms for their spiritual growth and can create a better, brighter, and more compassionate world for future generations to come.

(The author is the founder of Osho Tapoban International Commune)

E-invoicing is a transformative reform

E-invoicing under GST aims to streamline tax compliance, reduce tax evasion, and enhance transparency in the Indian taxation system



ABHISHEK RAJA RAM



In today's digital age, e-invoicing has become increasingly popular as a way to streamline business operations, reduce costs, and increase efficiency. As a result, the Indian government has made it mandatory for certain businesses to generate e-invoices under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.

As the Indian government strives to streamline tax compliance and enhance transparency in the taxation system, the adoption of electronic invoicing, or e-invoicing, has become a crucial component of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. E-invoicing is a standardized format that allows machines to read invoices, reducing the chances of false input tax credit claims, expanding the GST base, and improving compliance. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore everything you need to know about e-invoicing under GST in India, including its applicability, exemptions, turnover limits, and the benefits it offers to businesses.

What is E-Invoicing?

E-invoicing refers to the electronic generation, transmission, and authentication of invoices using specific document formats. Unlike traditional paper invoices, e-invoices are generated and stored electronically, allowing for seamless integration within the GST ecosystem. The e-invoice is authenticated by the Invoice Registration Portal (IRP) and assigned a unique Invoice Reference Number (IRN). This process ensures the standardization of invoice data and enables interoperability across the GST system.

The e-invoicing system encompasses various types of transactions, including Tax Invoices, Debit Notes, Credit Notes, Invoice-cum-Bill of Supply. It covers transactions such as taxable Business-to-Business (B2B) supply of goods or services, Business-to-Government (B2G)

AS BUSINESSES ADAPT TO THE CHANGING REGULATORY LANDSCAPE, UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICABILITY, EXEMPTIONS, AND BENEFITS OF E-INVOICING BECOMES CRUCIAL

(The writer is a Fellow member of ICAI. He was Co-opted Member of "Indirect Tax Committee - NIRC")

supply of goods or services, export sales, and sales falling under the Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM). However, it does not apply to exempted sales for which the bill of supply is raised, imports, job works, and delivery challans.

Applicability of E-Invoicing

The applicability of e-invoicing under GST is determined based on the turnover of a taxpayer. The Indian government has implemented e-invoicing in phases, gradually lowering the turnover threshold for mandatory compliance. Here is an overview of the phases and their respective turnover limits:

Phase 1 (from October 1, 2020): E-invoicing became mandatory for businesses with a turnover of INR 500 Crores.

Phase 2 (from January 1, 2021): The turnover threshold for mandatory e-invoicing was lowered to INR 100 Crores.

Phase 3 (from April 1, 2021): The threshold was further revised to INR 50 Crores.

Phase 4 (from April 2022): E-invoicing became mandatory for businesses with a turnover exceeding INR 20 Crores.

Phase 5 (from October 2022): E-invoicing became mandatory for businesses with an annual turnover of INR 10 Crores.

Phase 6 (from August 2023): E-invoicing became mandatory for businesses with an annual turnover of INR 5 Crores. From August 1, 2023, e-invoicing will be mandatory for all businesses in India with an annual turnover of over INR 5 Crores, as per the latest notification. This change aims to bring more busi-

nesses under the ambit of e-invoicing and promote greater transparency in the GST system.

Additionally, certain documents and transactions are also exempt from e-invoicing. These include a bill of supply, self-invoice in case of reverse charge mechanism, advance payment, delivery challan, and financial debit/credit notes. B2C transactions and non-GST supplies such as alcoholic liquor, petrol, and diesel are also exempt from e-invoicing.

The Benefits of E-Invoicing

E-invoicing offers numerous benefits for businesses, simplifying tax compliance and improving operational efficiency. Here are some of the key advantages of adopting e-invoicing under GST:

E-invoicing revolutionizes the tax return filing process by automating it through backward integration. Invoices' details are automatically inserted into returns, reducing manual work and ensuring accuracy. This approach brings forth multiple benefits: 1) Substantial reduction in process costs (60-80% per invoice), leading to quicker returns on investment; 2) Enhanced efficiency, compliance, and transparency with fewer errors and discrepancies; 3) Improved security through encrypted transmission; 4) Accelerated cash flow due to immediate invoice delivery; 5) Augmented transparency via automated approval processes. E-invoicing, within the GST framework, involves steps like registration, API integration, invoice generation, validation, and IRN generation. The digital-

ly signed e-invoice is then shared for printing and seamlessly transferred to other relevant systems for e-way bills and GST returns. This technology ultimately streamlines business operations, lightens compliance loads, and fosters a transparent tax ecosystem.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with e-invoicing regulations can result in hefty penalties for businesses in India. If a business fails to generate an e-invoice where it is mandatory to do so, the penalty can range from INR 10,000 up to INR 1,00,000 per invoice. Furthermore, any delay in uploading the IRN or UIN to the GSTN portal can result in a penalty of INR 200 per day, up to a maximum of INR 10,000.

E-invoicing under GST is a transformative reform that aims to streamline tax compliance, reduce tax evasion, and enhance transparency in the Indian taxation system. As businesses adapt to the changing regulatory landscape, understanding the applicability, exemptions, and benefits of e-invoicing becomes crucial. By automating processes, reducing errors, and improving operational efficiency, e-invoicing enables businesses to focus on growth and contribute to a stronger and more transparent economy. By keeping up with these regulations, businesses can ensure that they are operating in compliance with GST laws and regulations and can enjoy the many benefits of e-invoicing, including increased efficiency, cost savings, and streamlined operations.

Six reasons why laughter is the best medicine

Laughter can heal, foster stronger relationships, and enhance both our physical and emotional well-being

Stress is an inevitable part of a busy, modern life. However, it is important to mitigate it where we can so that we keep a healthy mindset. Several studies have shown laughter can decrease stress hormones in the blood, increase our "feel-good" chemicals (endorphins), and boost our immune system. Research also says that introducing some laughter into work life can contribute to productivity, and further strengthen workplace bonds.

More recently, laughter and humour have been utilised as a technique in cognitive-behavioural therapy for making physical, psychological, and social relationships healthy, thereby ultimately improving the quality of life. There is also an



SANJEEV JAIN

(The writer is Jt. managing director, Akums & Drugs Pharmaceuticals)

alternative mind/body practice based on the concept, called "laughter yoga," which is steadily gaining in popularity across the country and the globe. The practice is a combination of laughing exercises and yoga breathing, often held in a group setting. The results have shown significant improvements in positive emotions and reductions in the symptoms of stress and anxiety as well as improved quality of sleep.

Most of us would agree that a good laugh makes us feel better, which is why they say "laughter is the best medicine". Here are six science-backed reasons why you should start laughing today:

Boosts the immune system: Laughter boosts the immune system by decreasing

stress hormones and increasing immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your disease resistance. Laughter also stimulates the lymphatic system and helps the body further eliminate waste and toxins from the body's tissues.

Lowers stress: Laughter can encourage an overall sense of well-being by stimulating a rush of stress-busting hormones like epinephrine and dopamine. A good, hearty laugh also oxygenates the body and provides a physical and emotional release; leaving the muscles more relaxed afterwards.

Encourages heart health: Laughter increases your heart rate and the amount of oxygen in your blood. It acts as a great exercise and bene-



fits health the same way as an hour's morning walk does. It pumps the heart and cushions the blood vessels. This can improve vascular function and decrease the risk of a heart attack.

Burns calories: A common side effect of chronic

stress is weight gain. By no means is laughter a replacement for regular exercise, however, research conducted by Vanderbilt University Medical Center revealed that laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day burns between 10 and 40 calories

and also reduces the stress hormones that cause weight gain.

Feel Better: A good joke, a funny movie, or just seeing something silly can distract you from your pain and make you feel better, at least for a while. Laughing provides distractions from stressful situations and gives your brain time to rest from worrying.

Strengthens bonds: Laughter connects us with others. Most people find that laughter is contagious. A shared laugh with friends, family or a coworker can help you feel more connected to that person and form a strong and lasting bond.

Integrating more laughter into your life: Amidst the seriousness of life, we

often overlook the significance of incorporating laughter into our daily routines. Instead of dwelling on life's stressful moments, let's embrace them with humour. Engaging in activities that relieve stress, such as watching funny videos, dining out, or hosting game nights with friends, can make a notable difference. Even on days when humour feels elusive, simply finding a few reasons to smile can brighten our outlook. Laughter possesses the incredible ability to heal, foster stronger relationships, and enhance both our physical and emotional well-being. It is truly a remarkable resource for overcoming challenges and embracing a healthier, happier life.

TRUMP PLEADS GUILTY TO ELECTION CHARGES

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Former US president Donald Trump has pleaded not guilty before an Indian-American judge to four charges that he plotted a criminal conspiracy to remain in power despite losing the November 2020 election. Trump, 77, entered his plea on Thursday before Magistrate Judge Moxila Upadhyaya at a Washington, D.C., federal courthouse not far from the US Capitol, where the alleged conspiracy he's accused of orchestrating turned violent on January 6, 2021.

Wearing a dark blue suit and a red tie, Trump arrived at the courthouse in a motorcade after he flew in from Bedminster in New Jersey. It was Trump's third court appearance in four months. The former president is seeking to contest the 2024 presidential election as the Republican Party's candidate. After he arrived at the court, Trump was arrested and

arraigned on four felony counts outlined in special counsel Jack Smith's indictment: conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, attempting to obstruct an official proceeding, and conspiracy against rights.

Upadhyaya read the charges to Trump accusing him of conspiring against the United States to overthrow his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, now the US president, and listed the lengthy prison terms he would face if convicted.

The 45-page indictment was filed in Washington, DC earlier this week by Smith, who has led investigations into the former president on behalf of the US Department of Justice. "As to counts one to four, how does Mr Trump plead?" Judge Upadhyaya asked the former president in the courtroom. Trump, flanked by his lawyers, said: "Not guilty."

Trump spoke little during the hearing, answering ques-



Former President Donald Trump waves as he steps off his plane at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Thursday in Arlington, Va., as he heads to Washington to face a judge on federal conspiracy charges alleging Trump conspired to subvert the 2020 election. AP/PTI

tions about his name and age, while rarely glancing at prosecutors. When asked whether he understood that his words could be used against him, he replied in the affirmative. The judge told Trump that he would be released but there

are certain conditions that he has to abide by and appear in the court as and when required. Trump's next scheduled appearance is on August 28 before US District Judge Tanya Chutkan. But he has the option not to appear in person.

"Despite having lost, the defendant was determined to remain in power. So for more than two months following election day on November 3, 2020, the defendant spread lies that there had been outcome-determinative fraud in the election and that he had actually won. These claims were false, and the defendant knew that they were false," the indictment reads.

The indictment was issued by a grand jury of citizens in the District of Columbia and sets forth the crimes charged in detail. It caps an inquiry into events surrounding the January 6, 2021 riot at the US Capitol.

"The attack on our nation's capital on January 6, 2021, was an unprecedented

assault on the seat of American democracy. As described in the indictment, it was fuelled by lies," Smith said.

During the tense 27-minute proceeding, Trump was seated just 20 feet from Smith.

A significant point of tension during the proceeding was how soon will Trump stand trial.

Thomas Windom, the prosecutor helming the trial team for Smith, said the case should move quickly. "This case will benefit from normal order, including a speedy trial," Windom told the magistrate judge overseeing the arraignment.

But John Lauro, an attorney for the former president, said Trump's legal team might need a long time to go through the evidence that prosecutors are required to hand over to the defence.

"These are weighty issues," he said, adding that the Justice Department has had years to investigate the case. "All I'm

going to ask, Your Honour, is the opportunity to fairly defend our client. But in order to do that, we're going to need a little time."

Magistrate Judge Upadhyaya replied: "I can guarantee everybody that there will be a fair process and a fair trial in this case."

The Trump campaign has charged that Smith "has conducted a dirty, politically motivated investigation of President Trump to prevent him from winning back the presidency".

Smith sat in the courtroom throughout the proceedings.

"At around 4 PM EDT, Biden's weaponised Department of Justice will once again have its leading opponent (me) ARRAIGNED despite having committed NO CRIME. It sounds like a chapter you'd read out of an old history book on the Soviet Union or Maoist China... But sadly, it's taking place right here in America," Trump wrote in an email before he left New Jersey for the court appearance.

'US, UN should impose more sanctions on Sudanese leaders'

AP ■ CAIRO

A leading human rights group called on Friday on the United States and the United Nations to impose further sanctions on the Sudanese individuals "responsible for the atrocities" in Darfur, as evidence of scorched-earth attacks mount. The northeast African country plunged into chaos in April when months-long tensions between the military, led by Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, exploded into open fighting in the capital of Khartoum, and elsewhere.

In Darfur, the scene of genocidal war in the early 2000s, the conflict has morphed into ethnic violence, with RSF and allied Arab militias targeting African communities in the western region, UN officials say.

In a press release, Human Rights Watch said Washington should impose targeted sanctions to "ensure that the UN Security Council finally acts to protect civilians and to hold those responsible for the atrocities to account".

The US is set to take over the presidency of the UN Security Council later this month.

The New York-based watchdog group said at least seven villages and towns have been almost completely burned to the ground or destroyed in West Darfur alone, according to satellite footage and testimonies analyzed by the group. These include Habilla Kanari, Mejmere, Mistere, Molle, Murnei, Gokor, and Sirba.

"The world should not stand by as town after town in West Darfur is burned to the ground, sending tens of thousands of civilians fleeing for their lives," said Tirana Hassan, executive director at HRW.

In June, the US imposed sanctions against four key companies either linked to or owned by the warring factions.

Police detain suspect in S Korea's 2nd stabbing attack in two days

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean police detained a man suspected of stabbing a high school teacher with a knife Friday in the city of Daejeon. The stabbing follows a separate, apparently random attack on Thursday in which 14 people were wounded near a busy subway station in Seongnam. Officials at the Daejeon Metropolitan Police Agency didn't immediately release the personal details of the suspect in the Friday morning attack on the teacher at Songchon High School, describing him only as a "man in his 20s or 30s".

According to police, the suspect waited for the teacher to step out of a classroom before stabbing him and fleeing the scene, which, according to officials, suggests they were acquaintances. Police and fire department authorities did not specify the teacher's health con-

dition. The attack in Daejeon, about 120 kilometres south of Seongnam, came hours after President Yoon Suk Yeol called for "ultra-strong" law enforcement measures to restore faith in public safety after Thursday's violence, which he described as a "terrorist attack on innocent citizens." At least two people were in life-threatening conditions after Thursday's attack in Seongnam, in which a car rammed onto a sidewalk before the driver stepped out and began stabbing people at random at a shopping mall linked to the Seohyeon subway station at the heart of a bustling leisure and business district.

Among the five people who were hurt by the car, at least two were hospitalized in critical condition. Among the nine who were stabbed, eight were being treated for serious injuries, according to Gyeonggi Province fire department officials. Police are questioning the

22-year-old suspect. They did not identify the suspect or offer any immediate information about a potential motive.

During police interviews, the suspect talked incoherently and said he was being stalked by an unspecified source, said Park Gyeong-won, an official at Gyeonggi's Bundang district police station.

The suspect purchased the two knives he used in the stabbings from a different shopping mall on Wednesday, Park said, but there isn't clear evidence he planned the attack in advance. Photos from the scene showed forensic units examining the halls of the AK Plaza, where the attack took place Thursday.

A white Kia hatchback with a broken front window and ruptured front tire could be seen on a sidewalk near the subway station. A witness named Hwang Hee-woon told YTN television that he "heard a sound from the

first floor that seemed like a scream, so customers and shop workers were gathering on the rails of the second floor near the escalator to see what was happening below."

"Suddenly, someone told us the person who committed the crime was coming up to the second floor, so we ran away in panic," he said. He ended up hiding inside a refrigerated storage room with some mall employees.

Thursday's attack was the country's second mass-stabbing case involving random targets in a month. In July, a knife-wielding man stabbed at least four pedestrians on a street in the capital, Seoul, killing one person.

Attacks by firearms are rare in South Korea, which tightly controls gun possession, but there aren't meaningful restrictions applying to knives, including kitchen tools that are often used for attacks.

Ethiopia declares state of emergency in Amhara region

AP ■ NAIROBI

Ethiopia's Council of Ministers is declaring a state of emergency in the country's Amhara region after authorities pleaded for help as clashes intensify there between regional forces and the military. The prime minister's office announced the decision on Friday after the region's leader said regular law enforcement was no longer able to contain the violence. The declaration needs approval from Parliament. "The threat the activity is imposing on national security and public peace is increasing day by day," the declaration said, noting severe

economic damage as well and blaming "armed extremist groups."

Ethiopia's second most populous region has been gripped by instability since April, when federal authorities moved to disarm Amhara's security forces following the end of the devastating two-year war in the neighbouring Tigray region.

Authorities last year also tried to dismantle the informal Amhara militia known as Fano.

This week, residents have reported fighting across the Amhara region as militia members attacked army units and protesters blocked roads.

Mutinuous soldiers in Niger sever French military ties

AP ■ NIAMEY (NIGER)

Niger's military junta says it is severing military agreements with France, its former colonial ruler, firing some of the previous government's key ambassadors and warning citizens of the West African nation to watch for foreign armies and spies. A regional delegation's efforts at negotiation quickly deadlocked.

The junta's announcement on state television late Thursday deepens the post-coup isolation for what had been the United States' and allies' last major security partner in the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert that various Islamic extremist groups have turned into the global centre of terrorism. With two days



French Barkhane Air Force mechanics maintain a Mirage 2000 on the Niamey, Niger base, on June 5, 2021. On Thursday night, the junta said on state television it was terminating the military agreements and protocols signed with its former colonial ruler. File/Agencies

remaining before a deadline set by the West African regional bloc to release and reinstate President Mohamed Bazoum in face possible force, Bazoum in

a plea published in a Washington Post opinion piece said, "I write this as a hostage" and urged the US and partners to help.

Pope: True charity must get your hands dirty

AP ■ LISBON

Pope Francis visited a once troubled and crime-plagued neighbourhood of Portugal's capital on Friday to draw attention to the charitable side of the Catholic Church and the need to protect the world's most vulnerable people with concrete gestures that "get your hands dirty". The midday point in Francis' five-day visit to Portugal began with the pontiff hearing confessions of some young people who were in Lisbon for World Youth Day. The big Catholic youth festival will end Friday with a traditional Way of the Cross procession recreating Christ's crucifixion. Francis visited a community centre in the city's Serafina neighbourhood, which sits beneath a giant 18th-century aqueduct that is a symbol of the bounty that gold from Portugal's Brazilian colony once afforded the country. Two decades ago, drug and crime problems dogged the neighbourhood, but it has largely left them behind thanks in part to efforts by church charity groups,



A nun offers Pope a box of letters from the youths, during a gathering at the Eduardo VII Park with young people participating into World Youth Day, in Lisbon on Thursday. AP/PTI

including one that was created to provide a home for children with parents unable to care for them.

Speaking off the cuff to young people and the charity organisers, Francis said true service must be done with concrete gestures that make an impact. He thanked church groups that have "gotten your hands dirty, touching the reality and the misery of others."

Andrew Tate released from house arrest

Bucharest (Romania): Andrew Tate, the divisive internet influencer who is charged in Romania with rape, human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women, won an appeal on Friday to be released from house arrest, his spokesperson said. Tate won't be able to leave the country. He also will not be allowed to be "in close proximity with any of the other defendants, any of the witnesses or any of the alleged victims and their immediate family", his spokesperson, Matea Petrescu, said in a statement.

"This positive outcome gives us confidence that more favorable developments are on the horizon," Petrescu said. The decision at the Bucharest Court of Appeal comes after prosecutors formally indicted the 36-year-old Tate in June along with his brother, Tristan, and two Romanian women in the same case. All four were arrested in late December near Bucharest and have denied the allegations against them.

Japan's Kishida hopes to strengthen strategic coop with US, S Korea

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Friday he hopes to discuss further strengthening of three-way strategic cooperation with leaders of the United States and South Korea at a summit hosted by US President Joe Biden at Camp David later this month. The August 18 summit with Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol is the first stand-alone summit among leaders of the three countries, not in connection with international meetings.

The summit is also the latest sign of warming ties between Tokyo and Seoul. Both governments have moved to set aside decades-long tensions over wartime history, while Washington seeks to deepen its commitment in the Indo-Pacific region. "I have high hopes that this summit meeting will further strengthen the foundation for strengthening ties with the United States and South Korea, which have been built up

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of our client that Mrs. K. Sandi is the owner of Eastern portion of Plot No. 81, Land area measuring 100 Sq. Yds. Out of Kharsa No. 60/24. Situated at Village Hasthal Delhi state Colony known as Mohan Garden in Block-R, Delhi, vide GPA, AT&S & will dated 10.09.1993. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner wants to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection, he/she should inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given to the General public that Mrs. Madhu Anand is absolute owner of Property Flat Bearing No-6-C, on Second Floor in Block/Pocket-JG-3 (JG-3/6-C) Category-Janta, Situated at Vikas Puri, New Delhi by way of Relinquishment Deed, dated 20.08.2023, Doc No-18241, executed by Mrs. Ruchi Nohani Alias Mrs. Ruchi Anand and Mrs. Mahak Arora. Now Mrs. Madhu Anand is intending to sell the above-said property to Mr. Kunal Sagar and further Mr. Kunal Sagar is mortgaging the said property with RBL Bank. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-TTL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given to the General public that Mr. B K Sharma is absolute owner of Property House No. 22, 23 Block-B, DIF Ankur Vihar Loni Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh : 201010. Area measuring 30.5 sq. yds., out of Kharsa no. 487 situated at Sadh Nagar, Palam, New Delhi 45, by way of GPA, AT&S, dated 30.01.1984. In case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-TTL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Karamajunction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kuria (West), Mumbai- 400 070.
CIN: L65910MH1984PLC3262639, Website: www.piramalfinance.com
Branch Address: Agrha Road, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agrha Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, West (Thane) - 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.(DHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. That are also given below, in connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/PCHFL, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No. 1900001255 of Raj Nagar Branch) Ramesh Chandra Yadav (Borrower) Satya Ram Yadav (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1448983 /-(₹ Fourteen lakh Forty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Three Only) NPA (10-04-2023)	Unit No 3 Second Floor With Roof Right Back Side Rhs Plot No B-2 /23 Block-B DIF Ankur Vihar Loni Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh : 201010
(LC No. 2660000386 of Delhi Rajouri Garden Branch) Md Naushad (Borrower) Tabassum Begum (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2213667 /-(₹ Twenty Two lakh Thirteen Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Seven Only) NPA (08-01-2023)	Plot No. B-434, 2nd Floor Without Roof Block-B, plot No. 52, Kharsa No-2974/2749 616 & 2976/631, Basal Darapur Sudarshan Park, Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110015
(LC No. 09700008190 of Dehradun Branch) Parveen Rana (Borrower) Manisha Rana (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 7378529 /-(₹ Seventy Three lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Nine Only) NPA (10-04-2023)	Tower-I Flat No 104 1st Floor Hilllocks Mussoorie Road Dehradun Dehradun Uttaranchal : 248001
(LC No. 2790000362 of Greater Noida Branch) Niraj Kumar (Borrower) Mausam (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2144574 /-(₹ Twenty One lakh Forty Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Nine Only) NPA (10-04-2023)	Unit No-sum-2/503, Floor-5th Tower-sun Migsun Ultimplot No-gb-3 Omicon-3 Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 1900000657 of Raj Nagar Branch) Mahesh Chand (Borrower) Bharti Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3834372 /-(₹ Thirty Eight lakh Thirty Four Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (04-01-2020)	Unit No 706, 7th Floor, Lower-A Gayatri Aura, Plot No Gh-11, Sec-01 Greater Noida West G B Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 19900041187 of Faridabad - Sector 19 Branch) Balkishan Choudhary (Borrower) Rinku Choudhry (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1658810 /-(₹ Sixteen lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Ten Only) NPA (04-01-2020)	Flat No 1505 15th Floor Tower B Gayatri Aura Plot No. Gh 11 Sector 1 Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 2550000273 of Netaji Subhash Place Branch) Anmol Chopra (Borrower) Sudesh Chopra (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2641129 /-(₹ Twenty Six lakh Forty One Thousand One Hundred Twenty Nine Only) NPA (04-01-2020)	Flat No 1508, 15th Floor, Tower A Gayatri Aura, Plot No. Gh 11 Sector-1, Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 2560000032 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Ravi Prakash (Borrower) Seema (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3025909 /-(₹ Thirty lakh Twenty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Nine Only) NPA (04-01-2020)	Flat No-1704, 17th Floor, Lower-F Gayatri Aura, Plot No. Gh 11 Sector-1, Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 1190000682 of Noida Branch) Anil Rohila (Borrower) Archana (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 4901333 /-(₹ Forty Nine lakh One Thousand Three Hundred Thirty Three Only) NPA (04-12-2019)	Flat No-123, 12th Floor Block- B1, Aravali Heights Dwarakshis Project, Sec-24 Dharadhara Gurgaon Haryana : 122001
(LC No. 0770001230 of Ghaziabad Branch)Rahul Dagar (Borrower) Anita Kumari (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 4543465 /-(₹ Forty Five lakh Forty Three Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Five Only) NPA (04-10-2019)	Unit No-B-102,1st Floor Tower B/Block B, Eligent Ville Plot No-gh-06b, Noida Extn., Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 0920000339 of Rohini Branch) Ranjan Bhasin (Borrower) Chitra Bhasin (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3121272 /-(₹ Thirty One lakh Twenty One Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (03-09-2019)	Flat No- H-1001, 10th Floor Tower- H, Kdp, Grand Savana Raj Nagar Ext, Nh-58 Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh : 201011
(LC No. 2740000080 of Bhiwadi Branch) Rashmi Sachdeva (Borrower) Sahil Batra (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2342658 /-(₹ Twenty Three lakh Forty Two Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Eight Only) NPA (04-10-2019)	1702, 17th Floor Gayatri Aura, Gh - II, Sector I, Greater Noida (west) Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201301
(LC No. 2820000038 of Lajpat Nagar Branch) Mukesh Kumar Singh (Borrower) Rekha Singh (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2592474 /-(₹ Twenty Five lakh Ninety Two Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Four Only) NPA (04-08-2019)	Flat No 1308 13th Floor Tower A Gayatri Aura Plot No Gh 11 Sector 1 Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201310
(LC No. 0140000375 of New Delhi Branch) Panka J Choudhary (Borrower) Romita Chugh (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 4669807 /-(₹ Forty Six lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Seven Only) NPA (05-04-2019)	Flat No. 102, 1st Floor Tower-2, Novena Green Sec- Technzone-4 Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 19900041209 of Faridabad - Sector 19 Branch) Praveen Kumar Singh (Borrower) Shobha Devi (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1704632 /-(₹ Seventy Seven lakh Sixty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Only) NPA (05-04-2019)	Flat No 1703 17th Floor Novena Green Sector Technzone 4 Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 2490000300 of Anita Janakpuri Branch) Om Prakash (Borrower) Anita Devi (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 5628738 /-(₹ Fifty Six lakh Twenty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Eight Only) NPA (05-04-2019)	Flat No M-509, Mercury Tower 5th Floor, The Allen Court, Gh-1, Sec 3 Tronica City Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh : 201001
(LC No. 27900000517 of Greater Noida Branch) Kamal Singh Rawat (Borrower) Nirmala Bisht (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 4711853 /-(₹ Forty Seven lakh Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Three Only) NPA (04-07-2018)	A-2007, 20th Floor, Type III Block A Plot No-Gh-06 b, Tech Zone IV, Greater No Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 2560000074 of Karkarduma Noida Branch) Faisal Anis (Borrower) Maryam Fatima (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3885882 /-(₹ Thirty Eight lakh Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Two Only) NPA (04-01-2019)	Flat No 804, 8th Floor, Tower T20 Amarpal L-residencia, Plot No. Gh 06 A Technzone-4, Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 19600041633 of Delhi - Safdurjung Branch) Naresh Kumar Dagar (Borrower) Sunil Kumari (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 8174575 /-(₹ Eighty One lakh Seventy Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Five Only) NPA (04-07-2018)	Flat No. 903 9th Floor Tower B2 M3m Woodshire Sector 107 Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana : 122001
(LC No. 19700041483 of Gurgaon - Sohna Road Branch) Yukti Anand (Borrower) Virender Kumar Anand (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3120674 /-(₹ Thirty One lakh Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Four Only) NPA (06-06-2018)	Flat No. 136 1st Floor Block B Manhar Garden Harish Nagar Sikandra Bodla Road Agra Agra Uttar Pradesh : 282001
(LC No. 2790000293 of Greater Noida Branch) Sunil Kohli (Borrower) Savita Arya (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3231583 /-(₹ Thirty Two lakh Thirty One Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Three Only) NPA (06-06-2018)	Flat No. 329, Third Floor Block B, Manhar Garden Harish Nagar Sikandra Bodla Road Agra Agra Uttar Pradesh : 282001
(LC No. 2000ND38395 of Noida-sector 2 Branch) RAJEN PRADHAN (Borrower) Meenu Pradhan (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 3719930 /-(₹ Thirty Seven lakh Nineteen Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Only) NPA (04-07-2018)	H/Flat No.203, Floor No. 2nd Floor, Plot No. Gh-3a, Block-c,buland Elevates, Sector.16,greater Noida Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh : 201308
(LC No. 0960001267 of New Delhi-west Branch) Kishor Joshi (Borrower) Uma Joshi (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1953215 /-(₹ Nineteen lakh Fifty Three Thousand Two Hundred Fifteen Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	Plot No-b-1/22 & 23, Upper Ground Floor Rear & R.h.s Side Portion, Kh No-104/13 Gall No-05, Raja Puri Uttam Nagar, Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110059
(LC No. 2740000630 of Bhiwadi Branch) Brijesh Singh (Borrower) Madhavi Kumari (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1029602 /-(₹ Ten lakh Twenty Six Thousand Five Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	Flat No I - 1105, 11th Floor, Tower No I, The Rosella, Sec 95, Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana : 122001
(LC No. 19600043026 of Delhi - Safdurjung Branch) Abhishek Shukla (Borrower) Ashish Shukla (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2037958 /-(₹ Twenty lakh Seventeen Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Eight Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	Rag 582, Plot No 73 B & 74 2nd Floor Back Side, Raj Nagar-02, Kh No-50/15 Palam Colony, New Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110045
(LC No. 12100003386 of Gwalior Branch) Chandrapal Singh (Borrower) Shyama Jadon (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 1122389 /-(₹ Eleven lakh Twelve Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Nine Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	Mun. Pro.no.616, Ward No.65 Ganesh Colony, Gadayi Pura, Gram Ajaypur N/o Little Convent School Gwalior Gwalior Madhya Pradesh : 474004
(LC No. 1900001703 of Raj Nagar Branch) Mamta Gupta (Borrower) Aayush Gupta (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2752342 /-(₹ Twenty Seven lakh Fifty Two Thousand Three Hundred Forty Two Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	Plot No-141-c, 2nd/floor Kh No 433/1 Lhs Side Bagwan Nagar Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110014
(LC No. 2000ND38010 of Noida-sector 2 Branch) SUNIL KUMAR (Borrower) Taruna Dang (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 2697273 /-(₹ Twenty Six lakh Ninety Seven Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Three Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	U-41 & 42, Ground Floor Rear (I.h.s) Kh.no.339, Village.bindapur, Block-u Subhash Park, Uttam Nagar New Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110059
(LC No. 19800042251 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Sanjay Kapoor (Borrower) Neha Kapoor (Co Borrower 1)	26-06-2023 / ₹ 501884 /-(₹ Five lakh One Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Four Only) NPA (11-05-2023)	House No- B-18/8 Third Floor With Roof Kharsa 1625/954 Saket Gali Old Goidind Puri Krishna Nagar Delhi New Delhi Delhi : 110051
(LC No.		

Drones hit naval ship in major Russian port

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian sea drones attacked a major Russian port Friday, damaging a naval ship, according to a Ukrainian official, as the Black Sea becomes an increasingly important battleground in the war. Moscow claimed it repelled the attack.



In this photo provided by regional Governor Oleh Kiper rescuers work on a scene of drone attack in Odesa region, Ukraine, early Wednesday. File photo

The strike on Novorossiysk — which halted maritime traffic for a few hours — marks the first time a commercial Russian port has been targeted in the 18-month conflict. The port — which hosts a naval base, ship-building yards and an oil terminal and is key for exports — lies just across the Black Sea from Crimea, where Russia's Defense Ministry said it thwarted another attack overnight.

The Security Service of Ukraine and the country's navy carried out the attack on Novorossiysk, according to an official with the security service, and the landing ship, Olenegorsky Gornyak, suffered a serious breach.

As a result, the ship is unable to carry out its combat missions, the official added, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give the information to the media. Images posted on social media showed a ship listing.

Friday's attack is the latest in a series of strikes inside Russia. It also reflects an increase in fighting in the Black Sea following Moscow's withdrawal from a deal that allowed Ukraine to export its grain through the waterway. On Wednesday, Russian drones caused significant damage and a huge fire at grain facilities in the Odesa region. A day earlier, the Russian military said Kyiv's forces tried to attack two patrol vessels in the sea, southwest of the Russian-controlled city of Sevastopol in Moscow-annexed Crimea.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an advisor to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, heralded the latest attack, saying it showed "drones are changing

the rules of the game ... and ultimately destroying the value of the Russian fleet."

Russia's far superior navy has controlled the seas in the war so far. Its ships fire on major ports and cities across Ukraine, and they have largely blockaded the country's coast as well as mining the Black Sea, making passage through it treacherous. Podolyak's remarks and other recent attacks in the sea and on the Kerch Bridge connecting Crimea to Russia could indicate Ukraine is trying to change that dynamic.

With the latest assault, "Kyiv showed that it can attack any vessel of the Black Sea Fleet, no matter the distance," said Ukrainian military analyst Roman Svytan. The end of the grain deal, under which ships carrying food from Ukrainian ports were promised safe passage, "untied Kyiv's hands," he said, predicting the frequency of attacks on Russian ships would only increase.

Taking on Russia on the seas, however, will be a serious challenge. Russia's navy dwarfs Ukraine's — and after Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014, Ukraine said it lost more than 80 per cent of its naval capabilities. Meanwhile, Russia's Black Sea Fleet has 279 vessels, including 52 warships. So far, Ukrainian attacks have destroyed at least two: the

Saratov landing ship, which sank in the occupied port city of Berdyansk early on in the war, and the fleet's flagship, the Moskva, which also sank early in the war. Several more have been reportedly damaged.

On Friday, Ukrainian news agencies carried footage from social media channels that showed a ship listing to one side that they suggested was the Olenegorsky Gornyak. The ship is designed to transport troops and heavy equipment and was sent for repairs in 2014, according to Russian media reports. It is normally based with Russia's Northern Fleet in the Arctic.

Russia claimed it fended off the attack, saying ships patrolling the perimeter of the naval base, including the Olenegorsky Gornyak, destroyed two sea drones. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which operates an oil terminal in the port, said maritime traffic was halted for a few hours but that its facilities were not damaged. The regional governor said there were no casualties. Footage published on Russian social media channels appeared to show a ship firing into the sea and a burning object exploding. Ukrainian social media channels also posted nighttime video shot from what they indicated was a sea drone, floating near a ship.

Lithuania declares over 1,000 Russians to be national security risks

AP ■ VILNIUS

Lithuania declared more than a thousand citizens of Russia and Belarus living in the country to be threats to national security on Friday and said it was stripping them of their permanent residency permits.

The decision comes after the government asked the Russians and Belarusians to answer a questionnaire that included questions about their views on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the status of Crimea, the Ukrainian territory which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

Lithuania, a Baltic nation which declared its independence from the Soviet Union more than 30 years ago, is a democracy that belongs to NATO and the European Union. It has been a strong backer of Ukraine and also a place of refuge in recent years for many who have fled an authoritarian crackdown in their home countries.

The Migration Department said on Friday that it had established that 1,164 Belarusian and Russian citizens residing in Lithuania posed a threat to national security, a decision that was based on an evaluation of public and non-public information. It said 910 of those were Belarusian citizens and 254 Russian citizens. How people answered the questionnaire was taken into consideration in deciding whether to grant or deny residence, according to the Migration Department, the

government office that carried out the survey.

Those deemed to be national security threats are only a fraction of the Belarusians and Russians living in Lithuania. According to the Migration Department, more than 58,000 Belarusian citizens and 16,000 Russian citizens are currently residing in Lithuania. They are required to renew their residence permits every three years. Those stripped of permits can appeal the decision in court. Others will have up to a month to leave the country, according to the Migration Department.

There was no immediate reaction from the Russian or Belarusian governments. Viktor Voronov, a businessman who moved from Russia several years ago, learned Lithuanian and obtained citizenship, said he agreed with the move. "I know many Russians who served in the Soviet and later in Putin's army. They are married to Lithuanian wives, they live here, maintain close contacts with comrades in arms back in Russia and are spreading Kremlin propaganda constantly," Voronov said. "Lithuania is a democratic country and tolerates different views. Even their propaganda was OK until the war started, but things have changed and they must go," he said.

Lithuania also has an ethnic Russian minority that makes up about 5 per cent of the population. They are citizens of Lithuania and were not required to answer the questionnaire.

2 US Navy sailors charged with providing sensitive info to China

AP ■ SAN DIEGO

Two US Navy sailors were charged on Thursday with providing sensitive military information to China — including details on wartime exercises, naval operations and critical technical material. The two sailors, both based in California, were charged with similar moves to provide sensitive intelligence to the Chinese.

But they were separate cases, and it wasn't clear if the two were courted or paid by the Chinese intelligence officer as part of a larger scheme. Federal officials at a news conference in San Diego declined to specify whether the sailors were aware of each other's actions. Both men pleaded not guilty in federal courts in San Diego and Los Angeles. They were ordered to be held until their detention hearings, which

will take place Aug. 8 in those same cities.

US officials have for years expressed concern about the espionage threat they say the Chinese government poses, bringing criminal cases in recent years against Beijing intelligence operatives who have stolen sensitive government and commercial information, including through illegal hacking. The pair of cases also comes on the heels of another insider-threat prosecution tied to the US military, with the Justice Department in April arresting a Massachusetts Air National Guardsman on charges of leaking classified military documents about Russia's war in Ukraine and other sensitive national security topics on Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games.

US officials said the cases exemplify China's brazenness in

trying to obtain insight into US military operations.

"Through the alleged crimes committed by these defendants, sensitive military information ended up in the hands of the People's Republic of China," said US Attorney Randy Grossman for the Southern District of California. He added that the charges demonstrate the Chinese government's "determination to obtain information that is critical to our national defense by any means, so it could be used to their advantage."

Jinchao Wei, a 22-year-old sailor assigned to the San Diego-based USS Essex, was arrested Wednesday while boarding the ship. He is accused of passing detailed information on the weapons systems and aircraft aboard the Essex and other amphibious assault ships that act as small aircraft carriers.

SL prez slams political efforts to scuttle local debt restructuring

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday slammed what he termed as "efforts" by smaller political groups to derail the domestic debt restructuring (DDR) through court orders.

The government in late June got parliamentary approval for the DDR as part of its efforts to tide over the worst-ever economic crisis. "We got parliamentary approval for local debt restructuring. Some of the opposition groups opposed it. Some didn't come to vote in parlia-

ment," Wickremesinghe said addressing a gathering.

"Now some groups try to sabotage this by using the court. If this programme came to a halt the foreign governments will stop working with us. There will be fuel queues again in the country and the farmers will be left without fertiliser," the president said, underscoring the importance of the debt restructuring programme. He said the government would only be dictated by the Parliament.

"All fiscal matters are handled by the parliament, only the parliament can decide on these

issues," he added.

Wickremesinghe's remarks were an apparent reference to the opposition JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or 'People's Liberation Front') which late in June filed a fundamental rights petition in the Supreme Court seeking an order to prevent the DDR measures being applied to pension funds. Citing 46 respondents, the JVP sought an order that would prevent the curtailment of loans obtained by the government from the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees' Trust Fund (ETF) under the DDR.

Pak NA to be dissolved on August 9: Shehbaz Sharif

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has told the coalition partners that he would recommend the dissolution of the National Assembly on August 9, three days before the end of its term and setting the stage for general elections in the cash-strapped country.

Sharif at a dinner reception hosted in honour of the ruling allies at the Prime Minister's House on Thursday said the National Assembly or the lower house of Parliament would stand dissolved as soon as the President signs the notification he plans to send to him, the Pakistani media reported on Friday.

Sharif, also President of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, has reportedly said that his government will dissolve the National Assembly and the election commission will

Bill to curb money laundering, terror financing passed

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's National Assembly has passed a bill, which will help the country avoid the Financial Action Task Force's grey list forever if it is enforced and properly implemented.

The lower house of Parliament passed the bill on Thursday that seeks to form a central authority to curb money laundering and terror financing, bringing all institutions related to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) under one command. Last year, Pakistan was taken off the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog on terror financing and money laundering, four years after the country was put in the infamous categorisation.

announce general elections under the provisions of the Constitution.

However, if, for any reason, the president does not sign the advice, the 342-member Assembly will be automatically dissolved after 48 hours of receiving the prime minister's notification.

The move will prompt general elections in Pakistan within 90 days as the ruling coalition government gets ready to face polls after the five-year term of Parliament on August 12. The Constitution provides that if the assembly completes its tenure, elections are to be held in 60 days, but in case of premature dissolution - which will be the case here - this period is extended to 90 days. The prime minister will send a notification to President Arif Alvi for the dissolution of the National Assembly on August 9. The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Toshakhana case: HC sets aside lower court's verdict

Islamabad (PTI): In a relief for Imran Khan, a Pakistani high court on Friday set aside a lower court's verdict to uphold the maintainability of the Toshakhana corruption case for criminal proceedings against the former prime minister. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday reserved the judgment on multiple petitions by Khan, 70, against his trial by a district court in the case of sale of state gifts. Announcing the judgement, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on Friday also ordered the session court to decide the matter of maintainability again after a fresh hearing of the case.

On Friday, Pakistan's Supreme Court dismissed Khan's plea against trial proceedings in the corruption case in which the former premier is accused of concealing details of the gifts he retained from the state repository, as he withdrew

the case. While dismissing the plea in the Toshakhana case, the apex court observed that the application seeking the transfer of the case to another court was underway in the IHC. The court expressed the hope that the trial and the IHC will make decisions as per the law. The Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and officials by heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries.

The Toshakhana issue over the sale of state gifts received by the former cricketer-turned-politician became a major issue in national politics after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified Khan for making "false statements and incorrect declaration".

Imran fails to appear before poll panel

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister and chief of PTI Imran Khan on Friday failed to appear before the election commission despite having been served a final notice over the party's failure to hold intra-party elections, according to a media report. Khan, 70, was summoned by the electoral watchdog with a warning that if he failed to appear before the Election Commission of Pakistan, it might declare his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party ineligible to obtain an election symbol for future elections. The Express Tribune newspaper reported. "PTI chairman Imran Khan failed to appear before the Election Commission of Pakistan on Friday despite the notice served on him," the report said.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER SSA-22020/5/2023/240190/2023 Dated 04.08.2023 Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites following bids through GeM portal.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all that our client Mr. Chand Babu S/o. Sh. Bangali Khan R/o. B-43 ground floor, Thoker No.7, Shilpa Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025, hereby disown his son (1) Sh. Qamruddin and his daughter in Law (2) Ms. Nida Arafree from all his moveable and immovable properties and he has severed all his relations from them, henceforth. They shall not be responsible for any act or conduct done by them or their misdeeds. This is applied from after dated: 30/09/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Mohan Dass is the owner of Property/Shop No.277, in Block-A, measuring 636 Sq. Ft. Situated in the layout plan of scheme NSM (New Subz Mandi) Azadpur, Delhi vide Conveyance Deed dated 21.06.2021, Doc No. 4317. All persons are hereby informed that M/s. Shikhar Gauri/ Mr. Mohan Dass wants to mortgage the said property and intend to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said property, its mortgage/litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Kuldeep Sharma is the owner of Eastern Portion of Property Bearing No. 14, area measuring 50 Sq. Yds, out of Total Land 250 Sq. Yds, out of Khra No. 58/1, Situated at Village Hastal Abadi, Known as Mohan Garden, in Block L-I, Phase 1, New Delhi, Delhi, vide G.P.A. AT-5 and will dated 06.10.1995. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner wants to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said property, its mortgage/litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

PUBLIC NOTICE I Usha Malhotra (Aadhaar No. 2713-6386-0100) W/o Late Sh. Pradheep Malhotra R/o E252, DLF Park Phase, DLF Phase-5, Sector-54, Gurugram Haryana-122001 declare that my husband Namely Sh. Pradheep Kumar Malhotra S/o Late Jai Gopal Malhotra has passed away on 09-08-2018, he has left behind the following legal heirs:- 1. Usha Malhotra, 68 Years (Wife), 2. Namita Malhotra Punjabi, 43 Years (Daughter) 3. Mohit Malhotra, 41 Years (Son). There are no other legal heirs Class-1 except the above mentioned. If anyone has any objection regarding this, then he/she may file an objection within 30 days of the publication in the office of Tehsildar Wazirabad, Distt. Gurugram Haryana.

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD. (Government of M.P. Undertaking) Office of The Chief General Manager, Motiheel AB Road Gwalior 474010 Phone No. : 0751 2448200, Fax No. : 0751 2448200 Gwalior, Dt. 03.08.2023 NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS Online tenders are invited for following work from eligible Registered "A" class Electrical Contractor of A3 and above category under MPMKVCL QC portal as per tender specifications.

Aro granite industries ltd. (100% Export Oriented Unit) Regd. Office : 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jasola, New Delhi - 110025 Ph. : 011-41686169, Fax : 011-26941984, Email : investorgrievance@arogranite.com, Website : www.arogranite.com EXTRACT OF STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, खटीमा, ऊधमसिंह नगर ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक : 04.08.2023 मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, देहरादून की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान/उत्तराखण्ड भेयजल निगम में पंजीकृत फर्म/टेकदारों से ई-निविदा (दू बिड सिस्टम) आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से संबंधित सभी सूचना www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 05.08.2023 की सायं 05:00 बजे से उपलब्ध होगी।

Curbs on laptop, PC imports to check IT hardware loopholes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has imposed a licensing requirement for the import of laptops, tablets and personal computers to guard against IT hardware coming in with in-built security loopholes that may potentially endanger sensitive personal and enterprise data, top sources said.

With India having sufficient capacity for IT hardware devices manufacturing, the requirement of purchasers needing permission to import laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers, and ultra-small computers and servers will not in any way hit domestic availability, sources aware of the thinking behind the government move said.

Sources said the government is committed to ensuring that the Internet in India is 'open, safe and trusted and accountable' for all users. With the expansion of the Internet and more and more Indians coming online, the possibility of citizens being exposed to user harm and criminality has also increased. Various incidents of cybersecurity threats have also been reported.

The inbuilt security loopholes like hardware backdoors and firmware malware in IT hardware may be potentially



endangering sensitive personal and enterprise data, they said, adding providing secure hardware is the foundation for security.

The government has introduced this policy condition in order to protect the security interest of the country and its citizens, they said.

According to sources, the non-tariff barrier is not a ban on imports. Companies/traders can import IT hardware devices after obtaining a valid license from DGFT.

DGFT has prepared a portal, and companies/traders can apply online for getting a license. It is expected that DGFT will issue a license within 3/4 days if details are filled in properly.

Goods/consignments in transit will be allowed without an import license. Prior to the Directorate

General of Foreign Trade notification of August 3, regulations allowed companies to import laptops freely.

The notification, however, gives exceptions to certain categories, including the import of one laptop, tablet, all-in-one personal computer, or ultra-small form factor computer coming as part of baggage allowance.

Also, imports of 20 number of IT devices per consignment for R&D, testing, benchmarking and evaluation as well as imports for repair and re-export, and for product development purposes are also exempt. Re-import of goods repaired abroad, and devices coming as essential parts of capital goods are also exempt.

Sources said India has sufficient capacity for IT hardware devices and to further boost domestic manufacturing and

create an economy of scale for IT hardware, the government has notified production linked incentive scheme 2.0 in May this year, which will ultimately result in further lowering of the prices for IT hardware products.

In PLI 2.0 IT Hardware Scheme, 44 companies have already been registered as of July 31. Companies can submit applications till 30th August 2023.

After this Non-Tariff Barrier, IT Hardware OEMs or EMS players will recalculate their yearly production targets understanding that imports will almost stop (by around 93 per cent) in four years' time.

As per information, except for Apple, all other big IT hardware companies, like Dell, HP, HPE, Lenovo, ASUS, ACER, Intel, and local brands are participating directly or through EMS players in PLI 2.0 for IT Hardware scheme, sources said.

The government has been promoting local manufacturing and discouraging imports under the 'Make in India' plan.

India's electronics imports, which include laptops, tablets and personal computers, stood at USD 19.7 billion in the April to June period, up 6.25 per cent year-on-year.

In 2022-23, personal computer, including laptop, imports stood at USD 5.33 billion in 2022-23.

Markets halt 3-day losing run

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty snapped their three-session losing streak to close nearly 1 per cent higher on Friday, buoyed by gains in HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Infosys amid a largely firm trend in global markets. After three days of decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 480.57 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 65,721.25. During the day, it jumped 558.59 points or 0.85 per cent to 65,799.27.

The NSE Nifty advanced 135.35 points or 0.70 per cent to end at 19,517. On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark fell by 438.95 points or 0.66 per cent, and the Nifty dipped 129.05 points or 0.65 per cent. "Markets witnessed respite after the recent fall and gained over half a per cent. After the gap-up start, Nifty hovered in a band throughout the session and finally settled at 19,517 levels.

"Meanwhile, a mixed trend on the sectoral front kept traders busy, wherein IT, pharma and banking posted decent gains. The broader indices too participated in the move and gained nearly a per cent each," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

IndusInd Bank was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.25 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, RIL, TCS, L&T and Infosys. In contrast, State Bank of India, NTPC, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Motors and Power Grid were among the laggards, slipping up to 2.94 per cent. "The market had been falling for three consecutive sessions, and a relief rally was already expected, which came in on the back of a rating upgrade by Morgan Stanley as India remains a bright spot in an otherwise tepid world economy.

"Fitch Ratings' move to downgrade US government credit had triggered a global market sell-off in the last few sessions, but India's buoyant economic show in the last few quarters means investors cannot ignore domestic equity markets for long and would keep coming after every short-term correction," Amol Athawale, Vice President - Technical Research, Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent, and the midcap index



advanced 0.65 per cent. Among the indices, IT rallied 1.47 per cent, telecommunication jumped 1.45 per cent, teck (1.39 per cent), financial services (0.83 per cent), capital goods (0.66 per cent) and bankex (0.66 per cent).

Utilities, auto, oil & gas and power were the laggards. "Global stock markets steadied on Friday before a US non-farm payrolls report that could influence interest rate plans. German factory orders unexpectedly rebounded in June driven by foreign demand, while France's industrial production declined 0.9 per cent in June, following a revised 1.1 per cent growth in May, separate reports showed," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory while Seoul settled lower.

European markets were trading with gains in early deals. The US markets ended marginally lower in the overnight trade on Thursday.



Go First insolvency: NCLT directs RP to file details on recent developments

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Friday directed the resolution professional of cash-strapped grounded airlines Go First to submit details of the subsequent developments.

A two-member bench of NCLT, comprising Mahendra Khandelwal and Rahul P Bhatnagar, directed the resolution professional (RP) to file an additional affidavit in the next 10 days, including the status of the maintenance of the leased aircraft.

Moreover, the insolvency tribunal has also asked the RP to file the reply over the pleas filed by three new Go First lessors in two weeks and a rejoinder, if any, by them next week. It has directed to list the matter on September 1 for the next hearing.

The three new lessors are - DAE (SY 22) 13 Ireland, EOS Aviation 12 Ireland and Accipiter Investments Aircraft 2 Ltd. Pleadings on the petitions filed by six other lessors have been completed.

During the proceeding, Senior Advocate Ramji Srivivasan, representing the RP, informed the tribunal that Go First has approached the Supreme Court against the orders of the Delhi High Court.

Earlier a single-member bench of the Delhi High Court had permitted the lessors of Go First to access and inspect the planes they had leased to the air-

line. This was also upheld by the division bench of the high court, following which Go First moved to the apex court.

Srinivasan told the NCLT that Go First has moved the Supreme Court to seek clarity over the orders passed by the high court and NCLT over the status of around 30 aeroplane and their engines.

Earlier on July 26, the NCLT rejected pleas of the lessors of Go First to restrain the airline from commercial flying, saying aircraft are available for flight resumption since aviation regulator DGCA has not deregistered the carrier.

NCLT held that physical possession of the aircraft/engines would be "indisputably" with Go First and lessors cannot claim possession during the CIRP of the carrier. The tribunal had also declined the lessors' pleas for inspection of their leased aeroplanes and engines and strongly reiterated that it was the responsibility of the resolution professional to maintain them at the highest levels of efficiency/safety.

"The physical possession of the aircraft/engines is indisputable with the corporate debtor (Go First). Therefore, in terms of Section 14(1)(d), the applicants would not be within their rights to claim possession of these aircraft/engines," the NCLT bench said in its 29-page order passed on the petitions filed by several lessors of Go First.

DVC plans capex of ₹70,000 crore by 2030 to increase power generation capacity



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Multipurpose project Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) has drawn up capital expenditure plans of around Rs 70,000 crore by 2030 to boost power generation capacity from 6,700 MW at present to 16,000 MW, its chairman R N Singh said on Friday.

He said DVC will increase its coal-fired power generation capacity through brownfield expansion, while it also plans to invest in the renewable energy sector, Singh said.

Speaking at the Bengal Power Conclave organised by IEEMA here, Singh said "DVC will make a capital expenditure of Rs 70,000 crore in augmenting power generation capacity by 2030. The present installed capacity of 6,700 MW will go up to 16,000 MW". Thermal capacity expansion will be through the brownfield route, he added.

Singh said DVC will also make investments in the renewable energy sector by setting up floating and land-based solar power plants. He said the potential for harnessing solar energy will be about 2,000 MW under the DVC command area.

"DVC has already floated a tender of 310 MW in this regard, while another one for 750 MW is being evaluated. The floating solar power plants will be set up on the dams under the command area of DVC", he added. DVC has already formed a JV with NTPC for renewable energy projects.

'India within pole-vaulting distance to be able to replace China as factory to world'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is within a pole-vaulting distance of being able to replace China as the factory to the world and the suspicions of the neighbour's ambitions and post-Covid supply chain disruptions have also worked in the country's favour, Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra said on Friday.

In his address to the shareholders of Mahindra & Mahindra at the company's AGM, Mahindra used the metaphor of a pole vaulter, who needs multiple factors to converge for a successful pole vault and said the comparison is "even more apt in today's times because India is ready to pole vault".

"We are well into the run-up. The Indian economy is growing at 7 per cent when many countries are heading for recession," Mahindra said.

Geopolitical tensions with China are pushing many manufacturers in India's direction, he



said, adding, "But that is not the only reason. Economics also enters into it. India actually has the cheapest manufacturing costs in the world. It is not surprising that, of late, companies of the stature of Apple, Samsung, Boeing, and Toshiba have shifted a significant amount of their manufacturing activity to India." It is not just the Western nations, Mahindra said, adding, "Would it surprise you to know that the second largest investor in India is Singapore? We are within pole-vaulting distance of being able to replace China as the factory to the world." He further said, "Suspicious

of China's ambitions and post-Covid supply chain disruptions have also worked in India's favour. And we are well placed to take advantage of this. We have massively improved our performance on the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index. Our thrust on infrastructure is paying off."

As the world functions digitally today, Mahindra said India is in an enviable position on digital infrastructure.

"The cost of 1 GB of mobile data in India is the cheapest among major economies, and how. So is the cost of mobile internet. We are 73 times cheaper than South Korea, which has the highest cost of mobile data among major economies. I believe India is generating enough kinetic energy for a spectacular pole vault takeoff," he asserted.

He stressed on taking the fullest advantage of India's increasing stature on the world stage.

Oil India gets Maharatna status, ONGC Videsh becomes Navratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has approved the upgradation of Oil India Ltd to the category of 'Maharatna', a move which will impart enhanced powers to the OIL board while taking financial decisions.

Post the upgrade, the state-run oil major has become India's 13th Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE).

"Finance Minister approved upgradation of Oil India Ltd (OIL) to Maharatna CPSE. OIL will be the 13th Maharatna amongst the CPSEs. OIL is a M/o Petroleum & Natural Gas CPSE with annual turnover of Rs 41,039 crore and net profit of Rs 9,854 crore for the Year 2022-23," the Department of



Public Enterprises said in a post on Twitter, now branded as X.

In another post, the Department of Public Enterprises shared: "Finance Minister has approved the upgradation of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) to Navratna CPSE. OVL will be 14th Navratna amongst the CPSEs. It is a M/o Petroleum & Natural Gas CPSE with annual turnover of Rs 11,676 crore and net profit of Rs 1,700 crore for the Year 2022-23".

The other companies included in the Maharatna list are Bharat Heavy Electricals

Limited (BHEL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Coal India Limited, GAIL India Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited, NTPC Limited, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Power Finance Corporation, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, Rural Electrification Corporation Limited and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

To be eligible for the grant of the Maharatna status, the company should have an average turnover of over Rs 25,000 crore, an average annual net worth of more than Rs 15,000 crore, and an average annual net profit of over Rs 5,000 crore during the last three years.



India to be developed nation by 2047, modernising infra at rapid pace: Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister R K Singh on Friday said India is poised to become a developed nation by 2047, as the country is modernising its infrastructure at a rapid pace. Addressing a press conference Singh said, "Now we are transforming ourselves into a developed country. We will be a developed country."

Stressing that India is modernising its infrastructure at a rapid pace, he said the total length of expressway at present is 3,106 km, which was 353 km in 2014.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India will be a developed country by 2047.

The minister stated that the pace of infrastructure development is unprecedented and capital expenditure for the purpose has increased nearly five times since 2014, when the NDA government came into power and trebled since 2019.

He stressed that there has been rapid pace of modernisation of infrastructure development in the country and cited the example of roll out of Vande Bharat Express service which is an engine-less train.

Indigenously developed semi-high speed, Vande Bharat trains with best riding quality and fastest acceleration (100 Kmph in 52 second) were introduced on February 15, 2019.

So far, 25 train sets have been started covering all the

SBI shares fall nearly 3%; market valuation declines by ₹15,484 cr post earnings announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday fell by nearly 3 per cent after the company's first quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

The stock declined 2.94 per cent to settle at Rs 573.25 on the BSE. During the day, it fell by 3.23 per cent to Rs 571.50.

On the NSE, it dropped 2.92 per cent to end at Rs 573.20. The stock was the biggest laggard on both Sensex and Nifty indices.

The company's market valuation declined by Rs 15,484.2 crore to Rs 5,11,603.38 crore.

In traded volume terms, 27.42 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 5.27 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

On Friday, the 30-share Sensex climbed 480.57 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 65,721.25 points while Nifty advanced 135.35 points or 0.70 per cent to end at 19,517 points.

The country's biggest bank SBI on Friday posted an over two-fold jump in standalone net profit at Rs 16,884 crore for the first quarter of the current financial year, helped by decline in bad loans and improvement in interest income.

It had reported a net profit of Rs 6,068 crore in the April-June quarter of 2022-23.

BUSINESS BRIEF

AI-POWERED CLINICAL SUPPORT SYSTEM
NEW DELHI: Redcliffe Labs, a top Pan India diagnostics service provider, has partnered with healthcare giant Abbott India to introduce AI-powered Clinical Decision Support (CDS) system, AlinIQ. It aims to transform healthcare by offering personalized insights, empowering healthcare professionals and consumers. Redcliffe Labs leads the industry, adopting the cutting-edge technology to enhance patient care and revolutionize medical decisions.

PUMPS & VALVES MAKER'S GROWTH
MUMBAI: KSB Limited, a leading pumps and valves manufacturer, achieved a 24.8 per cent sales growth in H1 2023 compared to H1 2022. Q2 order intake rose by 26 per cent YoY. CRISIL rated the company's Governance score at 70 and ESG score at 56. KSB aims to maintain a strong performance throughout the year with a focus on sustainability and value for stakeholders. We remain optimistic about the demand situation as a consistent upward trend is seen in our export business, said Farrokh Bhatnaha, VP, sales and marketing, KSB Limited.

GOLD REMAINS FLAT; SILVER FALLS ₹100
NEW DELHI: Gold price remained flat at Rs 60,100 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC Securities. However, silver fell by Rs 100 to Rs 74,900 per kilogram. In the global market, gold was flat at USD 1,934 per ounce while silver was down at USD 23.47 per ounce. Gold remains under pressure this week following rising treasury yields and a stronger dollar index.

Rupee falls 8 paise to close at over 2-month low against US dollar

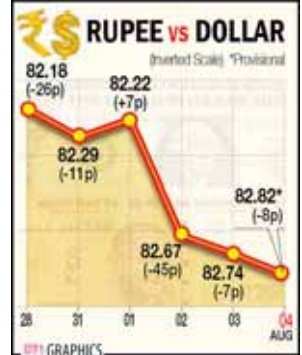
PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee fell by 8 paise to settle at a more than two-month low against the US dollar on Friday weighed down by safe-haven dollar demand and higher crude oil prices. Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit, analysts said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 82.73 against the dollar and finally ended the day at 82.82 (provisional), registering a fall of 8 paise from its previous close.

During the session, the local unit touched a peak of 82.72 and hit the lowest level of 82.85. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 82.74 against the dollar.

The Indian rupee settled lower following safe-haven dol-



lar demand and higher crude oil prices, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities said.

In the week gone, foreign institutions were net sellers of USD 273 million in domestic equities while the rupee fell nearly 0.7 per cent.

DLF's net debt falls 92 pc to record low ₹57 cr at end of June qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm DLF's net debt has come down by 92 per cent to Rs 57 crore — the lowest level — at the end of the first quarter of this fiscal on better cash flow driven by strong housing sales. According to an investors' presentation, DLF's net debt stood at Rs 57 crore as on June 30, 2023 as compare to Rs 721 crore at the end of 2022-23 fiscal. During the period under review, the company's gross debt also fell to Rs 3,068 crore from Rs 3,840 crore.

"We continue to focus on strengthening our balance sheet and cash generation. Strong collections led to a further reduction in net debt during the quarter. Consequently, our net debt now stands reduced to the lowest ever at Rs 57 crore," DLF's Group Chief Financial Officer Vivek Anand told investors. As per the transcript of the investors' call, Anand said, "With these low



levels of debt, we have almost achieved our commitment of being net zero and hopefully should end the year with a surplus cash position."

Recently, DLF reported a 12 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 527 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal and announced its re-entry into the Mumbai property market to develop a housing project.

The company's net profit stood at Rs 469.57 crore in the year ago period. Total income rose marginally to Rs 1,521.71 crore in the April-June period of

2023-24 financial year from Rs 1,516.28 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing.

DLF's sales bookings remained flat at Rs 2,040 crore in the June quarter. The company also announced it will invest Rs 400 crore as equity to develop a real estate project, comprising 35 lakh square feet of estimated saleable area, in Mumbai in partnership with NCR-based builder Trident group.

The company plans to launch the first phase of the Mumbai project, comprising 9 lakh square feet of residential space, by the end of this fiscal year. DLF is India's largest realty firm in terms of market capitalisation.

It has developed more than 158 real estate projects and an area of over 340 million square feet. DLF Group has 215 million square feet of development potential across residential and commercial segments. The group has an annuity portfolio of over 42 million square feet.

PRANNOY, RAJAWAT TO FACE OFF IN SEMIFINALS

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Star shuttler PV Sindhu bowed out but HS Prannoy and young Priyanshu Rajawat notched up contrasting wins to set up an enticing all-Indian men's singles semifinal clash in the Australian Open Super 500 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Orleans Masters champion Rajawat will make his maiden appearance in a semifinal of a Super 500 tournament after knocking out compatriot Kidambi Srikanth 21-13 21-8 in a lop-sided men's singles quarterfinal. World number 9 Prannoy came out victorious after a slugfest with world number 2 Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia, bouncing back from an opening game reversal to notch up a gritty 16-21 21-17 21-14 in a 73-minute battle.

Two-time Olympic medalist Sindhu, who has slipped to world number 17 following a series of early exits, was looking to make her fourth semifinal of the season but found it tough to tame USA's world number 12 Beibei Zhang, losing 12-21 17-21 in 39 minutes.

In their 10 past meetings, Sindhu had won six times against her opponent. The last time she faced Zhang, the Indian had beaten her in straight games in the 2020 All England Championship.

But Sindhu just couldn't get going on Friday against the 33-year-old China-born American, who showed better control to come up trumps.

Sindhu, the 2019 world champion, had beaten compatriots Ashmita Chahla and Aakarshi Kashyap in the first two rounds but her loss to Zhang would come as a big disappointment ahead of the World Championships in Copenhagen,



Denmark, to be held from August 21 to 27. Both Prannoy and Ginting came into the match with a 2-2 head-to-head record with the Indonesian having the last laugh in their previous encounter at the All England Championships in March this year.

Sixth seed Prannoy fell behind right from the start with Ginting dominating the rallies, leading 11-6 at the break.

The Indian had his moments but it was too little as the Indonesian kept a firm grip on the match, maintaining a four-point lead. At 14-19, Prannoy reeled off two quick points before Ginting prevailed to take a 1-0 lead. The second game started on an even keel with the duo fighting close before Prannoy broke off at 9-9 to take a slender two-point lead at the break. He jumped to a 14-9 advantage

before Ginting cut the deficit to 12-15. The Indian shuttler moved to seven-game points but squandered four of them before taking the contest to the decider.

In the third game, Prannoy galloped to 4-0 lead but Ginting managed to make it 7-8 before the Indian eked out an 11-7 advantage. Prannoy extended his lead to 15-8 when Ginting scripted a fine recovery with five straight points to make it 13-15 but the Indian squashed the mutiny and soon shut the door on his top-seeded rival.

Prannoy will go into the semifinal with a 1-0 advantage against world number 31 Rajawat, having beaten him at the Syed Modi International in 2022.

However, Rajawat, the 21-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, who had joined Pullela Gopichand's Gwalior academy at the age of 8, has improved by leaps and bounds in the last 12 months, having stretched Ginting, Japan's Kodai Naraoka and compatriot Lakshya Sen to three games this season.

In a battle between a senior pro and one trying to find his place in the international circuit, Rajawat gave ample display of his talent as he slowly grabbed a 11-6 lead at the interval against Srikanth.

On resumption, the former world number 1 narrowed down the lead to 11-13 after winning five of the next seven points, but Rajawat broke off with a four-point burst to create a 19-13 gap which Srikanth couldn't bridge.

The young Indian was faster and more precise in his return and maintained his momentum to zoom to an 11-3 lead after the change of sides. He kept a hold on the match to eventually close out the match without much ado.



Murray beats Nakajima in ATP Washington opener

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Andy Murray held firm in a 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 victory over Brandon Nakajima in the ATP hardcourt tournament in Washington on Wednesday, the British great's first match since an epic second-round exit at Wimbledon.

The 36-year-old Scot, ranked 44th in the world, saved all six break points he faced against the 70th-ranked American to reach the third round.

That included one in the final game, when a double fault left Murray down 30-40.

He responded with a deft, angled forehand drop shot to end a long rally and followed up with a service winner before closing out the contest with a booming forehand winner.

"It got really tense toward the end," Murray said, thanking a vocal crowd for their support. "The adrenaline, butterflies, nerves, that makes you feel alive. I still enjoy that."

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray admitted last month he didn't know if he'd be back at Wimbledon again after falling in five sets to world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round. He hasn't made the second week of a Grand Slam since reaching the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in 2017 as two hip surgeries threatened to end his career.

His first match win in Washington since 2018 showed he's still relishing the fight.

He trailed 5-2 in the first-set tiebreaker, winning five straight points to claim the set.

He broke Nakajima to open the second set and held on from there. "The courts and the balls are extremely slow here, so you're having to work really hard in all of the games, it's not easy to finish points," Murray said. "It was a good one to get through."

Murray, who had a first-round bye, next faces top-seeded Taylor Fritz or fellow American Zachary Svajda.

In other matches Wednesday, Japan's Yosuke Watanuki shocked third-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (12/10), 7-6 (7/3) and 11th-seeded Wimbledon quarter-finalist Christopher Eubanks beat Japan's Sho Shimabukuro 6-3, 6-4. At 12th in the world, Auger-Aliassime is the highest-ranked player the 99th-ranked Watanuki has beaten.



Svitolina reaches Washington WTA quarter-finals

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Ukraine's Elina Svitolina continued her dominance of Daria Kasatkina, taking her career record over the Russian to 8-0 with a 6-2, 6-2 victory Wednesday in the WTA hardcourt tournament in Washington.

Unseeded Svitolina's second victory over her fifth-seeded Russian rival saw her into the quarter-finals, where she'll face either top-seeded American Jessica Pegula or lucky loser Peyton Stearns.

"I just try to fight each time I play Dasha," said Svitolina, who also beat Kasatkina in straight sets in the fourth round at Roland Garros this year.

"She's a tough opponent to

face, and each time I try to play just one extra ball over the net, to take and dictate the game. I'm really happy I won the match today."

Svitolina, playing her eighth tournament since returning from maternity leave, belted 29 groundstroke winners, including 22 on her forehand.

She saved all 10 break points she faced, nine of them coming in just two games — her gritty hold to claim the opening set and a marathon game for a 5-1 lead in the second. When the match ended, Svitolina stuck to her policy of declining to shake her Russian opponent's hand, although at Roland Garros she commended Kasatkina for speaking out against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

France warned to 'pull their socks up' or pay World Cup price

AFP ■ SYDNEY

France coach Herve Renard has warned his team they must keep their focus or it "can all come tumbling down" after being stunned by an early goal from Panama and leaking another two late on.

Women's World Cup debutants Panama silenced the world number five with a strike in the first minute of their Group F clash in Sydney on Wednesday before France woke up to race 5-1 ahead.

But with a last-16 place secure, France eased off and were punished twice more by a team ranked 47 places lower.

Renard accused his team of looking for "an easy game" and said they did not exist at a World



Cup. "My girls weren't playing as they should have been playing and, collectively, we were looking for the easy solution, the easy game, forgetting that in a World Cup, you need to show respect," Renard said after the 6-3 win.

"Everything that you've built up can come tumbling down in a matter of seconds."

France rested captain Wendie Renard, and when her replacement Grace Geyoro came off among a slew of substitutions to give other players a chance they lacked leadership.

Renard said it was a wake-up call for those who came on, including Laurina Fazer, Amel Majri and Viviane Assseyi.

"We were 5-1 up, with the game in the bag ... you see this often in football. It was poor attitude from the girls for a few minutes," he said.

"This shows the ones who are hoping to be part of the starting 11, they need to work a little bit harder and pull their socks up, because what I saw maybe wasn't good enough."

France will face the runners-up from Group H in the last 16 on Tuesday — possibly two-time champions Germany.

Paris FC attacking midfielder Clara Mateo said the defensive mistakes must be fixed or they could be in trouble.

"We were quite consistent offensively because we scored six times," she said, with Kadidiatou Diani hitting a hat-trick.

"However, we conceded three goals so we will have to check what happened to fix our defensive mistakes."

"We know that in the knockout stage, it could be fatal so we need to improve the defensive aspect and keep on scoring goals."

Brazilian winger Lucas Moura returns to Sao Paulo

AFP ■ SAO PAULO

Brazilian winger Lucas Moura, formerly of Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain, finalized a deal Wednesday to return to his boyhood team, Sao Paulo, the club said.

"Lucas is back!" Sao Paulo FC said in a statement, making the 30-year-old international the latest South American footballer to head home for a late-career swan song.

The winger, whose contract with Tottenham ended in June, will join Colombian forward James Rodriguez, 32, whose signing with Sao Paulo was announced Saturday.

Moura made his professional debut with Sao Paulo in 2010,



winning the Copa Sudamericana with them two years later before heading to Europe for a decade.

Returning to the club "is a whirlwind of emotions," he said in the statement.

"Just remembering everything I lived through here, coming back after all this time, it's very exciting. I'm very happy."

Sao Paulo transferred Moura to PSG in 2012 for a \$53-million fee, the biggest at the time for a Brazilian team.

After struggling to make his mark at the star-studded French club, he left in 2018 to join Tottenham, where he memorably scored a hat-trick against Ajax in the 2019 Champions League semi-final, before the club's loss to Liverpool in the final.

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

Captain urges under-fire USA to raise game in World Cup knockouts

United States captain Lindsey Horan has called on the holders to "raise the standard" heading into the Women's World Cup knockout phase but defended her team against criticism that followed their goalless draw with Portugal.

The two-time defending champions limped through to a last-16 tie against Sweden after holding on for a 0-0 stalemate against Portugal at Eden Park on Tuesday.

That result saw them advance from their group in second place behind the Netherlands with just one win from three games.

US women's team great Carli Lloyd hit out at their performance, calling them "lacklustre" and "uninspiring" in her role as a TV pundit.

Lloyd also suggested the holders looked arrogant, but Horan hit back.

"It is kind of frustrating for me to hear, especially knowing this team and knowing how much we put into every single game," Horan told reporters in Auckland on Thursday.

that we faced. For me it is noise.

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and we know that is how it goes, but I always want to defend my team and say you have no idea what is going on behind the scenes."

Horan's 2019 World Cup-winning teammate Lloyd has since sought to play down her post-game comments.

"For anyone to question our mentality hurts a little bit but at the end of the day it doesn't really matter. I don't really care," said midfielder Horan, 29, who plays for French champions Lyon.

The USA's displays in New Zealand have raised doubts about their ability to cope with a multi-ability European threat in the knockout stage.

"Find the joy"

Sweden are up next in Melbourne, and the world's third-ranked team beat the USA 3-0 when the sides last met at the Olympics in Tokyo two years



ago. If Vlatko Andonovski's US team beat Sweden, they will return to Auckland for a quarter-final against either Japan or Norway.

European champions Eng-

land, Germany, France and co-hosts Australia are all in the other half of the draw.

"I think we are getting better and better but we need to raise the standard because all

these European teams and all these teams around the world are catching up, are bringing a different aspect," Horan admitted.

"We can't just physically

outdo teams, we actually have to be better with the ball, and be able to combine and play out. I think this team is fully capable of that. We are in a good place."

Sweden and the USA will be meeting at a sixth consecutive World Cup on Sunday, having been drawn in the same group in each of the last five editions.

The USA emerged 2-0 winners in 2019 when Horan scored the opener. "We are going to move forward, it's a new tournament starting now, it's the knockout stages," said Horan, who urged her team to "find the joy in it a little bit more".

That sentiment was shared by her teammate Lynn Williams, the 30-year-old forward appearing at her debut World Cup and who was handed a first start against Portugal.

"We need to be joyful that we made it to the round of 16 and not diminish that accomplishment," Williams said.

"That was the name of the game the whole time, to get out of the group stage, and that is exactly what we did."

"Of course we want to be playing better but tournaments are about results and we are getting results."



Argentine footballer's knee fully dislocated in Libertadores injury

AFP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Argentine footballer Luciano Sanchez could be out for up to a year after his left knee was entirely dislocated in a chilling injury the likes of which his doctor said he has never seen.

The injury took place after Fluminense's Marcelo accidentally stepped with his full weight on the Argentinos Juniors defender's shin, bending his leg entirely backwards and prompting gasps of horror on and off

the field.

"In 23 years as a doctor I have never seen anything like this, it is almost a separation of the femur and fibula," Argentinian doctor Alejandro Ronconi told D Sports Radio on Wednesday. He said Sanchez, 29, would undergo several surgeries to reconstruct the knee, and "recovery takes between 10 and 12 months."

The injury took place at 55 minutes, and the former Real Madrid player Marcelo broke down in tears as he was sent off.

AFTER INDIA DEBUT, TILAK HOPES FOR WORLD CUP CALL

PTI ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

Tilak Varma was not expecting to make his India debut so soon in his career, but having realised his dream, he is hoping to achieve his next target: win a World Cup.

The 20-year-old Varma, who was part of the 2020 U-19 World Cup squad, scored a fearless 39 off 22 balls in his maiden outing with the senior India team during the opening T20I against the West Indies, which the visitors lost by four runs.

"Everyone has this dream of playing for the country, I never thought that I will be able to play for India so soon in my career, because, after the Under-19 World Cup, there was the coronavirus issue which happened, so I thought let me just use the opportunity that I get," Varma said in a video posted by the BCCI.

Varma, who plays for Mumbai Indians, amassed 343 runs at an average of 42.8 in 11 matches in the 2023 IPL season, besides scoring 397 runs in 14 matches in the 2022 edition.

"From childhood, it has been my goal to win India the World Cup. In my mind, I always think about ways how to win the World Cup. I keep visualising everyday that I will go and bat in this number and win World Cup," he said.

"Now I got the India jersey and I used to visualise, but now, it has come true, so I feel that moment (of winning World Cup) will also come soon. This is a great feeling, I can't express it, everyone asks me but I am just feeling really happy and proud."



So taking it step by step, let's see how it happens."

While the upcoming ODI World Cup is scheduled to be held in India in October-November, the next T20 World Cup, co-hosted by the West Indies and USA, is expected to begin on June 4 next year.

Varma also received a surprise message from his MI colleague, Dewald Brevis of South Africa, congratulating him on his India debut.

"Hey brother, I hope you are very excited. I don't know if I am more excited than you, but I just want to say from my side and from the Brevis family, congratulations on your debut," Brevis said in a video.

"It's such a great moment for you and your family. I can just imagine how happy your parents and everyone must be. It's great to see you out there, living your dream out."

ICC fines India, WI for slow over-rate in first T20I

PTI ■ DUBAI

India and West Indies have been fined for maintaining a slow over-rate in the first T20 International of the five-match series at Tarouba, Trinidad.

While India were fined five per cent of their match fee for falling one over short of the minimum over-rate on Thursday night, West Indies have been docked 10 per cent of their match fee for falling two overs short of the minimum over-rate.

Richie Richardson of the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Hardik Pandya and Rovman Powell's sides were ruled to be one and two



overs short respectively of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and

Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined five per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time, subject to a cap of 50 per cent of the match fee.

According to an ICC release, Pandya and Powell pleaded guilty to the offences and accepted the proposed sanctions, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Gregory Brathwaite and Patrick Gustard, third umpire Nigel Duguid and fourth umpire Leslie Reifer levelled the charges.

India lost the first T20I by four runs. The second match of the series will be played at Providence, Guyana on Sunday.

No concerns around India's long tail: Arshdeep

PTI ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

Left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh brushed aside concerns around India's long tail after their shock loss in the first T20 International against the West Indies, saying such things are only discussed after a defeat.

The list of specialist batters ended with Sanju Samson at number six in the first game of the five-match series, which India lost by four runs.

"Not really," said Arshdeep when asked about the concerns around the batting order that has Axar Patel, a left-arm spinner who has vastly improved with bat in recent times, at number seven.

"These kind of things always come after the end of the match. The playing XI we fielded, we were confident that we would win the match. We always back our playing XI whether it has six bowlers or nine. It doesn't matter at all," he added.

Arshdeep, who conceded four wickets in the penultimate over of the West Indies innings, said the Indian team will "review" the loss.

Chasing a modest target of 150, India were restricted to 145 for nine as the West Indies prevailed by four runs at the Brian Lara Stadium.

While the extras bowled in the 19th over may have made the difference to the final outcome, Arshdeep tried his bit with the bat and hit two fours in his seven-ball 12 that nearly took India home after the fancied visitors self-destructed.

"I guess we needed one batter to stay till the end because in their last two over, five fielders were inside the 30

yard circle," the 24-year-old player said at the post-match press conference.

"We will review the match. What we could have done better in the first innings. Where we could have kept things tight and as a batting unit in the second innings where did we miss the finishing part."

The game was in the balance when skipper Hardik Pandya was bowled by the seasoned Jason Holder with India needing 37 off 29 balls.

India then required 10 off the final over with three wickets in hand but couldn't seal the game in their favour.

In the 19th over of the India innings, Arshdeep struck two fours to keep India in the fray but he could not get the team over the line.

"Any player who is in that kind of situation do believe that he can win the match for the team. When you play for your country, you always get that extra push," he said.

The highly-promising Tilak Varma shone on his international debut with a 22-ball 39 but Arshdeep said his wicket was not the turning point of the match.

"I can't say it was the turning point. It is his style of playing. He plays a lots of attacking shots and in those he will give chances but as we have seen, he is massively talented and he did so well on his debut, when he was immensely under pressure and not to forget we were chasing."

"He played few beautiful shots and I think he should always back his game and in the future he will help team win a lot of matches," Arshdeep said.

The teams will play the next two matches in Guyana with the final two games scheduled for Lauderdale, Florida next week.



Yuzvendra Chahal in batting order confusion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India lost the 1st T20I against West Indies at Brian Lara Stadium on Thursday at Brian Lara Stadium. Impressive performances by bowlers especially pacers helped West Indies to beat India by four runs.

Captain Rovman Powell (48) and Nicolas Pooran (41) top-scored for West Indies as other batters couldn't stay long on the crease.

For India, Yuzvendra Chahal (2/24), Arshdeep Singh (2/31) got two wickets each while skipper Hardik Pandya and Kuldeep Yadav claimed one wicket apiece.

Chasing a challenging total on bowler friendly pitch, Indian openers Ishan Kishan (6) and Shubman Gill (3) got out cheaply inside the first five overs. India were in deep trouble at 28-2 in 4.5 overs but Suryakumar Yadav (21 off 21) and debutant Tilak Varma (39 off 22) joined hands to revive India's innings.

Despite playing his first match for India, Tilak didn't look in any sort of pressure and played some glorious shots. On the other hand, Suryakumar wasn't at his fluent best but he was giving enough support from the other end.

During the 20th over Kuldeep Yadav was clean-bowled by Romario Shepherd but India still required 10 runs in 5 balls with two wickets in hand.

After his wicket, Chahal was all geared up to bat but he realized that coach Rahul Dravid and captain Hardik Pandya wanted Mukesh Kumar, the debutant, to bat at No.10. then Chahal decided to walk back but he was not allowed to do so due to ICC rule.

HERE IS WHAT LAW SAYS

According to the laws of the game, once a batter steps onto the field at the fall of a wicket, he can't go back and send another.

Tail-ender Arshdeep Singh (12) made the game more interesting with a couple of fours in the penultimate over, making use of an extra fielder in the circle due to the home team's slow over rate.

Eventually, Romario Shepherd was able to defend 10 runs off the final over.

Now India will face West Indies on August 6 for the second T20I which will be played at Providence Stadium in Guyana.

Ireland announce squad for T20Is against India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ireland have brought in all-rounder Fionn Hand and leg-spinner Gareth Delany in their 15-member squad for a three-match T20I series against India, starting from August 18 in Malahide.

Hand had missed out on selection in Ireland's recent qualification for the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup while Delany is returning from injury after breaking his wrist during the Men's ODI World Cup Qualifiers in Zimbabwe in June.

"Giving opportunities to players also filters down the series themselves, so I would expect that all of the 15 players named in the India series squad will feature at some point. The Indian side arriving in Ireland is

an exciting one for the supporters, but as we showed last year, we have the talent and confidence to match them on the field of play and we have high hopes for another fiercely contested series.

So, while the immediate task at hand for Heinrich and the leadership team is on the India challenge, we are definitely framing this series as an important component of a longer-term plan to be ready to take on the world's best at the T20 World Cup next year," said Andrew White, Ireland Men's national selector, in a media release.

The three T20I matches between India and Ireland will be played in Malahide on August 18, 20 and 23. The series is Ireland's first bilateral



T20I series since securing 2024 Men's T20 World Cup qualification and White insisted it is being treated accordingly as part of the strategic planning for that tournament scheduled for June 2024 in West Indies and the USA.

"The recent qualifying campaign in Scotland was the first stage of our strategic planning for next June's T20 World Cup. We currently have around 15 T20 Internationals scheduled between now and the World Cup, so it is important

that we use each of these to continue to build on areas that the coaching team have identified," he said.

"We only have a limited time between now and the end of the 2023 domestic season, so it's also crucial that we use what opportunities we have to provide exposure and experience to a pool of players who we believe are in contention for making that World Cup squad," he added.

India and Ireland played a two-match T20I series in June 2022, with the visitors winning the series 2-0, though the hosts' came close to winning.

During the upcoming tour, India will be captained by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who will be making a comeback to international

cricket after a layoff caused by back injury since September last year.

Apart from Bumrah, pacer Prasidh Krishna will be coming back to international cricket after being nearly out for a year due to lumbar stress fracture in the back. Both Bumrah and Prasidh had been recuperating and achieving full fitness at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru after undergoing back surgeries.

Ireland squad: Paul Stirling (captain), Andrew Balbirnie, Mark Adair, Ross Adair, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Fionn Hand, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Theo van Woerkom, Ben White, Craig Young.

RCB appoint Andy Flower as head coach

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore on Friday appointed vastly experienced Andy Flower as their head coach, officially ending the term of Mike Hesson and Sanjay Bangar.

The contracts of both Hesson, director of cricket operations, and Bangar, the head coach, were up for renewal in September but the franchise decided to move on from the duo.

Rajesh Menon, vice-president and head of RCB, met Flower in London for discussions before drafting him in.

Flower said he was looking forward to take the RCB to newer heights in the IPL 2024.

"I am really proud to be joining RCB. I recognise the work put in by Mike Hesson and Sanjay Bangar, who are two coaches I respect, and I look forward to the challenge of taking RCB to new heights," said Flower, who coached Lucknow Supergiants in



the last two seasons of the IPL. Flower has extensive experience in the IPL, having worked with LSG and Punjab Kings prior to that.

The former Zimbabwe batsman said he is looking forward to working with RCB players, particularly with captain Faf du Plessis.

"I'm particularly excited to be reunited with Faf. We have worked very well together in the past and I look forward to forging our partnership and relationship into something bigger and better."

"We have an exciting roster of

players to work with, and I recognise and will relish both the amazing opportunity with RCB but also the responsibility that comes with the role. It is a great challenge, and I can't wait to get started," said Flower.

Commenting on the decision to appoint Flower as the head coach, Prathmesh Mishra, chairman of RCB, said: "We would like to thank Mike Hesson and Sanjay Bangar for their excellent work in the past four seasons culminating in three play-offs. Their professionalism and work ethics have always been held in high regard."

Confirming their exit, both Hesson and Bangar thanked the franchise for giving them an opportunity to work with them and termed their tenure as a rewarding experience.

RCB is yet to make an announcement regarding the coaching staff of their team in the Women's Premier League. Ben Sawyer is the head coach of the team, and his contract too is under review as part of an internal review.

Injured Tamim Iqbal steps down as Bangladesh captain

PTI ■ DHAKA

Left-handed batter Tamim Iqbal has decided to step down as Bangladesh ODI captain after a recurring back injury ruled him out of the upcoming Asia Cup.

The continental ODI tournament will be held in Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 30 to September 17.

The 34-year-old, who had announced his shock retirement from ODIs during the home series against Afghanistan before withdrawing his decision, will be eyeing the rubber against visiting New Zealand to get back into reckoning for the World Cup in India.

"I will step down as captain and concentrate as a player and try to give my best whenever the opportunity comes," Tamim said during a press conference on Thursday.

"I believe injury is an issue. I took an injection (on July 28), but it is like a hit or miss. I have told them (the



board) about the problem. I have always kept the team over everything else. So keeping that in mind, stepping down is the best possible decision."

Tamim had withdrawn his decision to retire the last time after an intervention from Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina but said this time he has informed her.

"I have spoken to the prime minister, and she understood," Tamim said.

Alex Hales retires from international cricket

PTI ■ LONDON

Explosive and temperamental England opening batter Alex Hales on Friday announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect.

Hales, who made his international debut against India in August 2011 in a T20I at Manchester, represented England in 11 Tests, 70 One-Day Internationals and 75 T20Is.

Incidentally, Hales' last impact innings on the international stage was also against India, a brutal, unbeaten 47-ball 86 (4x4s, 7x6s) in the semifinal of the T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia. Hales and Jos Buttler (80 not out) had powered England to a 10-wicket win while chasing 169 at Adelaide.

"Just a note to announce that I have decided to retire from international cricket,"



Hales shared in a note on his Instagram account.

"It has been an absolute privilege to have represented my country on 156 occasions across all three formats. I've made some memories and some friendships to last a lifetime and I feel that now is the right time to move on," he wrote.

Hales, whose last appearance for England was in the T20 World Cup 2022 final

against Pakistan at Melbourne, said, "Throughout my time in an England shirt I've experienced some of the highest highs as well as some of the lowest lows. It's been an incredible journey and I feel very content that my last game for England was winning a World Cup final."

Hales was not a part of England's World Cup winning campaign in 2019 when

the team's captain Eoin Morgan and senior players decided that he had no role to play, while he served a 21-day ban for failing a second recreational drugs case.

Morgan had termed it as 'a complete breakdown of trust'.

But Hales was a vital cog in England's revival in white-ball cricket. In fact, he contributed a 92-ball 147 (16x4s, 5x6s) when England piled up

a monumental 481/6 against Australia in the Nottingham ODI in 2018 - the second highest ODI total ever.

Hales scored 2,419 runs at 37.79 with six centuries and 14 fifties in 70 ODIs. In 75 T20Is, he made 2,074 runs at 30.95 with one century and 12 half-centuries. In 11 Tests, he could only manage five fifties and a total of 573 runs at 27.28.