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**GANGULY BACKS
TILAK TO BE
INDIA'S NO 4
12 SPORT**



India inches closer to punishing 26/11 brains

US court denies Tahawwur Rana's plea, paves way for US to extradite Pakistan-origin biz man to India

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON



In a positive development for India regarding the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, a US court has denied the writ of habeas corpus filed by Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana. This paves the way for US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to issue a certification for him to be extradited to India where he is sought for his involvement in the 2008 terror attacks.

The court has denied Tahawwur Rana's petition for writ of habeas corpus by a separate order, Judge Dale S. Fischer, Central District of California, wrote in his order on August 10.

However, Rana has filed an appeal against the order and sought a stay on his extradition to India till the time his appeal in the Ninth Circuit Court is heard.

In a major victory for India's fight in bringing the perpetrators of the 26/11 terror attacks to justice, a US court approved 62-year-old Rana's extradition to India in May.

Rana faces charges for his role in the Mumbai attacks and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Judge Fischer in his order

said Rana has only made two basic arguments in the writ. First, he claims that, pursuant to the treaty, he cannot be extradited because India plans to prosecute him for the same acts for which he was charged and acquitted in a United States court. Second, he argues that the Government has not established that there is probable cause to believe that Rana committed the Indian offences for which he is expected to stand trial, the judge said. He denied both arguments.

"Given that, even if (David) Headley's testimony were the entire basis for the probable cause finding, it would be sufficient for the purposes of habeas review because it constitutes some competent evidence supporting the finding. For the reasons stated above,

Rana's petition for a writ of habeas corpus is denied," the judge wrote.

Following Judge Fischer's order, Patrick Blegen and John D. Cline, Rana's two attorneys filed an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit from the Order entered on August 10, 2023, for denying his petition for writ of habeas corpus.

In a separate appeal, Blegen has filed a petition "for a stay of extradition pending his appeal" to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit from the court's order denying his petition for a writ of habeas corpus.

"As set forth in the accompanying memorandum, petitioner submits that a stay of extradition pending appeal is appropriate because he has made a strong showing that he is likely to succeed on the merits of his non-bis in idem claim; he will suffer irreparable harm if he is extradited, potentially including the death penalty; a stay pending appeal will not substantially injure the Government; and the public interest favours a full review of Rana's non-bis claim before he is sent to a country that seeks to execute him," Rana's attorney wrote on August 14.

Continued on Page 2

Manipur flares up again, 3 mutilated bodies found

PTI ■ IMPHAL

In a fresh round of violence in ethnic strife-torn Manipur, mutilated bodies of three youths were found following heavy gunfire at Kuki Thowai village in Ukhrul district on Friday, officials said.

This is the first time that an attack in the recent bout of violence has occurred in Ukhrul district, which is dominated by Tangkhul Nagas.

Sounds of heavy gunfire were heard from the village, which falls in Litan police station area, early in the morning, they said.

Officials said the bodies of the three youths aged between 24 years and 35 years were found after police carried out a thorough search in the surrounding villages and forest areas.

Bodies of the three persons bore injury marks apparently made using sharp knives and their limbs were also chopped off, officials said.

Ethnic clashes broke out in the northeastern state on May 3, after a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Meanwhile, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Friday asserted that everyone



was entitled to speak freely in a democracy. He was reacting to the request of Kuki MLAs of Manipur to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a separate Chief Secretary and DGP for the Kuki-dominated hills areas in Manipur.

Ten Kuki MLAs, including seven from the BJP, submitted a memorandum to Modi on Wednesday, requesting that "posts equivalent to chief secretary and DGP" be established in five hill districts of the state to ensure "efficient administration" in the wake of the state's three-month ethnic violence.

The five districts for which they raised this demand are Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Chandel, Tengnoupal, and Phorzawl.

"In a democracy, everyone is entitled to speak freely," the chief minister told reporters here after a programme on the occasion of Sabhavna Diwas.

Though there were a number of MLAs at the function, none spoke to the media on the issue.

The Kuki MLAs, in their memorandum, claimed, "The IAS, MCS, IPS and MPS officers belonging to the Kuki-Zo tribes have been unable to function and discharge their duties..."

The Kuki-Zo MLAs have also demanded ₹ 500 crore from the PM's relief fund for the rehabilitation of people of the community who have lost their homes and livelihood because of the three-month-long ethnic strife in the state.

In his Independence Day speech, CM N. Biren Singh had claimed that foreign plot to destabilise the country have led to the loss of precious lives and properties in the State.

CBI challenges Lalu's bail in fodder scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar Lalu Prasad has landed in trouble as Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has challenged his bail in alleged fodder scam in the Supreme Court. The SC will hear the matter on August 25.



Allegedly "fake" bills had been issued by the Animal Husbandry Department to facilitate this.

A special CBI court had held Lalu guilty in the Doranda treasury case related to the fodder scam in February this year.

In July, the CBI had filed a chargesheet against the RJD chief, his wife Rabri Devi and their son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in the alleged land-for-jobs scam.

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SC nixes acquittal of RJD leader Prabhunath in double murder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday overturned the acquittal of Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Member of Parliament (MP) Prabhunath Singh in a double murder case from 1995.

Currently serving a life imprisonment term for another murder case, Singh was pronounced guilty by a trial court in 2017 for his involvement in the 1995 murder of legislator Ashok Singh. The latter had triumphed over Prabhunath in the 1995 Bihar Assembly election, leading to threats of elimination within 90 days of the election.

A panel of justices comprising Sanjay Kishan Kaul, AS Oka, and Vikram Nath convicted Prabhunath, a former three-term Janata Dal (United) or JD(U) and one-time RJD MP from Maharajganj, in the double murder case.

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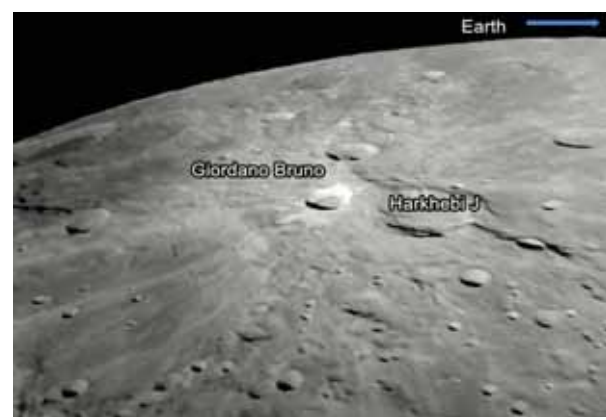
Chandrayaan-3's lander sends pictures of Moon

Health of Lander Module normal as its gets closer to Moon, says ISRO

PTI ■ BENGALURU

ISRO on Friday released a set of visuals of the Moon captured by cameras positioned on the Lander Module of Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft. The images, captured after the separation of the Lander Module from the Propulsion Module of the spacecraft on Thursday, showed the craters on the Moon's surface that were marked on the photographs released by ISRO as "Fabry", "Giordano Bruno" and "Harkhebi J".

The country's space agency shared on X (formerly Twitter) the images captured by the Lander Position Detection Camera on August 15, and visuals from the Lander Imager Camera-1 on August 17 — just



Moon as seen by the Chandrayaan-3 Lander Imager Camera-1 just after the separation of the Lander Module from the Propulsion Module

PTI

after the separation of the Lander Module from the Propulsion Module. The Lander Module comprising the lander (Vikram) and the rover (Pragyan) was on Friday lowered to an orbit that takes it closer to the Moon's surface for the soft landing on the

Lunar south pole on August 23. Announcing that the health of Lander Module is normal, ISRO on Friday said that the module has successfully undergone a deboosting (slowing down) operation taking it closer to the Moon.

Continued on Page 2

Rahul to contest from Amethi: Rai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/ LUCKNOW

Newly appointed Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai on Friday said that former party chief Rahul Gandhi will contest the upcoming Lok Sabha election from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

Additionally, his sibling and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has the freedom to choose her constituency within the State and may consider challenging Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat, he said.

"Rahul will definitely contest the Lok Sabha election from Amethi, the people of Amethi are here," Rai said, addressing reporters in Varanasi shortly after his arrival from Delhi.

Rai also claimed that if Priyanka expresses her interest, she can stand for election in Varanasi or any other suitable location.

"If Priyanka has the desire to fight from Varanasi, every single worker will work wholeheartedly for her," said the Uttar Pradesh Congress president.

There is a buzz in the Congress circle that Priyanka might contest from the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency, currently represented by her mother, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

This speculation arises due to Sonia's possible retirement from active politics due to health concerns.

Amethi, a longstanding stronghold of the Gandhi family, saw a shift in the 2019 general election when BJP's Smriti Irani defeated Rahul, who had represented the seat since 2004. Rahul is currently an MP from Wayanad in Kerala.

Sonia remains the only Congress parliamentarian from UP, representing Rae Bareilly.

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Journalist opens door, only to be met with bullets in Bihar

PTI ■ ARARIA/PATNA

A journalist was shot dead by unidentified people in Araria district of Bihar early on Friday, police said. Vimal Kumar Yadav (35), who worked for a Hindi daily, was killed at his residence in Premnagar village. "The assailants knocked at the gates of Yadav's house around 5.30 am and opened fire as soon as he opened the gates," the Bihar Police tweeted.



Yadav died on the spot, where the district police chief and the SHO of Raniganj, the police station concerned, rushed upon hearing the news.

"The body has been sent for post-mortem examination. An investigation is underway. Forensic experts and the dog squad have been called in. The deceased was said to be involved in an old dispute with a neighbour. All angles are being probed into," said Ashok Kumar Singh, Araria Superintendent of Police.

When journalists approached Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in Patna with queries about the incident, he said, "I felt really sad and immediately asked officials concerned to look into the incident. The matter is being

probed and the culprits will be brought to book."

However, the Opposition lashed out at the Government and claimed the incident showed "democracy is in danger in Bihar."

Continued on Page 2

SC for stern action against hate speech

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said stringent action must be taken against those propagating hate speeches, regardless of their affiliations.

In a brief hearing overseen by Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti, the court addressed a series of petitions, one of which sought measures to counter the spread of hate speeches across States.

This included a request for action against Hindu groups advocating the social and economic exclusion of Muslims in response to recent communal violence in Nuh-Gurugram within the Delhi-NCR region.

At this juncture, a lawyer presented evidence that the Indian Union Muslim League (IUM), a political party in Kerala, had organised a rally in July where slogans like "death to Hindus" were reportedly raised.

The court's response was



unequivocal. "We are unequivocally clear. Regardless of the side, they must be treated uniformly, and the law will follow its due course. Anyone engaging in what we recognise as hate speech will be dealt with in accordance with the law. This aligns with our already expressed standpoint."

Due to time constraints, Justice Khanna stated that the bench wouldn't further hear the matter that day, as there were already pending petitions challenging the Bihar caste survey. All matters concerning hate speech will be revisited next Friday, the court said.

Continued on Page 2

Rain fury kills 2,038; Bihar bears brunt with 518 lives

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A series of natural calamities, including floods, lightning strikes, and landslides during this monsoon season has taken 2,038 lives. Bihar witnessed the gravest impact with a reported casualty count of 518 lives, followed closely by Himachal Pradesh with 330 lives lost.

According to Union Home Ministry data, 101 people went missing and 1,584 received injuries during the rains and floods from April 1 to August 17. As many as 335 districts were affected by the rains, landslides and lightning -- 40 of them in Madhya Pradesh, 30 in Assam and 27 in Uttar Pradesh.

Twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh and seven districts in Uttarakhand were also hit by the monsoon floods and landslides.

A total of 892 persons



A woman wades through the floodwaters of the Ganga river at Chainpurwa village of Kanpur on Friday

PTI

drowned due to floods, 506 died due to lightning and 186 lost their lives due to landslides during this period, according to the data. As many as 454 people also died due to various other reasons during the monsoon.

Besides Bihar and Himachal Pradesh, 165 people died due to rains, floods, landslides and lightning in Gujarat, 138 in Madhya Pradesh, 107 each in Karnataka and

Maharashtra, 90 in Chhattisgarh and 75 in Uttarakhand.

A total of 160 teams of the National Disaster Response Force have been deployed in various States. Of them, 17 teams were deployed in Himachal Pradesh, 14 in Maharashtra, 12 each in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, 10 each in Assam and West Bengal and nine in Uttarakhand.

Keep environment first: Shah to CAPF

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday urged Central Armed Police Forces personnel to make environmental protection an essential part of their lives as a country-wide plantation drive of the forces reached the four-core mark with the minister planting a sapling.

Shah said he trusts that these security forces, more than 10 lakh personnel in collective strength, will ensure that the target of planting 5 crore saplings across the country is met by the end of this year.

He watered a 'peepal' (Ficus religiosa) tree after putting some soil on the sapling and later e-inaugurated 15 newly constructed buildings that have been built in eight different campuses of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the country's largest CAPF or paramilitary force with about 3.25 lakh personnel.



Shah launched the 'environment protection' themed plantation drive by the CAPFs on July 12, 2020, from a CRPF camp in Gurugram, Haryana and all the forces under the command of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) were tasked to plant trees, which have a long life of 60-70 years, in their area of deployment.

These forces included the CRPF, Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB), National Security Guard (NSG), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Assam Rifles. Shah said when he planned this initiative

there were doubts in some quarters if these figures of plantation could be achieved. Still, the CAPFs and other forces under the MHA made it possible as they undertook this mega mission which can be called a 'Maha Kumbh' for environment protection and conservation.

"As you have made bravery and country's security your nature, I urge you to similarly make environment protection your way of life," he told the jawans at a CRPF camp here.

This way, he said, you will ensure oxygen for future generations and help in minimising the damage to the environment and damage to the ozone layer, he said.

The increase in temperature will not keep life safe on earth and the only solution is to plant more and more trees and lessen carbon dioxide emissions, Shah said. He said climate change and global

warming were a reality as he thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking initiatives in this context that helped India become a 'leader' in this fight to save the environment from harmful gases and human activities.

Shah said this was also the reason that India kept the G20 Summit theme as 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. India is hosting the G20 Leaders' Summit next month in Delhi under its presidency.

He said various initiatives steered or launched by PM Modi like the International Solar Alliance, Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) and as many as eight national missions for the environment were a testimony of his government's resolve for this subject.

Due to these initiatives, the UN honoured PM Modi with the 'Champion of the Earth' award, Shah said.

Forces recover foreign ultra's body from Reasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces early Friday Amorning recovered the dead body of a foreign terrorist from the thickly forested belt of Dhakikot in the Reasi district. The terrorist was believed to be part of the same group tracked down by the security forces in Gundha-Khawasa area of Rajouri on August 5.

One terrorist was killed in the operation while another injured terrorist managed to escape the encounter site. "The body of a second terrorist injured in an encounter at Khawasa found by a special operation group (SoG) at Dhakikot area of Reasi", Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh said on Friday. Singh said two grenades, three AK magazines, 90 AK rounds, 32 pistol rounds, and some other material were recovered from the spot.

Lt Col Suneel Bartwal PRO (Defence) Jammu in a separate statement said, "Indian Army, JKP, and SOG have been continuing relentless operations in the thickly forested belt of Reasi district to track down the footprints of an injured terrorist. During the ongoing operations, the security forces deployed along the



high ridge lines near Dhakikot observed suspicious movements of unidentified persons. When one of the suspicious persons approached the deployment site and was challenged, he tried to escape. The Army troops readjusted their positions to prevent his escape. The terrorist was seen stumbling and falling down the cliff in a dense jungle.

Defence PRO said the search was halted for the night due to inclement weather conditions in the forest area. The dead body of a terrorist, possibly a foreigner, was found in the Dhakikot jungle area, he added. Meanwhile, a huge cache of arms and ammunition was recovered by the security forces in Machhal Sector, Kupwara on Friday.

PLA applauds Coast Guard for evacuation of Chinese national

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a Chinese national was successfully evacuated from mid sea off Mumbai after he suffered a cardiac arrest, the Chinese embassy on Friday lauded the Indian Coast Guard for the effort.

"Our heartfelt appreciation to @IndiaCoastGuard for the timely and professional medical evacuation of a Chinese citizen in the Arabian Sea off Mumbai," tweeted the Chinese Embassy in India.

The Indian Coast Guard on Thursday said the Chinese national identified as Yin Weigang was airlifted from the Panama flagged vessel amidst challenging weather conditions.

"The Indian Coast Guard has successfully conducted medical evacuation of a Chinese national from a Panama flagged research vessel.

IT Ministry working to establish assistive technology for disabled

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Software Technology Park of India under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) are working to establish an assistive technology (AT) Hub comprising one centralized virtual hub and three physical hubs at eminent institutes including IIT-BHU, Varanasi.

The stakeholders had consultations on Thursday to deliberate on the way forward for AT with participation from the Department of Empowerment of persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), IIT Delhi, IIIT Delhi, ICMR, UNESCO, ILO, National Institute of Urban Affairs, AIIMS among others. "The demand for AT is highly fragmented and yet to evolve as a formal industry in our country."

India, China hold more talks on Ladakh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to maintain peace and Land tranquility on the border in Ladakh, Army officers of India and China on Friday held another level of talks on Friday after the Corps Commander level talks on August 14. The talks were held in the backdrop of continuing friction points in Depsang valley and Demchok.

The talks on Friday involved Major General level officers of both the sides while the 19th round of military level talks on August 14 saw Lt Generals of the two armies trying to find a way out to hasten up process of disengagement.

These two rounds of talks come days ahead of likely bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on sidelines of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg from August 22

to 24. The latest round on Friday was part of confidence building measure to ensure that situation on the tense Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains under control.

The joint statement released by the two countries after 19th round on Tuesday said Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on 13-14 August.

The two sides had a positive, constructive and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC in Western Sector. In line with the guidance provided by leadership, they exchanged views in an open and forward looking manner.

They agreed to resolve remaining issues in an expeditious manner and maintain momentum of dialogue and negotiations through military and diplomatic channels.

Jamia terms charges over land sale NOC as frivolous

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia has deemed the follow-up allegations regarding the issuance of a no-objection certificate (NOC) to an individual for selling a piece of land to a private entity as frivolous.

The university claimed that these allegations are driven by ulterior motives stemming from vested interests of certain individuals.

Recently, Alumni Association of Jamia (AAJMI) issued a statement requesting the university authorities to cancel its decision to grant NOC to the person in possession of the land to sale it.

According to AAJMI, the land belongs to the university. However, the Jamia administration has labeled AAJMI as defunct, clarifying that the

active alumni body in the university is the Alumni Connect.

The Jamia administration said, "During the Executive Council (EC) meeting, the agenda item was thoroughly discussed, leading to a decision. Detailed deliberations have been documented in the meeting minutes.

"Following extensive discussions within the Executive Council, four members supported the proposal that Jamia should grant the NOC instead of purchasing the land, while three members of the Executive Council — designated as President's nominees, namely Professor Sanjay Srivastava, Dr Md Raihan, and Professor SNL Das — expressed their objection to the NOC. As a result, five members, including the chairperson, gave their assent for the grant of the NOC."

Shooter alleges physical harassment by in-laws

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An international shooter Ahailing from Meerut has accused her father-in-law, who is a police inspector, of physical harassment. The victim alleged that when she informed her unemployed husband about it, he laughed it off.

Police registered a case in this regard and started investigations. The victim is a constable in the Border Security Force (BSF) posted in Indore.

The victim alleged that her father-in-law and husband's brother also threatened to implicate her in a false case. The victim also accused her husband's brother of physical harassment.

The victim, who reached the SSP office in Meerut with a complaint on Thursday, said that she got married in October 2022. Her father-in-law

Sirajuddin is a police inspector posted at Deoband in Saharanpur district. She said that her husband is unemployed and stays at home.

According to the victim, when she complained to her brother, he laughed off her issues.

The victim reached the SSP office, demanding action against the accused. "If no action is taken by police, I will raise the issue with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi," she said.

SSP Rohit Singh Sajwan confirmed that the woman had filed a complaint against her father-in-law and brother-in-law for physical harassment. "Investigation is being conducted and appropriate legal action will be taken," the SSP said.

India inches closer...

From Page 1

In June, the Biden administration urged the court to deny the writ of habeas corpus filed by Rana. "The United States respectfully requests that the court deny Rana's petition for a writ of habeas corpus," said E. Martin Estrada, US attorney for the Central District of California, in his petition filed before the US District Court for the Central District of California.

India filed a complaint on June 10, 2020, seeking the provisional arrest of Rana with a view towards extradition. The Biden administration supported and approved his extradition to India.

Filing the writ of habeas corpus through his attorney, Rana challenged his extradition by the Government of India. Rana's extradition would violate the United States-India extradition treaty in two respects, his attorney argued. First, Rana has been tried and acquitted in the United States District Court for Illinois for charges based on the identical conduct for which

India seeks to prosecute him.

He argued that extradition is, therefore, barred under Article 6(1) of the Treaty, which declares that "extradition shall not be granted when the person sought has been convicted or acquitted in the Requested State for the offence for which extradition is requested".

Second, the material submitted by the Government of India — consisting principally of transcripts and exhibits from Rana's trial in the Northern District of Illinois — fails to establish probable cause that he committed the offences for which India has charged him. The Indian government's extradition request thus fails to satisfy Article 9.3(c) of the Treaty, the attorney said, adding the court should grant the writ of habeas corpus, deny extradition and order Rana's release.

However, the US Government has said that Rana be extradited to India. In his submission to the US Court on June 23, the US attorney argued that Rana's claims about the legitimacy of his business in Mumbai fall flat.

The evidence does not support Rana's assertion that the Mumbai office conducted legitimate business, but even if it did, the engagement of legitimate business activities does not preclude a finding that Rana's business also served as a cover for Headley's terrorism-related activities in Mumbai.

"Rana's claims about who funded the Mumbai office also do not relate to whether Rana lacked knowledge of and support for Headley's activities. Similarly, even if Rana hoped to continue business operations in Mumbai, the evidence reveals that neither Rana nor Headley renewed the business lease that expired approximately two weeks before the start of the Mumbai attacks," Estrada argued.

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) is probing Rana's role in the 26/11 attacks carried out by terrorists of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group. The NIA has said that it is ready to initiate proceedings to bring him to India through diplomatic channels.

CBI challenges Lalu's bail in fodder

From Page 1

Investigating agencies have alleged that people were given employment in the Indian Railways from 2004 to 2009 - when Lalu was the Railway Minister - in return for land parcels being gifted or sold at cheap rates to the Yadav family.

Lalu and Tejashwi have been at the forefront of efforts to unite the Opposition and played a key role in organising the first mega meet of 16 Opposition parties that was held in Patna on 23 June.

The parties were joined by 10 others in Bengaluru for a second meeting on 17-18 July, where the coalition named itself the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

Rahul...

From Page 1

After the State polls last year, the party's presence dwindled to just two seats out of the 403-member UP House. Ajay Rai, an upper-caste Bhumihar, had previously contested against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He was appointed as the UP Congress chief, replacing Dalit leader Brijlal Khabri.

When asked about his appointment in relation to his previous contests against Narendra Modi, Rai responded, "This is the result of my continued struggle, someone who went to jail, who has been continuously exposing the wrong, Ajay Rai is the 'siphahi' of Rahul Gandhi. This struggle will be fought all over the State." Referring to Irani, who defeated Rahul in the last election, Rai said that she appears frustrated.

Journalist opens door...

From Page 1

"Criminals are roaming freely while innocent citizens, including journalists, and even police personnel are being killed in Bihar," alleged State BJP president Samrat Choudhary.

"What has happened in Araria is, indeed, tragic. But such incidents have become the norm since the 'ghamandia' (arrogant) Mahagathbandhan led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD supreme Lalu Prasad formed the government in the state," said the BJP leader whose party shared power in the stage till a year ago.

Former Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan, who has realigned with the BJP-led NDA, said, "Nitish Kumar and his allies keep shouting that democracy is under attack in Bihar. But they are unable to protect the fourth estate."

Chandrayaan-3's lander sends pictures of Moon

From Page 1

The Lander Module comprising the lander (Vikram) and the rover (Pragyan), will undergo its second deboosting operation on August 20. This will lower the module to an orbit that takes it much closer to the Moon's surface. The soft landing of the Lander on the Lunar south pole is scheduled on August 23. "The Lander Module (LM) health is normal. LM successfully underwent a deboosting operation that reduced its orbit to 113 km x 157 km.

The second deboosting operation is scheduled for August 20, 2023, around 02:00 Hrs. IST," ISRO said in a post on X (formerly Twitter). The Lander Module of Chandrayaan-3 had successfully separated from the Propulsion Module on Thursday, 35 days after satellite was launched on July 14.

SC nixes ...

From Page 1

The court found sufficient evidence linking him to the murders of Rajendra Rai, aged 18, and Daroga Rai, aged 47, near a polling booth in Chhapra in March 1995. These three persons were fatally shot as they did not cast their votes according to Singh's instructions. After concerns were raised about witness intimidation and influence, the case was transferred from Chhapra to Patna. In December 2008, the trial court acquitted Prabhunath due to insufficient evidence. This acquittal was upheld by the Patna High Court in 2012. The Supreme Court intervention was prompted by the challenge made by Rajendra Rai's brother against the acquittal.

Justice Nath, while delivering the verdict, stated, "We set aside the impugned order of the Patna High Court and convict respondent no 2..Prabhunath Singh, under Section 302 (murder) for the murders of Daroga Rai and Rajendra Rai.

SC for stern action against hate speech

From Page 1

Justice Khanna after reviewing the 2018 verdict in the Tehseen Poonawalla case and the court's issued guidelines, expressed his hopes for strict adherence to these directives. He conveyed this to Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, who represented the Centre.

Advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for petitioner Shaheen Abdullah, emphasised the desire for harmony devoid of divisions based on hate. The lawyer, who claimed hate speeches were made against Hindus at the IUML rally, said Pasha had not placed correct facts before the court. The bench restrained him from speaking further.

The court then allowed the petitioners and respondents to file whatever documents, and written submissions they needed to file and posted all the petitions for hearing on August 25.

On August 11, observing that there has to be harmony and comity between communities, the top court had mooted a committee constituted by the Director General of Police (DGP) of Haryana to go into the cases registered in the wake of the recent communal riots in the State that claimed six lives.

The top court had made the observation while hearing a plea over alleged "blatant hate speeches" calling for killing members of a particular community and their social and economic boycott at rallies in different states, including Haryana. It had asked Nataraj to seek instructions and inform it about the proposed committee.

The top court had also directed Abdullah to collate all material, including videos, and submit to the nodal officers appointed in each state in pursuance of its October 21, 2022 judgment.

In his petition, Abdullah has referred to the August 2 order of the apex court passed in the context of Nuh-Gurugram violence which said, "We hope and trust that the State Governments and police will ensure that no hate speeches irrespective of the identity are made against any community and there is no physical violence or damage to the properties."

CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat has also moved the top court seeking to intervene in the plea filed by Abdullah.

Know to all that my client SH. GIRISH CHAND KANODIA is owner of GROUND FLOOR WITH OUT ROOF RIGHT AREA 50.16 SQ YARDS PROPT. NO-1/10717/OLD NO-45/KHASRA NO-60/SUBHASH PARK NAVIEN SHAHADARA VILLAGE VLDHANPUR ILLAQA SHAHADARA DELHI and mortgaging the same with Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd. And there is wrong reference mention in Relinquish ment deed related this property i.e. Gauri Devi expired Ramp; Chain of GPA by Santoshi to Sohan Singh not taken, so it is informed that any deal with said documents by person except my said client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Court: Sec-10, Dwaraka, New Delhi. Ph: 9899013918. M:- 9899013918

Know to all that my client Virender Parkash Siddharth is owner of LAND AREA MEASURING 0.15575 HECTARE OUT OF KHASRA NO-115. SITUATED AT WAKA NOIA SAHAWAR DEHA PARGANA AND TEHSIL SAHAWAR DISTT.KASHI RAM NAGAR, and mortgaging the same with Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd. And Virender Parkash Siddharth have not Original 1. Success on Certificate in favour of Virender Parkash Siddharth and 2. Death Certificate of Smt. Madhurwati Devi, it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Court: Sec-10, Dwaraka, New Delhi. Ph: 9899013918. M:- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Shri Shubhash Bansal S/o Shri RD Bansal and Sushila Bansal W/o Shri Shubhash Bansal, both resident of T-12A Friday Market, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, severally all relations and disowned/debarred his son Ankit Bansal and daughter-in-law Nishu Bansal from all movable/immovable property & assets due to their misbehavior. Any body dealing with them shall do at their own risk.

Valbhav Trivedi (Advocate)
724, Lawyers Chamber, Dwaraka Court Complex, Sec-10, Dwaraka, ND-75, 9810887802

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
To be known to all that I, Smt Meena Chandolia W/o Shri G.D.Chandolia R/o DDA MIG Flat No.6 A, Ground Floor, Block-JA, Ashok Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110052. The Original Documents Original Demand Letter Vide File No F4(S93)/72-HB/58 of the above said property has been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR NO. 721120/2023. Date 04/08/2023. S.O.No.430/2014 Delhi Police. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/ph: 9971450099. The person claiming any right, interest objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to The Assistant Director, MIG/Housing, Vikas Sadan, DDA, INA, New Delhi.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Gajender Pal S/o Shri Harvir Singh R/o D-736, Jahangir Puri, Delhi-110033. It is informed by me that the name of my minor Daughter Nogeeta has now become Yashika Pal, hence my Daughter will be known and Recognized by the name of Yashika Pal for all future purposes.

PD(133)C

Central Coalfields Limited
A Miniratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
NOTICE
"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in/ respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfields.in/). CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in/> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in/>."

LG BLAMES GOVT FOR DELHI FLOODS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (LG) VK Saxena on Friday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal listing lapses on the part of the Delhi Government that resulted in the recent flooding in the national Capital.

Yamuna flows for 44 kms in Delhi, out of which the 22 km stretch from Wazirabad to Okhla has 18 major obstructions that impede the free flow of water.

"Lapses on the part of the Government include the outdated and inaccurate level-based discharge computing table used by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to compute the discharge at Wazirabad barrage and the unprofessional practice of Government departments of not clearing the construction and demolition (C&D) and other waste from bridge construction sites that obstruct the free flow of the Yamuna.

"The highest recorded discharge of 8.28 lakh cusec from Hathni Kund was in 2019, which resulted in the water level in the Yamuna at the Old Railway Bridge (ORB) touching the 206.6-meter mark, whereas, the discharge this year was only 3.59 lac cusec, yet the Yamuna level reached the record level of 208.66 meter at the Old Railway Bridge," the letter read.

Saxena also held heavy accumulation of silt over the last



several years and lack of desilting as one of the reasons for floods in Delhi.

"The Najafgarh drain, which brings the maximum discharge from the city into the Yamuna, is filled with silt and garbage to the tune of 108 lakh metric ton. This severely affects the water holding/carrying capacity of this 57-km-long channel," the LG wrote.

The LG further said that there was not one single department or agency that had ownership of Yamuna, especially during the floods.

Mentioning measures to prevent floods in the national Capital in the future, the LG said permanent ownership of

the Yamuna River stream flowing through Delhi must be assigned to one department. "All the pumping installations at regulator locations can be handed over to a single department to enhance operational and maintenance efficiency, plus coordinated action by the CPWD and PWD is needed to ensure hassle-free drainage from Rajghat and the Samadhi complex," the letter read.

Other measures suggested by the LG include sustainable desilting of the Yamuna and the Najafgarh drain, a drainage master plan of the city and an advanced flood management plan for Yamuna bazaar and other low-lying areas. "Hence,

there is a need to carry out a fresh topographical, hydrodynamic and hydrographic study to plan required remedial measures to cater for discharge of approximately 10 lakh cusec from Hathni Kund in future. Selective dredging of the Yamuna (must) be carried out, especially of the critical and crucial stretch between Wazirabad-ITO Barrage," it said.

"While giving a NOC to various agencies for construction of bridges across the Yamuna, the requirement of minimum obstruction inside the river course (must) be ensured. An advance Flood Management Plan for Yamuna Bazaar and other low-lying areas (must) be put in place now," reads the letter.

"While all hands on the deck grappled with the situation, with myself visiting affected areas and sites and supervising restoration and rehabilitation works, this unfortunate instance that threw the city out of gear for days together, also provided us with an opportunity to assess the gaps and accordingly, put in place remedial measures," Saxena wrote.

LG's 'innovative' desilting work to blame, retorts AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Water Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj on Friday alleged that L-G VK Saxena was responsible for the recent floods in the national Capital as the latter had directed an "innovative method called partial gravitational desilting" of drains which caused huge quantities of silt to be deposited in the Yamuna riverbed.

Responding to a letter from Raj Niwas, the Delhi Government claimed these projects worth several crores were unscientific and illegal, and were not approved by the Minister. "Various desilting and drain/riverbed cleaning projects were being executed under the direction of the LG without sharing any details with the Minister and the elected Government of Delhi," Bhardwaj said in a statement.



Bhardwaj said that the Haryana Government had already accepted that their engineers did not maintain the ITO Barrage and had suspended the Chief Engineer.

"The HOD of the IFC department was hiding the fact from the Government that the ITO Barrage gates were jammed. It would be interesting to see if the LG would initiate any action against the officer. Also, the Haryana Government sent huge quantities of water towards Delhi through the Hathnikund Barrage while keeping the

Eastern Yamuna canal dry, just to save UP from flooding," Bhardwaj listed the reasons for the cause of floods and sought an explanation from the Raj Niwas.

"Some facts are conveniently concealed regarding various obstructions in river Yamuna that have been created by Central agencies in the name of various road/railway construction projects like the RRTS. Ideally, they should have been removed before the monsoon season. Your good self forgot to mention how huge quality of water was diverted to Yamuna River in Delhi while the Eastern Yamuna canal was kept dry to save UP from flooding. Large quantity of water was diverted towards Delhi despite the fact that the River Yamuna in Delhi was flowing above danger mark," he said, targeting the LG.

'2025 poll will be fought on issue of full statehood for Delhi'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday attacked the BJP-led Centre, saying the Ordinance on Services was brought as money power and the threat of the ED and the CBI failed in Delhi. Kejriwal stressed that the next election would be fought on the issue of full statehood for Delhi. Replying to a debate in the Delhi Assembly on the GNCTD (Amendment) Bill, Kejriwal claimed that the BJP was set to lose all seven Lok Sabha seats in the national Capital. The AAP Convener also claimed that the BJP had brought the "Sanghi" model of democracy through the Services Bill and asserted that the 2024 Lok Sabha elections would be fought on the issue of full statehood for the national Capital.

let the work being done in Delhi by his Government stop under any circumstances and promised that he would get the rights of the people back.

Kejriwal said, "The democratic rights of the people of Delhi were trampled through the Ordinance and the Bill. There are several styles of democratic systems like the Westminster style and parliamentary style. These people (BJP) have brought the Sanghi style of democracy through this Bill," he said. "The Ordinance on Services was brought because money power and the threat of the ED and the CBI failed in Delhi."

He added that recently, someone from the BJP had threatened him, saying, "We will make you bow. But I want to tell them that no power can make Kejriwal and the two crore people of Delhi bow." Earlier, speaking on the issue, Delhi Services Minister Atishi criticised the BJP for its disruptive efforts to diminish the powers of the elect-



ed Government of Delhi with the GNCTD (Amendment) Bill. "The BJP's manifestos from 1989-2014 claimed that the party would get Delhi 'full statehood,' but they forgot their own promises after 2014, why?" the Minister questioned.

Atishi said that just as the Viceroy ruled over India during colonial times, regardless of the people's wishes, the BJP has done the same by imposing the LG on the people of Delhi and the elected Government. "The BJP was scared that if CM

Arvind Kejriwal gets complete power the nation would witness the pace and efficiency with which work for the public is done. The BJP oppressed Delhiites and took away their power to vote. The people will give BJP a stern response in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections," Atishi added.

The BJP reacted sharply to Kejriwal's scathing criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the recently-enacted GNCTD Amendment Act, saying "corruption, inaction and

nepotism" of his Government will pave its exit in 2025.

Delhi BJP president Virender Sachdeva challenged Kejriwal to call a session of the Assembly for a debate to compare development works done by his Government and the Modi Government in Delhi. "Since the 2020 elections, people of Delhi have seen the real face of Kejriwal through communalism, inaction, corruption and nepotism and they will shunt him out of power in 2025," Sachdeva said. He also said the AAP national convener was deft in playing the victim card and diverting issues.

"Kejriwal has mastered the art of playing the victim card for political benefit. Time and again the people of Delhi have seen that whenever the issue of corruption and nepotism in his governance becomes a topic of discussion, he tries to raise the issue of power and rights of his Government to divert public attention," Sachdeva charged.

HC reserves verdict on confirmation of death penalty in Batla House case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday reserved its verdict on confirmation of the death penalty awarded to Ariz Khan, following his conviction in the sensational 2008 Batla House encounter case, in which decorated Delhi Police Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma lost his life.

"Arguments have been heard. Verdict reserved," said a Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Amit Sharma after the lawyers for the convict and the State concluded their submissions. Advocate MS Khan argued that there was nothing to suggest that Ariz Khan can't be reformed.

"If there is a probability, not possibility, that the convict can be reformed, life sentence is the rule. There is a probability of transformation and reformation," he submitted.

Special Public Prosecutor



Rajesh Mahajan, representing the Delhi Government, said that killing a uniformed police officer was a "rarest of rare" case which justified the death sentence. He also placed before the court Ariz Khan's social investigation report and psychological analysis report, and submitted he has "adequate intellectual and cognitive functioning" and his conduct in jail was "unsatisfactory."

Inspector Sharma of the Delhi Police's Special Cell was killed during the encounter between the police and terrorists in Jamia Nagar in South Delhi on September 19, 2008. Two terrorists were also killed in the encounter which took place days after five synchronised

bomb explosions rocked the national Capital, killing 39 people and wounding 159. Sharma had raided the place while looking for the terrorists responsible for the blasts.

The trial court had on March 8, 2021, convicted Ariz Khan, saying it was duly proved that he and his associates murdered the police officer and fired gunshots at him. On March 15, 2021, it had awarded Khan capital punishment and also imposed a fine of Rs 11 lakh on him, making it clear that Rs 10 lakh should be immediately released to the family of Sharma.

Subsequently, the High Court received a reference for confirmation of the death sentence awarded by the trial court to Khan. When a trial court sentences a person to death, its verdict is examined by the High Court where arguments are heard for confirmation of the death sentence.



LG opens 23-acre sports complex at Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor (LG) VK Saxena on Friday inaugurated a 23-acre sports complex at Dwarka and called it a "beautiful gift for the people of Delhi" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

and shooting at Sector-19, Dwarka and Centre of excellence in football and hockey at Sector-23, Dwarka. Besides, a golf course, spread over 157.92 acres is also coming up at Sector-24, Dwarka. All these projects are likely to be completed by end of this year. More such sports complexes will be opened in the national capital soon, he added. In Rohini Sector 33, Centre of excellence in athletics is being developed, which is likely to be completed by June 2024.

Asked about the preparations ahead of the G20 Summit, the LG said that the city is being cleaned, spruced up and beautified.

"Several fountains and sculptures are being installed, as you all must have seen. Delhi which was neglected for a long time, is being decked up not just for G20, but any such events...For which Delhi is prepared," he said.

Asked about the AAP govt criticising him in the past over some of the events he attended, "This (criticism) is their work, we are doing our job (Ye unka kaam hai, hum apna kaam kar rahe hain)."

West Delhi MP Parvash Sahib Singh Verma, DDA vice chairman Subhashish Panda, Vice Chairman (DDA), several dignitaries and senior officials of DDA were also present at the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Panda said that membership rates in this sports complex are very affordable and urged people to participate and stay fit, as per vision of Prime Minister.

The Dwarka Sports Complex in Sector-17 of the sub-city has been built by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) at a cost of Rs 92 crore, a DDA official said.

Spread across 23.13 acres, the complex has several sports facilities and a yoga hall, he said. The LG said, "The PM's vision is that Delhi grows ahead and more facilities are created here."

The membership fee at the complex has been kept nominal, especially for senior citizens, the Delhi LG said. "Cricket, football, tennis, table tennis and squash facilities have been built at the sports complex which has been constructed by the DDA "in record time," he added. "All facilities are available here and I would urge the people of Dwarka to make maximum use of this complex," Saxena said.

AAP MLAs take up Dwarka e-way graft issue in Delhi Assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP MLAs on Friday trained guns at Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the ongoing session of the Delhi Assembly as they cited Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports on irregularities in various Central Government schemes including the construction of the Dwarka Expressway.

The BJP MLAs staged a walkout when their notice for a discussion on an alleged nexus between an AAP MLA and a gangster was not accepted by Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla who was in the Chair.

Starting the discussion on the alleged scam in the construction of Dwarka Expressway and other irregularities pointed out by the CAG in its report tabled in Parliament recently, AAP MLA Rituraj said the cost of the expressway increased from Rs 18 crore per km to Rs 250 crore per km.

"This seems to be a gold road," Rituraj said, and demanded that the scam be probed by the CBI or the ED "although not much is expected from them". Participating in the debate, AAP MLA from



Model Town Durgesh Pathak also said that there was a scam in the construction of the expressway as well as in the Ayushman Bharat Health scheme. AAP MLA Praveen Kumar said the CAG report had pointed out various "scams" in the BJP-ruled States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The BJP leaders returned to the House after some time and Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri urged the Deputy Speaker to allow them to participate in the discussion. But, Birla did not allow them to speak, observing "Do Opposition members think this is some garden or cafe where they can come and

go whenever they want?"

Speaking on the issue, Delhi Cabinet Minister Imran Hussain said on one hand Prime Minister Modi talks about fighting corruption, but the CAG report has shown that agencies of the Centre are involved in irregularities.

"While the Dwarka Expressway is being constructed at a cost that is 15 times higher than the estimate, the AAP Government in Delhi has completed projects at costs lower than estimates and that, too, in time," Hussain stated. Even as the Minister spoke, the BJP MLAs protested over being denied the chance to participate in the discussion and continued to raise slogans.

MLAs not allowed to speak in Assembly: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday lashed out at the ruling AAP dispensation claiming its members were not allowed to speak in the Delhi Assembly on the Dwarka Expressway issue and termed it as "murder of democracy."

Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the BJP legislators were not granted permission to speak despite being present during a discussion on the Dwarka Expressway in the CAG report.

Addressing a Press conference Bidhuri and other BJP MLAs said Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla acknowledged that along with Bidhuri, Mohan Singh Bisht would participate in the discussion on this matter.

All BJP legislators were present in the House during the discussion, but they were not allowed to speak. Bidhuri stated that expressing opposition through a walkout and participating in the discussion are rights of a



member. Bidhuri said regarding the CAG report being discussed in the House, all BJP members wanted to dispel any misconceptions. In fact, the CAG report mentions a cost of Rs 250 crore per 1 km of road, which is not just a 1 km road but a 5,000 km long project that is being funded with Rs 91,000 crores. The road mentioned in the report is also an approximately 17 km-long elevated road.

It is the first time in India that an 8-lane elevated road is being constructed on a single pillar. The project for this road was awarded at Rs 5,269 crore which is estimated to be 12 per cent lower than the projected cost.

The project includes the construction of four-level interchanges for the first time.

DCW notice to IGIA, DGCA over man clicking pics of crew, lady co-passenger

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A passenger on board a Delhi-Mumbai flight earlier this month was allegedly found to be clicking pictures of the cabin crew, private airline SpiceJet said on Friday, adding that he was subsequently asked to delete the photos. The passenger deleted the pictures and gave a written apology for the incident that happened on August 2, the airline said in a statement.

"A passenger seated in the first row of SpiceJet flight SG157 operating from Delhi to

Mumbai on August 2 was found clicking pictures of the cabin crew, while she was seated on the jump seat at the time of take-off," a SpiceJet spokesperson said.

"The passenger was confronted by the crew members. He deleted the pictures from his phone and apologised for his action. The passenger also gave a written apology," the spokesperson added. Taking a suo moto cognizance of a video being circulated on social media platform Instagram, the Delhi Commission for Women has issued notices to the Indira Gandhi

International Airport Police and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) over an incident of alleged sexual harassment onboard a flight.

"In a flight from Delhi to Mumbai, a passenger secretly took videos and objectionable photos of the flight attendant and other women. A video on this is going viral on Instagram. This is a very serious matter, taking cognizance they are issuing notices to the police and DGCA," DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal tweeted on Friday sharing copies of the notices.

"It is alleged in the viral video that a passenger was trying to click obscene pictures of a woman flight attendant and his woman co-passenger. It has been stated that when his mobile phone was checked, objectionable pictures of the women onboard the plane were found in his mobile," the notice read.

In the DCW notice, Maliwal sought a copy of the FIR registered in the matter and details of the accused arrested by August 23. "If the accused has not been arrested, please inform the reasons for the same, detailed

action taken report in the matter and provide the sought information to the Commission Considering the gravity of the matter," Maliwal wrote. Maliwal said, "Complaints of sexual harassment on flights are on the rise. This is unacceptable. In this particular case, an FIR should be registered and the matter should be thoroughly investigated and guilty must be punished. DGCA must have a zero tolerance policy against sexual harassment on flights and take stringent action to prevent such incidents in the future."



Yet another hoax bomb threat delays flight at IGIA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In yet another case, a hoax bomb threat was received in the national Capital even as the Delhi-Pune Vistara flight was ready for take-off from the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). The call was received at a GMR Group-run call centre, creating a scare at the airport. The flight, which was scheduled to take off in the morning, was isolated and thoroughly searched by security agencies, however, no suspicious item was found on board, said police.

In a statement, Vistara said flight UK971 had been delayed due to "mandatory security checks". Delhi Police said a threat call received at the DIAL control room in Gurugram was transferred to them through the CISE. Following the call, search and combing operations were launched.

"The passengers were deboarded and we checked the aircraft from inside and outside but nothing suspicious was found. A case is being registered and further investigation is underway," the officer said. Flight UK971 was to depart at 8:30 AM. Airport security sources said the airport call centre received a call at 7:38 AM and the caller said that "three bombs have been kept in flight No. UK971 parked at gate No. 42 and they will explode in an hour". The call got disconnected immediately.

All passengers and crew of the flight were deboarded and anti-sabotage checks were conducted in an isolation bay at IGIA, they said.

Gadkari slams NHA officials over 'lax response' to CAG on Dwarka project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



On being 'targeted', Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has conveyed his displeasure with the lopsided attitude adopted by certain officials responsible for responding to queries raised by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) with regard to the cost of construction of the Dwarka Expressway.

A political row has erupted on the CAG report that flagged the high cost of construction of the Dwarka Expressway with Opposition parties led by Congress attacking the Modi Government with allegations of corruption in the matter.

With series of audit reports related to road and highways constructions implicating the Road Transport Highways Ministry (MoRTH), Gadkari

convened high-level review meetings on Thursday and Friday and directed the Ministry as well as the Central road making agency NHA to fix the responsibility of this lapse on the part of senior concerned officials.

Sources said the Ministry had concluded that in the absence of an adequate response from the Ministry and the National Highway Authority of India (NHA), the CAG adopted an incorrect methodology for computing the cost of Dwarka Expressway.

Ministry officials also explained that the CAG has simply divided the total cost of construction of ₹91,000 crore (expenditure) under National Corridor Efficiency Programme with the project's entire length of 5,000 kilometres under development. They

further said the CAG has itself noted that the cost of construction of ₹18.2 crore per kilometre does not include the cost norms for flyovers, ring roads, etc. They were of the view that the expressway in question has elevated roads, underpasses, tunnels and other components which were not part of the project.

The cost of ₹91,000 crore for 5,000 km under Bharatmala Phase-I project was finalised by the ministry on August 10, 2016, for the year 2016-17 to the extent possible.

Ministry has claimed in fact the government saved over 12 per cent in construction cost against estimates in awarding contracts for the expressway and pointed out that the CAG findings that the cost was exorbitant are misplaced as the auditor did not factor in the actual cost. According to reports, the CAG had found

that the NHA decision to go for an elevated carriageway on the Haryana portion of the Dwarka Expressway pushed up the construction cost to ₹251 crore per kilometre from ₹18.2 crore per km estimated earlier. The audit report on the implementation of Phase-I of the 'Bharatmala Pariyojana' highway projects, triggered a political row with the opposition parties alleging corruption in the process of awarding the project.

The ministry sources had explained that all four packages of Dwarka Expressway were put for tender at an average civil cost of ₹206.39 crore per kilometre but the contracts were finally awarded at a lower rate of ₹181.94 crore per km.

The average civil construction cost of the four packages of the expressway was 12 per cent lower than the estimates, they had said.

CAG slams Tourism Ministry for ₹5 cr loss to Govt in Puducherry

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller Auditor General of India (CAG) has come down heavily on the Union Tourism Ministry for wasteful expenditure of over ₹5 crore by sanctioning a project at a flood-prone zone in Puducherry without assessing its feasibility.

Needless to say, the spate of floods in the region in the past few years have washed away the tourism amenities constructed under the project at the site in Yanam in the UT, thus along with it, exchequer money also went down the drain, the CAG has revealed in its report tabled in Parliament recently.

It stated that under the central flagship Swadesh Darshan, the UT's project envisaging construction of tourism amenities such as of walkway, fencing, and bamboo house etc at a sand dune in mid-stream at the junction point of Coringa river and Godavari Godavari river in Yanam was given nod. "The DPR for development of

tourism amenities submitted by the Department of Tourism, Puducherry, was sanctioned in December 2015 by the Ministry under the project 'Development of UT of Puducherry as Tourist circuit', said the report.

The approval came despite the fact that the site was in a flood prone area and the highest flood level was faced in Yanam in August 2013, stated the top auditor. The Andhra Pradesh Government too had objected to the work stating that it was obstructing free flow of the Godavari River. Also, approval for construction activities was not obtained from the Yanam Planning Authority, it noted.

However, works were awarded between March 2017 and June 2018 and expenditure of ₹5.26 crore was incurred by Puducherry Tourism Department on components of walkway, fencing, bamboo house, rainwater shelter, solar lights etc. However, during the flood in August 2018, ameni-

ties created on the site (valued at ₹1.33 crore) were damaged and another flood in August 2020 washed away the remaining structures (valued at ₹3.93 crore) completely, said the report. The Auditor has taken exception that the Ministry did not make any effort to assess feasibility and ground reality before sanctioning the project.

"The Programme Management Consultant visited the site only in December 2018, when works had already been executed and washed away in August 2018."

Thus, despite being aware of the fact that the island was flood-prone, infrastructure was created thereon, which was washed away in flood, thereby resulting in unfruitful expenditure of ₹5.26 crore, as per the report.

The Ministry, while noting the audit observations, seems to have washed away its hands by stating that "it would seek comments from Government of Puducherry in this regard."

Maiden flight of Navy's LCA NP5 successful

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Giving a fillip to indigenous capabilities in Defence manufacturing, the maiden flight of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Naval Trainer Prototype 'NP5' was successfully conducted on Friday.

Making this announcement, Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) said the maiden flight was conducted from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airport in Bengaluru.

The aircraft was captained by Capt Amit Kawade (Indian Navy) with Wing Commander Siddharth Singh (Retired) in the rear cockpit. The aircraft took off at 14:20 hrs and was airborne for 57 minutes with all parameters normal, it said.

The LCA Navy is designed and developed jointly by ADA and HAL. Addition of NP5 aircraft to LCA Navy prototype fleet will help to accelerate flight testing activities which will provide designers vital inputs towards design and development of the Twin

Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF), the prestigious futuristic carrier aircraft programme of the country.

The LCA Navy can also serve as an effective training platform for Indian Navy pilots for operations from the aircraft carriers.

The new prototype NP5 will soon undertake field and carrier operations from both INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant, ADA said, adding it will incorporate all improvements identified during exploitation of NP1 and NP2 is a production ready aircraft.

It will also incorporate the production standard airframe and rainwater compliance, maintainability improvements as well as futuristic system

advancement.

During an interaction, Capt Amit Kawade expressed that the handling qualities were extremely satisfactory and all test points envisaged have been successfully completed.

Director General-ADA, who witnessed the first flight while congratulating the team, said today's flight of NP5 is a culmination of combined efforts of ADA, HAL, CEMILAC (Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification), DGAQA (Directorate General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance) and several other Government and Private industries. The first trainer prototype NP1 was flown on April 27, 2012 and the fighter prototype NP2 was flown on February 7, 2015.

According to ADA, both Naval Prototypes (NP1 and NP2) have achieved major landmark milestones like ski jump take off and arrested landing demonstrations on Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF) at Dabolim Airport, Goa and operations from indigenous aircraft carriers.

Listen to pain of Indians on fringes: Rahul on vendor clip

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday called for listening to the voice of an India whose pain and challenges he said are "far removed from the mainstream debate."

Rahul's call came in a post on social media in which he shared a video of his interaction with Rameshwar, a vegetable vendor who recently met with the former Congress chief weeks after a clip of him breaking down while talking about his hardships due to inflation had gone viral on social media.

Sharing the video of his interaction, Rahul said, "Rameshwar ji is the voice of India whose pain, issues and challenges are far removed from the mainstream debate today." "It is the moral responsibility of all of us to listen to the voice of that India and help in fighting those struggles," the former Congress chief said.

In the video, Rameshwar, ahead of his meeting with Rahul Gandhi, says it was "Bharat milaap" or "Sudama meeting Krishna" and that he was for-

on Monday. In a statement issued by the Congress, Rahul said that since the beginning of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, he has been listening to the people and understanding their sorrows and pains. "Unexpectedly one day, a video of Rameshwar ji surfaced - a common man, a proud and honest Indian who wants to support his family with hard work, but his eyes were filled with tears of helplessness.

What to do - on one side there is a deep well of unemployment and on the other side there is the huge gap of inflation," Rahul was quoted as saying. "Financially poor, but very rich at heart, Rameshwar ji - the smile remained on his face as long as we interacted... His courage is actually a golden ray of hope," Rahul said of Rameshwar.

"Today, like crores of other Indians, Rameshwar ji stands at the end of the line of progress - a place with no jobs, no relief from inflation, no true business opportunities and no economic security. Until all facilities reach them... This journey will not stop."

Privileges panel asks Adhir Ranjan to appear before it

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Privileges Committee of Lok Sabha on Friday decided to ask Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to appear before it at its next meeting to hear his version on his suspension from the House for "misconduct".

The committee, chaired by BJP member Sunil Kumar Singh, also appeared to favour recommending to Speaker Om Birla to revoke Chowdhury's suspension after formally hearing his side at its meeting on August 30, Parliament sources said.

Chowdhury was named by Speaker Om Birla for "unruly conduct" on August 11, the last day of the Monsoon session and was suspended from the membership of Lok Sabha pending a report from the Privileges Committee.

At the meeting on Friday, several members were of the view that Chowdhury has been punished for his conduct by

Lok Sabha and there was no further need to examine his behaviour by a parliamentary panel. "A person cannot be punished twice for the same offence," a committee member said, adding that even BJP members took a "soft view" of the issue and were in favour of revocation of Chowdhury's suspension.

Besides Singh, BJP members Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Raju Bista, Ganesh Singh, Janardan Sigrwal, Dilip Ghosh, DMK member T R Baalu, Congress member K Suresh and Trinamool member Kalyan Banerjee attended the meeting on Friday. "As a process of natural justice, the committee has decided to hear Chowdhury's version at its next meeting on August 30," a committee member said. Chowdhury said he will do his duty as an MP and appear before the committee to present his case. "I am a Member of Parliament. I will abide by the rules of conduct and adhere to the directives of the Privileges Committee."

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ozager Khan/ Arshi Praveen Khan/ LBGHU0002448461	Flat No. 606, Floor 6 Tower F, ROF Alayyas, Tower, Sector- 102, Gurgaon/ August 14, 2023	August 18, 2017 Rs. 6,28,529/-	Delhi/NCR

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : August 19, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

ED files chargesheet against Senthil Balaji

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has filed Prosecution Complaint or chargesheet before Special Court, Chennai against V Senthil Balaji, the then Transport Minister, Tamil Nadu on money laundering charges linked the 'Cash for Jobs Scam' in the State Transport Corporation and Metropolitan Transport Corporation (Chennai).

The chargesheet was filed under Prevention of Money Laundering Act on August 12 and the court took cognizance of the Prosecution Complaint August 16. The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of three FIRs registered by Central Crime Branch (CCB), Chennai in the 'Cash for Jobs Scam' wherein three chargesheets have been filed arraying Senthilbalaji as main accused. In this case, the Supreme Court by order dated

May 16, 2023, had directed Tamil Nadu State Police to further investigate and file supplementary chargesheet within two months and allowed the ED to proceed with its investigation lifting the stay on investigation vide Madras High Court order dated September 1, 2022.

PMLA investigation revealed that, Senthil Balaji by abusing his official capacity, along with his brother RV Ashok Kumar, and his personal assistants B Shanmugam and M Karthikeyan, entered into a criminal conspiracy with the then Managing Directors of State Transport Undertakings (STUs) and other officers of transport corporations and obtained illegal gratification from candidates to recruit them as drivers, conductors, Junior Tradesmen, Junior Assistants, Junior Engineer and Assistant Engineer in the transport corporations, the ED said in a statement.

Simple saliva test can detect cardiovascular disease: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A simple saliva test may show the first warning signs of cardiovascular disease, as per a team of scientists who have identified a link between high white blood cells in the saliva of healthy young adults and an early cardiovascular disease warning sign.

Researchers noted that high levels of white blood cells, which indicate gum inflammation, correlated with a compromised flow-mediated dilation, an early warning sign of heart disease.

Scientists suspect that inflammatory factors may enter the bloodstream through the gums and damage the vascular system, leading to cardiovascular diseases.

The study, published recently in the journal Frontiers in Oral Health, found that

high levels of white blood cells correlated with compromised flow-mediated dilation, an early indicator of poor arterial health.

"Even in young healthy adults, low levels of oral inflammatory load may have an impact on cardiovascular health - one of the leading causes of death in North America," said the corresponding author of the study, Trevor King from the Mount Royal University in Canada.

Periodontitis is a common infection of the gums which has previously been linked to the development of cardiovascular disease.

Scientists suspect that inflammatory factors may enter the bloodstream through the gums and damage the vascular system.

"We are starting to see more relationships between oral health and risk of cardio-

vascular disease," said the first author of the study, Ker-Yung Hong, who now studies dentistry at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

"If we are seeing that oral health may have an impact on the risk of developing cardiovascular disease even in young healthy individuals, this holistic approach can be implemented earlier on," Hong said.

"Optimal oral hygiene is always recommended in addition to regular visits to the dentist, especially in light of this evidence. But this study was a pilot study," said King.

"We are hoping to increase the study population and explore those results. We are also hoping to include more individuals with gingivitis and more advanced periodontitis to more deeply understand the impact of different levels of gingival inflammation on cardiovascular measures," he added.

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

This E-auction Sale notice for sale of Immovable Assets is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (an underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security interest in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the **Physical Possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Anamika Biswas (Borrower), Amal Kumar Biswas (Co-borrower) QZDEL00005039991	P. No.11, Third Floor With Roof (R.H.S) Kh. No. 80/5, Vill. Hastnal, Roop Vihar Om Vihar Phase. V, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi. Area: 585 sq. ft.	Rs. 30,44,240/- (as on August 09, 2023)	Rs. 17,10,000/- Rs. 1,71,000/-	September 02, 2023 From 11:00 AM To 12:00 Noon	September 15, 2023 From 11:00 AM To 12:00 Noon

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited** (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>). The Mortgagors/noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **September 14, 2023 before 05:00 PM** failing which, this secured asset will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) to **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005** on or before **September 14, 2023 before 05:00 PM** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **September 14, 2023 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005** on or before **September 14, 2023 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of **"ICICI Bank Limited"** payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the E-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 9372730494/8584874809**

Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited, 2. Augoo Assets Management Private Limited, 3. Hecta Proptech Pvt Ltd.** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date : August 19, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

NIA raids in Bihar arms seizure case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday swooped down on premises connected with the accused and suspects at multiple locations across Bihar in the case relating to seizure of deadly arms and ammunition from cadres of CPI (Maoist).

Raids were conducted at nine locations in East Champaran, Sheohar, Saran, Muzaffarpur and Samastipur districts of the State to trace the links of Ram Babu Ram alias Rajan, the Zonal Commander of banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), and Ram Babu Paswan alias Dhiraj, also an active cadre of the outfit. The duo was arrested by the State Police on May 4, 2023 and sent

to judicial custody. The case was subsequently handed over to the NIA, which re-registered it on June 23, 2023. "Following extensive investigations, the NIA today cracked down on two premises connected with the two jailed accused and seven premises of other suspects in the case.

Several digital devices, including mobile phones, Tablet, HD card and Memory card, along with SIM cards, a pocket diary containing mobile numbers, pages containing Naxal content, as well as other incriminating documents were seized during the raids," the agency said in a statement. The case relates to the seizure of two AK-47 rifles, five magazines

and 460 rounds of 7.62x39 mm live ammunition, which were found buried in the forest area near Bariakala village under Laukariya police station, Bagaha in West Champaran district.

The recoveries were made by the State police after a tip-off led them to the Siudi Bandh area of Mashrakh under Saran police station where the two accused were camping and conspiring to commit a terrorist act. Their interrogation subsequently took the police to the Bariakala village forest area. The NIA is examining the various gadgets and documents seized in raids conducted on Friday as part of its ongoing investigations in case. PNS

WHO for closer monitoring of sub-variant of Omicron

New Delhi: After EG.5, it is now another sub-variant of Omicron BA.2.86, dubbed as BA.X which is on the watch list of the World Health Organisation. The global health agency has called for a closer monitoring of the variant to understand its spread and severity. The virus has to date been detected in just five cases — in Denmark (2), Israel (1), the US (1), the UK (1) — and the variant has shown large mutations, increasing fears of fresh Covid variants. "WHO has designated Covid-19 variant BA.2.86 as a 'variant under monitoring' today due to the large number

of mutations it carries," the global health body wrote in a post on X (formerly known as Twitter), adding that "the number of mutations warrants attention."

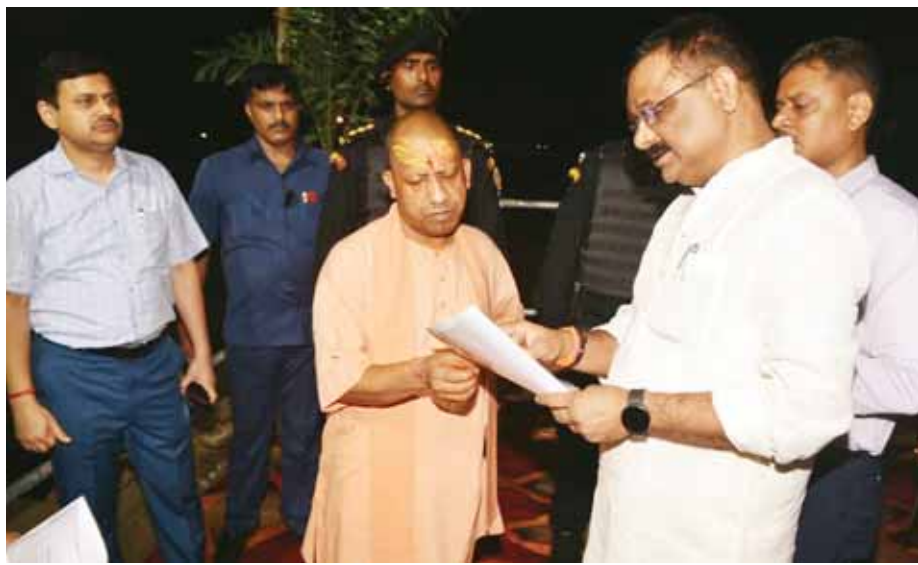
"Very limited info available right now but large mutations, needs closer monitoring surveillance, sequencing & Covid19 reporting critical to track known/detect new variants," added Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 response at WHO, in a post Even as Covid virus continues to circulate and evolve, the WHO also called for "better surveillance." PNS

CM inspects water supply project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted a site inspection of the water supply project at the Jal Sansthan premises located in Kamachha (Bhelupur) here on Thursday night. During the inspection Mayor Ashok Tiwari and officials of Jal Sansthan informed the CM about the project. Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma and District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam along with other officers and public representatives were also present on the occasion.

The CM arrived in the city on his two-day visit in the evening and after holding a review meeting with the officers at Circuit House, Yogi went to Apna Ghar Ashram in Samne Ghat area and met the inmates there. He also inquired about their well-being and appreciated the arrangement of the ashram. He inaugurated the building 'Prabhu Seva Kendra' built by Nirmla Birla and provided a cheque of ₹42,38,935 on behalf of UPPCL and ₹2,22,800 on behalf of District Rifle Club to the manager of the ashram. Appreciating Apna Ghar Ashram, the CM said it is the service of 'Narayan' (Almighty) in the form of a man. "Surely this effort of the doctor couple is commendable. Due to this the helpless people of the society are getting support. Such ashrams should be established at other places as well. The people of the society should ensure their active participation in this work," he said, adding that in Apna Ghar Ashram all necessary facilities like treatment, food, clothing, residence and other necessities are provided to the destitute without any charges and with the cooperation of the society. Apna Ghar Ashram was established on October 14, 2018, by senior eye specialist Dr K Niranjana and his wife dental surgeon Dr Katyayani along with their team to serve the helpless, destitute and sick persons on the banks of holy river Ganga. A 100-bed (50 each for men and women) residential building has also been made available by the couple and later keeping in view the increasing number its capacity was gradually increased to 300. After that he reached Kal Bhairav Mandir and offered prayers. He then visited Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT). It was his third visit to the KVT during the ongoing auspicious month of Shravan. The CM directed the officials that the devotees visiting the temple in the month of Shravan should not face any kind of trouble and



CM Yogi Adityanath seeing the details of water supply project in Varanasi on Thursday night.

better facilities should be provided to the visitors. Earlier, he reviewed the development works and law and order and gave strict instructions to the officers at a meeting in the Circuit House. He instructed the officers to ensure completion of the under construction development works by launching a campaign on a war footing. He instructed the officers to keep all preparations complete to deal with possible flood situation and ensure that the government facilities are provided to the affected people immediately in the event of flood. Besides, he laid emphasis on the expansion of the city and starting of bus services along the Ring Road. "A transport town should be set up on the side of the Ring Road and the warehouse should be shifted," he said. Yogi instructed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to complete all preparations to deal with communicable diseases on time and in view of infectious diseases like dengue, chikungunya etc, proper arrangements should be made in the hospitals, including spraying of insecticides in the affected areas. He directed that 24-hour presence of doctors in OPD should be ensured and surveillance teams should be kept active. The CM asked the officers of Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) to ensure easy redressal of problems of general public and directed all departmental officers to sit in their respective offices on time and ensure that the problems of general public are resolved on priority. He also directed the officers that street vendors should be rehabilitated safely in the zones and there should be regular cleaning of the city apart from daily lifting of garbage. "Illegal stands of vehicles should not remain anywhere in the dis-

trict," he said, and directed the officers to solve problems of entrepreneurs and traders on priority. He asked the revenue officers to stay at night in their respective areas and SHOs should also stay at night in their police station areas apart from increasing foot patrolling. In most of these programmes,

the CM was accompanied by UP Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh, UP ministers Anil Rajbhar and Ravindra Jaiswal, MLAs Neelkanth Tiwari Saurabh Srivastava, T Ram, DC Kaushal Raj Sharma, Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain, DM S Rajalingam and others.

Warm welcome given to Ajay Rai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The local Congress workers gave a warm welcome to the newly-appointed state party president Ajay Rai when he landed at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur here on Friday amidst the shouting of local traditional slogan of 'Har Har Mahadev'. Just a day ago former UP Minister Ajay Rai was elevated by Congress Mallikarjun Kharge from provincial chief (Prayagraj Zone) to state president of the party in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as the party has made a major organisational reshuffle.

Hundreds of party workers not only from the district and city units but also from adjoining districts of Jaunpur, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Ghazipur, Bhadohi, Chandauli, Kaushambi etc arrived here to greet Rai, who is a popular leader contested parliamentary elections unsuccessfully twice against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and represented an assembly seat in Varanasi district for almost two decades. In the last assembly election, he lost to Dr Awadhesh



Newly-appointed state Congress president Ajay Rai being welcomed in Varanasi on Friday.

Singh of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Pindra assembly constituency. At the airport, Rai was welcomed amidst the chanting of mantras performed by Brahmins.

The office-bearers of district and city units apart from party's different frontal organisations were also present. "I

express my heartfelt gratitude to the top Congress leadership for expressing its trust in a worker like me. I'm a soldier of Rahul Gandhi and I'll try my best to live up to the expectations of the top leadership," he said while talking to mediapersons.

"Congress is not just a

party for me but is like a mother. I'll fulfil my responsibility with all my heart and soul. As the state president, my main goal will be to give importance to grassroots workers and make the organisation active by connecting Dalits, farmers, women, youth and middle class people with the party," he added. He said that his first target will be to organise and ensure a grand comeback of the party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

After coming out from the airport, he garlanded the statue of former Prime Minister late Lal Bahadur Shastri. District President Rajeshwar Singh Patel, city chief Raghavendra Chaube, former district president Prananath Sharma, Prof Satish Rai, Ajit Singh, Shailendra Singh, Pt Rajan Dubey, Dr Pramod Pandey, Imran Khan, Anand Singh Rinku, Hasan Mehndi Kabban, Ashok Pandey, Sunil Rai, Ghanshyam Singh, Fasahat Hussain Babu, Poonam Kundu, Dr Nripendra Narayan Singh and others were present.



CDO Himanshu Nagpal being honoured in Varanasi on Friday.

KVT gets first prize, CDO honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) organised the sixth Regional Seminar on Child Protection, Child Safety and Child Welfare 'Vatsal Bharat' at Swatantra Bhavan in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Friday which was attended by Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Priyank Kanungo and attended by more than 1,500 participants, including representatives of NGOs from different corners of the country. During the programme 'Vatsal Bharat Award' for the best performance in child begging and child labour free campaign and out of 51 major religious places identified in India, Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) complex got first place in making it child friendly, child begging and child labour free. For this, Chief Development Officer (CDO) of Varanasi district Himanshu Nagpal was awarded and honoured on the stage by the NCPCR and MWCD. In the same function, the Vatsal Bharat Award was conferred on

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), founded by Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi, for its constant efforts towards protection of child rights and ensuring child welfare. Aditi Das Raut, Additional Secretary, MWCD and Priyank Kanungo, Chairperson, NCPCR presented the award. The members of child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, village child protection committees and representatives of Anganwadi workers participated in the seminar.

The event is part of a series of regional seminars to be organised across the country to increase awareness and reach of child protection, child safety and child welfare issues. NCPCR Chairperson Priyank Kanungo said today we all have got the privilege of organising this event at Mahamana's BHU in Kashi. "We are happy that people from different corners of the country have come here to participate. Since the year 2014, many important works have been done for child welfare. Due to changes in Mission Vatsalya and Juvenile Justice Act, the respect of child protection workers has increased," she said.

उमंगों भरे झूले पड़े, चारों ओर हैं फूल खिले
सखियों हो जाओ तैयार, आया है तीज का त्योहार

“श्रद्धा और सच्चे विश्वास का त्योहार तीज आपके जीवन में खुशियां और नयी उमंग लाये, ईश्वर से यही प्रार्थना है। सभी प्रदेशवासियों को तीज की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं।”
- मनोहर लाल

हरियाली तीज

के शुभ अवसर पर हरियाणावासियों को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

तीज मेला

◆◆ मुख्य अतिथि ◆◆
श्री मनोहर लाल
मुख्यमंत्री, हरियाणा

शनिवार, 19 अगस्त, 2023, पानीपत

कार्यक्रम से जुड़ने के लिए QR कोड स्कैन करें

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Man-made tragedy

Unbridled construction on riverbeds is behind the catastrophic floods in Himachal Pradesh

Amid the ongoing monsoon season, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana are grappling with a dire catastrophe that has cost these states a fortune. The relentless downpour has transformed serene rivers into roaring torrents, causing widespread devastation and loss of life and property. This situation, however, is not solely the result of nature's fury; it is the consequence of unchecked human actions that have disrupted the delicate balance between progress and environmental responsibility. The disturbing trend of constructing hotels and resorts on riverbeds, oblivious to the potential consequences, has emerged as a prominent contributor to the ongoing tragedy. The allure of scenic waterfront properties has driven a reckless pursuit of profit, often overshadowing prudent considerations for the environment and local communities. As these structures sprawl across the riverbanks, they impair the natural flow of water, causing disastrous consequences during heavy rainfall. The repercussions of this short-sighted development approach are now on full display. Thousands of residents have been forced to abandon their homes, a direct result of the man-made encroachments that obstructed the rivers' natural paths. The scale of destruction is staggering, with homes reduced to rubble and livelihoods swept away. Moreover, the human toll extends beyond material losses, with health issues exacerbating the already dire situation. More than 100 lives have been lost in Himachal alone, while thousands of crores have been washed away. This indeed is a direct consequence of greed and unbridled desire to choke nature to the maximum. The nexus among the builders, politicians and bureaucrats has played havoc in the state. The illegal construction goes full steam while the administration looks the other way.

Incessant rain has triggered flash floods, landslides and other calamities, compounding the crisis. The toll on lives and agriculture is heart-wrenching, with both states witnessing substantial financial losses. Haryana and Punjab have suffered estimated losses of hundreds of crores, while Himachal Pradesh's losses are estimated at a staggering Rs 8000 crores. The unchecked expansion of human settlements onto riverbeds must be met with strict regulations and responsible land use practices. The consequences of prioritising short-term financial gains over long-term environmental sustainability have become painfully clear. The lessons from this disaster should serve as a stern reminder that our actions have profound repercussions on the environment and the local population we share it with. It is imperative that accountability is assigned not just for immediate relief efforts, but also for the regulatory oversights that allowed such reckless construction to thrive. These floods must become a turning point in our approach to development. Only through responsible planning and a renewed commitment to environmental stewardship can we hope to prevent such disasters from recurring.



An artist gives finishing touches to an idol of Lord Ganesh, ahead of the Ganesh Utsav, Mumbai

Unwarranted and indecorous linkages

Politicians should leave the armed forces alone and not use them to score brownie points, else politicisation of forces is not far away



BHOPIINDER SINGH

When the national convener of the IT cell of a national party makes a wholly partisan accusation at members of his rival party, he is entitled to be suggestive, provocative, and in the lamentable context of our politics, even 'economizing' with the truth. But the creativity can get unwarranted and indecorous when it tantamount to questioning the sacred and inviolable tenets of constitutional governance e.g., the principle of civilian control over military affairs.

The Armed Forces of India have coercive and kinetic abilities that allow them to undertake violence on behalf of the Sovereign (externally or internally), as ordered by the legitimate government of the day. A professional soldier is expected to respect and abide by the constitutional wiring of 'civil-military relations' in a non-partisan and non-prejudiced manner (all pros and cons of undertaking or refraining from an order are left to the competent authorities who are expected to nuance the civilian thinking, optimally) - but the soldiers on the ground simply take 'orders' and failing to do so, is a dereliction of duty. This discipline is critical to maintaining the apolitical nature of the 'sword arm of the nation' and for it to serve the sovereign, regardless of the party in power.

But the incorrigibly partisan politicians can sometimes disregard this nonpartisan ideal and either try to usurp and appropriate the 'muscular' imagery of Indian Soldiers towards their utility or like recently, drag the combatants (whilst in service) into ascribing 'intent' onto their actions, while in 'Uniform'. It is dangerous and unacceptable, either way. Beyond the operational imperatives, the Armed Forces do not act on their own volition but do so, at the behest of the government. Only enemies and forces inimical to constitutional India would suggest that the operational action of a soldier is owing to his/her thinking.

India's history post-independence has been complex and



painful with many insurgent movements necessitating the invocation of Armed Forces onto its citizenry (as policing forces routinely fail). It is neither a desirable nor strictly speaking, the mandated task of the Armed Forces, to take up internal sorting, but as the sovereign's 'last resort', they do so. It is especially concerning as most of the hardy soldiers hail from the rural/hinterlands of the sensitive border states e.g., Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Northeastern States etc. But because the profession of arms was typically afforded the respectful 'distance' from political passions and suggestions, these soldiers were able to tide over dark periods of insurgency in Punjab, J&K, Northeast etc., professionally without getting ascribed any personal 'intent', in the conduct of their combat duties.

Recently, one such painful incident from the past i.e., air raids in Mizoram, was regrettably invoked in a completely political moment (no-confidence motion) to score political points - the issue was further escalated by the overenthusiasm of a party convener when he attacked a rival's father (Air Force officer) of "flying the Indian Air Force planes that bombed Aizwal"! Not only was this statement a



ALL POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE SOMEONE OR THE OTHER IN TERMS OF VETERANS IN THEIR RANKS - WHICH IS USUALLY A MATTER OF PRIDE AND NECESSITY TO HAVE A CROSS-SECTION OF PERSPECTIVE, ESPECIALLY FROM THE SECURITY REALM

lie as rebutted by the politician/son of the late Air Force Officer, "You have the wrong dates, wrong facts... Yes, as an IAF pilot did drop bombs. But that was on the erstwhile East Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak war and not as you claim, on Mizoram on the 5th March 1966"...who added for good measure, "He was commissioned into the IAF only on 29th October 1966!". A far more consequential concern of dragging the apolitical institution and that of its fraternity in 'Uniform' towards political decisions, was recklessly suggested.

All political parties have someone or the other in terms of Veterans in their ranks - which is usually a matter of pride and necessity to have a cross-section of perspective, especially from the security realm. But to link their prior participation in any militaristic act with the implicit 'intent' besetting their act then is fraught with frightening consequences for the apolitical institution. Whereas, to question the dispensation of the day then (in this case, the rival opposition party today), may be par for the course, as could be said of other latter-day actions e.g., 1984 Operation Blue Star etc., - but questioning the individual 'intent' of Soldiers who merely undertook orders then, is unwarrant-

and indecorous (that it was also an abjectly false statement, is far less in terms of impropriety). It sadly demonstrates, that matters about the hallowed 'Uniform' are not free from political taint or absorption.

Ironically, some of the most illustrious Veterans in the political domain did repose faith in the party flag of the said convener, after hanging their boots, and rightfully their conduct or participation in any earlier combat operation, insurgency, or war remained beyond the remit of their personal 'intent', as it should be. The increasing trend to blur the hard lines of necessary 'distance' between the Armed Forces and Politics, is a sad reality, and Robert Frost's insistence that 'good fences make good neighbours' applies to the sensitive civilian-military relations, too. Just across the Line-of-Control (LOC), their Armed Forces do indeed have an independent 'intent' akin to a 'State-within-a-State' (unlike India), and they are infinitely poorer as a nation, for that. If speaking the truth in politics is a luxury by itself, at least spare the 'Uniform' from discourse and linkages.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GRIEF OF PET LOSS

Sir - The profound impact of pet loss on pet parents cannot be underestimated. Pets, offering laughter and stress relief, seamlessly integrate into their owners' lives, creating an inseparable bond. The void left by the departure of a beloved pet is often impossible for others to fill.

Coping with the loss of a pet presents challenges, as mishandling it can result in profound distress. Although society tends to overlook the pain of losing a pet, the anguish is comparable to losing a human family member. This societal disparity underlines the lack of acceptance for pet loss. Heartless taunts from bystanders, branding grieving individuals as "crazy," demonstrate an inability to comprehend the depth of this pain. The complexities intensify as rituals for the passing of animals remain largely unknown. The grief stemming from losing a pet is overwhelming, but finding solace in support groups composed of those who understand the love and grief for a companion animal is invaluable. Surrounding those grieving with emotional support is crucial, without resorting to labeling them as irrational. Instead of advising a replacement pet or diversion, encouraging open expression of their grief is essential. To aid individuals in coping with pet loss, initiatives like Blue Cross, Goodbye Tails, and Bridging Rainbows should expand their reach to various cities.

Gourja Soni | Delhi

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION POLICY

Sir - Karnataka's role as a pioneering state in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) has taken a new direction. While it initially embraced the NEP, the state is now charting a course to phase it out for higher education. This decision will nullify the applicability of NEP's Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) norms in colleges and universities across Karnataka from the next academic year.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah affirmed that a specialized committee, uniting rep-

'Selective remission' on SC radar



In a recent development, the Supreme Court directed pointed questions toward the Gujarat government and the Central authority regarding the 'selective' implementation of a remission policy for convicts associated with the gang rape and murder during the 2002 post-Godhra riots. This issue was raised by Justice B V Nagarathana, leading a bench that examined pleas challenging the remission granted to 11 convicts in the case. Justice Nagarathana questioned why the remission

policy was applied selectively and emphasized the importance of reintegration and reform for all eligible convicts, rather than a chosen few.

Representing Gujarat, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju argued that the state was bound by a 2022 Supreme Court ruling, enforcing the remission policy according to the state where the crime occurred. Raju highlighted the state's adherence to the 1992 remission policy before granting clemency to 11 convicts. The court queried the preference for the opinion of the Godhra judge over that of the Maharashtra trial court judge, and Raju clarified that the latter's opinion was not based on the case's merits, rendering it irrelevant in light of the 1992 policy. In pursuit of justice, the court demanded the submission of data on the implementation of the remission policy.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

ERADICATING MENACE OF RAGGING

Sir - The tragic incident at Jadavpur University serves as a stark reminder of the rampant menace of ragging that permeates India's educational institutions. Though legal safeguards exist, the efficacy of measures hinges on resolute implementation, public awareness campaigns, and a no-tolerance stance. The redefinition of ragging's scope is pivotal to ensure accountability under the law. Addressing this crisis requires united efforts from the government, educational institutions, and society. Viewing ragging as more than exuberance is essential; its detrimental effects on individuals and communities must be acknowledged. By nurturing an atmosphere of respect and support, students can flourish unburdened by fear. A collective action against this deeply ingrained problem is required to make educational environment free from all aberrations.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Vector borne diseases can be fought with food

You can boost immunity against mosquito-borne diseases with nutrient-packed dietary habits which are free from side effects and cost effective

Mosquitoes are carriers of diseases such as malaria, dengue, and chikungunya, which collectively affect millions of people worldwide. According to the World Malaria Report 2021, India stands out as the primary contributor to malaria cases, accounting for a significant 82.5% of the total burden within the Southeast Asia region. While using insect repellents and mosquito nets are essential preventive measures, paying heed to our diet and consuming nutrient-dense foods can also play a significant role in strengthening our immune system against these illnesses.

Vitamin C-Rich Foods
Vitamin C is renowned for its immune-boosting properties. Foods such as citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruits), strawberries, kiwi, and bell peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C. This powerful antioxidant helps neutralize harmful free radicals, reduce inflammation, and enhance the body's ability to fight infections.

Zinc-Containing Foods
Zinc is crucial for a robust immune system. Foods like lean meats, poultry, legumes,



nuts, and seeds are abundant in zinc. This mineral supports the production of immune cells and antibodies, enabling the body to mount an effective defence against mosquito-borne pathogens.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids
Found in fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines), flaxseeds, and walnuts, omega-3 fatty acids possess anti-inflammatory properties that aid in reducing the severity of immune responses. They also contribute to the overall health of cell membranes, improving immune cell function.

Antioxidant-Rich Foods
Antioxidants, found in fruits (berries, grapes) and vegetables (spinach, kale, broccoli), help protect cells from damage caused by oxidative stress. By supporting the body's immune cells, antioxidants play a critical role in defending against infections.

B Vitamins
B vitamins, including B6, B9 (folate), and B12, are

Garlic and Turmeric

Garlic and turmeric are natural immune-boosting foods. Garlic has antiviral and antibacterial properties, while turmeric contains curcumin, a compound with potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Incorporating these spices into our meals can provide added protection against mosquito-borne illnesses.

Hydration
Staying hydrated is essential for maintaining optimal immune function. Adequate water intake, along with replenishing electrolytes through foods like bananas, coconut water, and yoghurt, helps support the body's immune responses and maintain overall health.

Vitamin D Sources
Vitamin D plays a key role in modulating the immune system's response to infections. While sunlight is a natural source of vitamin D, fatty fish, fortified dairy products, and egg yolks are dietary sources that can contribute to maintaining adequate levels.

B Vitamins
B vitamins, including B6, B9 (folate), and B12, are

essential for immune cell development and function. Whole grains, leafy greens, beans, and lean meats are good dietary sources of these important nutrients.

Summing up
A well-balanced and nutrient-dense diet is a powerful tool in fortifying our immune system against mosquito-borne illnesses. While it is crucial to employ physical protection, our dietary choices can significantly impact our body's ability to combat these diseases.

By incorporating foods abundant in vitamin C, zinc, omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and immune-boosting spices like garlic and turmeric, we can build a vigorous defence mechanism that guards against infections. With proper hydration and the inclusion of vitamin D and B vitamins, we can equip our bodies with the resources needed to repel the threats posed by mosquitoes. Informed food choices aid to reduce the burden of mosquito-borne illnesses.

(The writer is nutritionist, at Nupuur Patil Fitness)



NUPUUR PATIL



FIRST COLUMN

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

We need to teach our girls that there is no limit to a woman's strength



SAKSHI SETHI

Our world is a better place when all people are accepted for their talent, skills and abilities regardless of their gender. For ages, women have been a victim of the glass ceiling. Glass ceiling is a metaphor that is used to depict invisible barriers given to women to prevent them from rising beyond the system. The barrier exists due to a pre-conception of gender roles, age, colour, wages and many more. The roadmap to success doesn't even exist for women. In one of the researches, it was found that the ratio of women in executive positions is massively unequal, especially in Asia and the Pacific region. Simultaneously, in developed countries too, the situation is not too gloomy.

The status quo has always been a boy's club and women have never been considered taking leadership roles.

In the words of Sudha Murthy, "women of today play a critical role in the success of entrepreneurs." She explains the importance of dedication, sacrifice and strength that goes into building remarkable ventures. Success is not merely achieving milestones, but breaking down barriers that pave the way for others. With inspiring numbers, women of today are inspiring and guiding others, especially igniting the hearts of future generations.

Inspiring Indian women such as Indra Nooyi (Former CEO of PepsiCo); Kiran Mazumdar Shaw (Founder and CEO of Biocon); Smriti Irani (Minister of Women and Child Development in India); Akshata Murty (Director of Catamaran Ventures) and many more show that with determination and perseverance, women can break glass ceilings and achieve their goals. Every one of them has been a trailblazer and has been recognised fully in their work. Not only this but from Nirmala Sitharaman, becoming the 1st full-time finance minister of India to PV Sindhu being the Badminton World Championship, women have always proved themselves to be equally at par with their male counterparts. Furthermore, personalities such as Hekani Jakhlu and Salhoutouuo Kruse also became the first women to be elected to the 60-member Nagaland Assembly since the State came into being in 1963.



In the corporate world, the term "glass ceiling" is still very much a part of today as it was years ago. As stated before, glass ceilings are still found in the workplaces, not only in the discrimination of pay scales but also marked by sexual harassment, exploitation at work and a feeling of insecurity in women due to conduct of the opposite sex. Since ages, the time a woman takes birth, they have been considered to be a liability and to break this stereotype thinking, it becomes the need of the hour to educate the men of today in this respect thereby, giving equal opportunities and encouragement to break the barrier to gender equality.

Remember, one should never doubt themselves, there are plenty of people who will do that. Behind every great woman, there will be another woman whispering, "you've got this" in her ear. There are always going to be people who don't believe a woman can stand on her two feet and create something of her own but the fact is she can and she is doing it.

We need to teach our daughters and sisters that there is no limit to a woman's strength and ambition. They should also be taught to worry less about fitting into the glass slippers and more about shattering glass ceilings, thereby uplifting each other while at the same time embracing femininity, as there is beauty in it. Every revolution needs a soundtrack.

(The writer is an educator)

Religion is a matter of choice, not force

Forced conversions spark concerns in India and Pakistan. The well-being and rights of all individuals, regardless of their faith, must be ensured



BISWAJEET BANERJEE



LUBNA JERAR NAQVI

Forced conversions of women have emerged as a pressing issue in both India and Pakistan, casting a shadow over the principles of individual freedom, religious choice, and societal harmony. As the spotlight intensifies on these disconcerting practices, civil society activists, legal experts, and concerned citizens are grappling with the complexities surrounding this contentious matter.

In India, the focal point of concern revolves around the conversion of women from the majority community, stirring restiveness among various segments of the population. Activists, while recognizing the sacrosanct right of individuals to alter their faith, invoke the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, which legally sanctions interfaith unions. Indian courts have generally upheld the rights of couples choosing diverse religious paths. However, across the border in Pakistan, the scenario is marred by a polarizing debate over the legitimacy of conversions.

Pakistan witnesses a parallel but distinct narrative. Here, activists and lawyers are increasingly raising their voices against the conversion of women hailing from minority communities. These women, often hailing from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, find themselves with limited agency in these life-altering decisions. The dilemma faced by courts in Pakistan is rooted in the absence of pertinent legal frameworks and the paradox of converted women claiming contentment when produced in court.

Civil society activists in both countries underscore the bewildering disarray caused by the relatively small number of interfaith unions and conversions. The stark numerical disparities further highlight the disproportionate social turmoil emanating from these cases. Pakistan's demographic composition portrays a mere three per cent representation of Hindus and Christians, while in India, Muslims account for 15 per cent of the populace. Astonishingly, despite their numerical insignificance, these conversions incite significant societal disruptions.

The paradox is striking. India has seen the emergence of controversial "anti-love jihad" statutes and laws aimed at criminalizing the conversion of Hindu women to Islam and their subsequent marriages with Muslim men. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the discourse predominantly revolves around the conversion of women from Hindu and Christian minorities. Astonishingly, instances involving Hindu men converting to marry Muslim women, or vice versa, remain virtually non-existent in both countries.

The legal frameworks governing these issues also diverge. In India, the Special Marriage Act offers a legal avenue for couples to retain their respective faiths while solemnizing their unions, safeguarding the bedrock of personal freedom and choice. On the contrary, Pakistan's legal landscape remains devoid of comparable legislation, rendering converted women with limited legal recourse.

M. Shoaib Ashraf, a human rights activist and advocate at the Pakistan Supreme Court, emphasizes that authentic religious conversion must emanate from sincere belief, untainted by ulterior motives.

A watershed moment in India came through the historic ruling delivered by Chief Justice of Indian Supreme Court Justice DY Chandrachud, unequivocally



affirming the indomitable prerogative of individuals to select life partners, irrespective of religious affiliations. This judgment underscored the impervious realm of personal privacy and the Constitution's unwavering defence of religious liberty.



DESPITE THE CLARION DIRECTIVES EMANATING FROM THE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN, ENDEAVOURS TO ENACT COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION AGAINST FORCED CONVERSIONS HAVE FALTERED REPEATEDLY

(Banerjee is Political Editor, The Pioneer Lucknow, while Lubna is a senior journalist based in Karachi)

Similarly, the Lahore High Court in Pakistan acknowledged religion as a deeply personal conviction, refraining from overstepping into these matters.

Despite this, both countries have, unfortunately, witnessed instances of subterfuge and deceit in the context of forced conversions, often culminating in tragic consequences.

Recent developments in India have ushered in the Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance in Uttar Pradesh. This legislative initiative has culminated in numerous arrests, with a predominant number of cases involving Muslim individuals, who are accused of luring and coercing women into conversion.

The most recent legislative addition making waves is the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion (Amendment Act), 2022. This freshly minted legal framework, duly passed by the Uttarakhand assembly, introduces significant revisions to the preexisting Freedom of Religion Act of 2018. The crux of this amendment lies in its stance against coercive or deceptive conversion practices.

Under the new amendments, any individual found attempting to induce religious conversion through methods involving "misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement, or fraudulent means" could face a hefty penalty of Rs. 50,000. This legal stride is accompanied by the categorization of such actions as both cognizable and non-bailable offences. If proven guilty, the offender could be sentenced to a minimum of 3 years in prison, with a potential extension of

up to 10 years. Moreover, the amendment introduces the requirement for the convicted individual to provide compensation of Rs. 5 lakhs to the aggrieved party, adding a financial dimension to the consequences.

Contrastingly, the Jharkhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2017, takes a distinct approach. It levies a milder penalty for converting adults from upper castes, encompassing a three-year imprisonment term or a fine of Rs. 50,000, or potentially both. Conversely, conversion involving individuals from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), women, or minors is met with more stringent punishment, carrying a four-year prison sentence and a fine of Rs. 1 lakh, or both.

Similarly, the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, underscores a focus on heightened penalties. It places an emphasis on safeguarding lower castes, Adivasis, minors, and women from undue influence, enacting penalties of greater severity for those involved in their conversion.

The first anti-Conversion bill that was passed by the Odisha government in 1967, Cynthia Stephen in her EPW paper Anti-Conversion legislation in Karnataka notes when the state passed the bill, the Christian population of the state was around 2 lakhs, 1.1% of the population in comparison to 1.7 crores Hindus. Madhya Pradesh also followed the Odisha line and in 1968, passed its first Freedom of Religion bill. Notably, as per the 2011 census the Christian population in Madhya Pradesh stands at 0.29%.

In essence, these recent legislative moves reflect a commitment to curbing undesirable religious conversion practices, while simultaneously aiming to maintain a balance between religious freedom and the prevention of coercive or deceptive tactics.

Pakistan, grappling with the absence of a specialized legal framework against forced conversions, has compelled affected families to resort to existing laws about abduction, forced marriages, child marriages, and the rape of minors to seek justice. Activists underline the misleading nature of a victim's proclamation of voluntary conversion and stress the necessity of nuanced consideration in such intricate situations.

Jibrin Nasir, an advocate, and lead campaigner, accentuates the intricate nature of consent in such cases, contending that apparent satisfaction may belie underlying coercion. Data emanating from the Center for Social Justice in Pakistan unveils the highest reported instances of alleged forced conversions in Punjab (52%) and Sindh (44%) between the years 2013 and 2020.

Regrettably, despite the clarion directives emanating from the Supreme Court of Pakistan, endeavours to enact comprehensive legislation against forced conversions have faltered repeatedly at both the provincial and national levels. Frustratingly, even in cases where legislative frameworks have been drafted, their passage has been hamstrung, despite unambiguous directives from the apex court.

In Pakistan, a provision allowing courts to provide victims with a respite in "darul aman" (places of safety) has been incorporated to facilitate contemplation in such circumstances. However, the overarching absence of well-rounded legal measures continues to loom large over addressing this intricate matter, intertwining the fundamental tenets of freedom, consent, and justice. As India and Pakistan grapple with these weighty issues, it remains imperative for societies to engage in a thoughtful and nuanced discourse to ensure the well-being and rights of all individuals, regardless of their faith.

Natural dye-substitutes are an excellent choice

Standardisation of natural dyeing for textiles will pave the way for a sustainable tomorrow

Ever since the world became a global village with the advent of the internet and new-age technology, businesses all over the world have seen all-around growth in the past few decades. However, with an increase in opportunity came the responsibility of selling and buying genuine products tested against well-defined standards across industries.

The textile industry is also no exception when it comes to manufacturing standardised products that are tested for their quality through a series of certification protocols. The testing and certification of the products are not only in the interest of the buyer but also help brands become synonymous



YAWER ALI SHAH

(The writer is a member of the BIS committee & group leader of the natural dyes mark and ISO standard and co-founder of AMA Herbal)

with authenticity and trust. Until a few years ago, it was difficult to decipher if a certain textile product was coloured using synthetic or natural dyes.

Textile colourants (natural and synthetic) have added value to the desires of consumers. In ancient times, the processing of dyeing was done using colours from natural sources until synthetic dyes were introduced into commercial practice and started being used widely by textile dyers. Almost all synthetic colourants are synthesised using petrochemical sources and pose a grave threat to the environment. Hence, the growing consciousness of preferring eco-friendly products has renewed the interest of consumers

and manufacturers in the use of eco-friendly natural dyes. Following the increase in demand and awareness, commercial dyes and textile export businesses have started re-looking at using natural dyes for dyeing a variety of textiles and enhancing the market for eco-friendly colourants.

Not only do natural dyes prevent environmental hazards, but they also produce soft shades that are skin-friendly compared to synthetic dyes, which are available at an economical price but often cause skin allergies. The extraction of colour components from the source in natural dyeing is an important step to optimise the colour yield. The impediments in creating trust in the

global markets towards natural dyes have been a gradual process that has been through the journey of formulating certification protocols for natural dyes that are indigenous to India.

Any standardisation in our country cannot be called foolproof unless it has achieved the parameters set under the Bureau of Indian Standards, which is the apex body for setting up standard protocols for all consumer products. A special panel was also set up to prepare certification protocols for indigenous dye products by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The journey started as early as 2007-08 when we roped in IIT Kanpur to develop standards for testing natural dyes. This is the first project

in the world under which a certification protocol has been developed for natural dye products.

My association with the Textile Specialty Chemicals and Dyestuffs Sectional Committee, TxD 07, BIS Committee of the Textiles Department for the last 7 years has resulted in achieving significant milestones as a nation. After extensive work, the committee has been successful in formulating three benchmarks on natural colours, which include Standards on Natural Indigo, Rubia Madar, Katha, Lac, Punica Granatum, Rheum Emody, Canna Indica, Gulmehandi, Teak, and Arjun Bark.

India, being a project leader in the standardisa-

tion of natural materials for textiles, has also developed three ISO standards on natural dyes. These include the standards for Madder, Catechu, lac, and Punica Granatum. The demand for natural dyes has increased tremendously over the past decades. This has created a need for standardisation as there is a vast pool of players and products in the market. The presence of the ECO logo along with the ISI Mark on a product dye indicates that it offers the best quality requirements as specified in the relevant Indian Standard and is eco-friendly, which consumes less water and energy in its making.

It is due to hard work and determination that the textile industry in India has started

paying special attention to the use of natural dyes in place of chemical dyes. Our country is taking giant leaps in propagating the wide use of natural dyes, in line with the intention of the Indian government. When we use synthetic dye, 5.6 kg of carbon footprints are generated by dyeing 10 kg of cotton fabric.

Currently, we have numerous natural options available for natural dye substitutes. Among many things, a lot of money will be required to reduce the carbon footprint during the production process. It has also been proven in life cycle analysis (LCA) reports that the use of natural dyes can reduce the carbon footprint manifold as compared to synthetic dyes.

Ukraine to get F-16 jets from Dutch & Danes

AP ■ THE HAGUE The United States has given its approval for the Netherlands and Denmark to deliver F-16s to Ukraine, officials in Washington and Europe said Friday, in a major gain for Kyiv even though the fighter jets won't have an impact any time soon on the almost 18-month war.

It was not immediately clear when the first F-16s might enter the conflict but Ukrainian pilots will first have to undertake at least six months' training on the aircraft, according to officials.

Ukraine has long pleaded for the sophisticated fighter to give it a combat edge. It recently launched a long-anticipated counteroffensive against the Kremlin's forces without air cover, placing its troops at the mercy of Russian aviation and artillery.

In eastern Ukraine, attack helicopter pilots welcomed the news. They said Russia has a clear advantage in the skies, but the introduction of modern fighter jets could dramatically shift the balance of power.

Ukrainian forces supporting infantry are using decades-old Soviet-era models, which are vulnerable to air-to-air missile attacks from Russian fighter jets, Capt Yevgen Rakita, a spokesman for the 18th Army

Aviation Brigade, told The Associated Press. "A modern war cannot be won without aviation (capabilities)," Rakita said.

In making the decision on F-16 deliveries, Washington aims to ensure warplanes can be provided to Ukraine as soon as its pilots complete their training, according to a Biden administration official who was not authorised to comment and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The official said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken sent a letter to his Dutch and Danish counterparts earlier this week, offering formal assurance that the US would fast-track approval of all requests from third parties to transfer F-16s to Ukraine.

Danish Defence Minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen said Friday the training of Ukrainian pilots is starting this month.

A coalition of 11 Western countries - the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom - pledged in July to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s.

Officials have previously said that Ukrainian pilots will need six to eight months of training.



A Ukrainian soldier fires during night training in Donetsk region, Ukraine on Thursday. AP/PTI

Xi to attend BRICS summit, China confirms

AP ■ BEIJING Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend next week's summit of the BRICS nations in Johannesburg, to be followed by a state visit to South Africa, the Foreign Ministry said Friday.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying also said in a statement that during his August 21-24 visit to South Africa, Xi will co-chair the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue with his South African counterpart, Cyril Ramaphosa.

China is a core member of the BRICS nations, which also include Brazil, Russia and India.

The grouping was predicated on linking the interests of the world's leading emerging economies but has sought to expand into other civil and governmental fields.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided not to attend the summit because of an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court for him, according to South African authorities.

The development could be viewed as embarrassing for Putin, who is expected to be the only leader of a country in the bloc not to attend.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Putin "has decided to take part" in the summit via video link, without confirming if he had intended to attend in person.

The BRICS summit is the first to be held in person since 2019 and comes as the bloc seeks new relevance amidst Russia's war in Ukraine, South Africa's crashing economy and sharpening competition between Asian giants China and India.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has said that he supports more countries joining the group and intends to raise the topic at the summit.

Around 20 countries have formally applied to join, Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister Mauro Vieira said following the comments by Lula, who since taking office has repeatedly bucked the existing Western-dominated international structure.

Among the hopefuls are Argentina, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iran and Venezuela, Vieira said.

Facing isolation by the US and European Union, China and Russia have sought to expand their economic influence in developing countries.

Beijing has done so partly through the Chinese-backed New Development Bank, commonly known as



Xi Jinping speaking at a podium.

the BRICS bank, which is funding infrastructure projects in Brazil and elsewhere in the developing world.

Asked at a daily briefing about China's expectations for the summit, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said BRICS had been "taking on increasing international influence," but did not mention the issue of expansion.

He said China looks forward to working with South Africa to "jointly pursue development and revitalisation and make a positive contribution to a multipolar world and greater democracy in international relations."

"All sides will have an in-depth exchange of views on prominent global challenges, enhance coordination and cooperation in international affairs, and inject stability and positive energy into today's world," Wang said.

Incumbent President Halimah Yacob's six-year term will end on September 13.

The two Chinese origin who have qualified as candidates for the presidential election are Chief Investment Officer Ng Kok Song and former NTUC Income Chief Executive Tan Kin Lian.

The department noted that Tharman submitted his bid under the public sector service track while Ng applied under the public sector deliberative track, and Tan under the private sector deliberative track.

Tharman who launched his bid for the presidency on July 26 met the public sector service requirements, having held office as a minister for at least three years.

Tharman, 66, resigned from public and political posts last month to run for the presidency.

Tharman was an economist and civil servant, mainly at the Monetary Authority of Singapore, before joining politics in 2001.

He served as Minister for Education and Finance and was Deputy Prime Minister from 2011 to 2019.

The next step for Ng, Tan and Tharman is to be nominated as candidates. They must deliver their nomination papers - along with the Certificate of Eligibility, community certificate and political donation certificate - on Nomination Day on August 22.

Ukraine and Romania to boost Kyiv's grain exports

AP ■ BUCHAREST (ROMANIA)

Ukraine and neighbouring Romania signed an agreement Friday to work together to boost Kyiv's export of grain through Romania after Moscow broke off a key wartime shipping agreement that allowed safe passage through the Black Sea.

The accord was signed during a trip by Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal to the Romanian capital, Bucharest, for talks with his Romanian counterpart Marcel Ciolacu.

The two leaders discussed ways to ramp up the war-torn nation's key grain exports, and improve infrastructure for transportation across river, rail, road, sea, including at border crossings.

Ukraine's economy is heavily dependent on farming, and its grain is crucial for world supplies of wheat, barley, and sunflower oil.

Ciolacu told a news conference after the meeting that he hopes Romania can transport more than 60% of Ukraine's grain exports.

He also noted the "ambitious" target to double the transport of Ukrainian grain through Romania that was set last week during a meeting that included Western and Ukrainian officials in Romania's Danube River town of Galati.

Intends to double the amount from 2 million to 4 million tons per month, but Ciolacu did not specify a timeframe for the increase.

"I emphasized the importance of collaboration between our countries as well as with our international partners," he said.

The Romanian leader added that the Black Sea port of Constanta will remain a key transport route for getting Ukraine's goods to the international market.

The Sulina Channel, an arm of the Danube River on what is Europe's second-longest river and a key transport route, will also play a role.

The bilateral meeting comes amid weeks of Russian strikes on Ukraine's grain storage and port facilities along the Danube River.

Ukraine has increasingly relied on those Danube ports after Moscow broke off a key wartime shipping agreement that allowed safe passage of grain exports through the Black Sea.

As a result, Kyiv has sought to reroute transport through the Danube and road and rail links into Europe.

For his part, Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmyhal said that the two neighbors will aim to streamline border controls at crossing points to facilitate the smoother transport of goods.

"We discussed improving the transport infrastructure destroyed by Russia," he said.

Ciolacu added: "We will stand by Ukraine as long as it takes."

Woman interrupts Sweden's Quran-burning protest

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Swedish police detained a woman Friday who sprayed an anti-Islam activist with a fire extinguisher as he staged a Quran-burning protest outside the Iranian Embassy in Stockholm.

Video of the scene showed the woman rushing up to Salwan Momika and spraying white powder toward him before she was intercepted by plainclothes police officers who led her away.

Momika, who appeared stunned but unhurt, then resumed his demonstration, which had been authorised by police.

Police spokeswoman Towe Hagg said the woman, who was not identified by police, was detained on suspicion of disturbing public order and violence against a police officer.

Momika, a refugee from Iraq, has desecrated the Quran in a series of anti-Islam protests that have caused anger in many Muslim countries.

Swedish police have allowed his demonstrations, citing freedom of speech while filing preliminary hate speech charges against him.

Prosecutors are investigating whether his actions are permissible

under Sweden's hate speech law, which prohibits incitement of hatred against groups or individuals based on race, religion or sexual orientation.

Momika says his protests target the religion of Islam, not Muslim people.

The Quran-burnings have sparked angry protests in Muslim countries, attacks on Swedish diplomatic missions and threats from Islamic extremists.

Sweden on Thursday raised its terror alert to the second-highest level, saying the country had become a priority target for terrorist groups.



A woman spraying a fire extinguisher at a man during a protest.

Wildfire approaches NW capital, residents flee

AP ■ LAHAINA

Residents in the capital of Canada's Northwest Territories were rushing to evacuate their homes as one of hundreds of wildfires raging in the territories moved closer to the city of 20,000.

Thousands fled on Thursday, driving hundreds of miles to safety or waiting in long lines for emergency flights, as the worst fire season on record in Canada

showed no signs of easing. The fire was within 16 kilometres (10 miles) of Yellowknife's northern edge Thursday and officials worried that strong northern winds could push the flames toward the only highway leading away from the city, which was choked with long caravans of cars.

Ten planes left Yellowknife on Thursday with 1,500 passengers, said Jennifer Young, director of corporate affairs for the Northwest Territories' Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, adding that they hope to have 22 flights leave on Friday with 1,800 more passengers.

"I want to be clear that the city is not in immediate danger and there's a safe window for residents to leave the city by road and by air," Shane Thompson, a government minister for the Territories, told a news conference. "Without

rain, it is possible (the fire) will reach the city outskirts by the weekend."

Canada has seen a record number of wildfires this year - contributing to choking smoke in parts of the US - with more than 5,700 fires burning more than 137,000 square kilometres (53,000 square miles) from one end of Canada to the other, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

As of Thursday evening, 1,046 wildfires were burning across the country, more than half of them out of control.

Public Notice: Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Shiraz who is purchasing the entire first floor along with 25% undivided indivisible and impartible ownership rights of land area measuring 300 Sq. Yds. constructed property bearing No. S-54, situated at Greater Kirti Park, New Delhi, from Mrs. Urvasi Juneja, who is owner of the aforesaid property vide Sale Deed dated 26.09.2009, which is duly registered vide Document No. 12815, at Sub-Registrar, V, New Delhi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from DDI Bank Limited. That original Regd. General Power of Attorney dated 07.04.2008, executed by Subhash Chander Budhwar and Mr. Satish Chander Budhwar in favour of Ravinder Nangla in respect of aforesaid property, duly registered vide Doc. No. 1708, on 07.04.2008, at SDCV, New Delhi is Lost/Misplaced/Not available on online Lost Report vide LR No. 767617/2023, dated 12.08.2023 has been lodged by Mrs. Urvasi Juneja in this regard. To comply the requirements of BANKING, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim, right, title/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances. Item etc:

Lucem Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049 Contact# 911-40046316

REGISTRAR n/12/145/2023/26907 Dated CHD :- 8/18/2023

APPENDIX-IV-A (See proviso to rule 8 (6)) Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the "Authorised Officer" of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 25.09.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 53,50,054/- (Rupees Fifty Three Lakh Fifty Thousand Fifty Four only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLKUN00472481, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 10.08.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 11.08.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from RAJEEV KUMAR AGGARWAL, RACHNA AGGARWAL, RAVISH AGGARWAL and NARAIN WIRE ROPES.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 38,00,000/- (Rupees Thirty Eight Lakh Only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 3,60,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh Sixty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY RESIDENTIAL FLAT BEARING NO. F1 - 0804, ON THE 8TH FLOOR OF A MULTI STOREYED BUILDING IN BLOCK - F1 OF KINGSBURY APARTMENTS, SITUATED IN TDI CITY, KUNDLI SONIPAT - 131001, HARYANA HAVING SUPER AREA OF 1845 SQ. FT. THE SAID FLAT NO. F1-0804 IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :- EAST BY :- F1-0803 NORTH BY :- F1-0803 WEST BY :- PARK SOUTH BY :- PARK For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in Date : 14.08.2023 Place : SONPAT Authorised Officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

US, Japan & S Korea boost mutual security ties

AP ■ CAMP DAVID (US)

The United States, Japan and South Korea have agreed to a new security pledge committing the three countries to consult with each other in the event of a security crisis or threat in the Pacific, according to Biden administration officials.

Details about the new "duty to consult" commitment emerged as President Joe Biden prepared Friday to welcome South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for a summit at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland.

The agreement is one of several joint efforts that the leaders are expected to announce at the daylong summit, as the three countries look to tighten security and economic ties amid increasing concerns about North Korea's persistent nuclear threats and China's provocations in the Pacific.

"Suffice it to say, this is a big deal," Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters on Friday shortly before the formal start of the summit. "It is a historic event, and it sets the conditions for a more peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific, and a stronger and more secure United States of America."

Kishida, before departing Tokyo on Thursday, told reporters the summit would be a "historic occasion to bolster trilateral strategic cooperation" with Seoul and Washington.

"I believe it is extremely meaningful to hold a Japan-US-South Korea summit where leaders of the three countries gather just as the security environment surrounding Japan is increasingly severe," he said.

Before it even began, the summit drew harsh public criticism from the Chinese government.

"The international community has its own judgment as to who is creating contradictions and increasing tensions," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters Friday.

"Attempts to form various exclusive groups and cliques and to bring bloc confrontation into the Asia-Pacific region are unpopular and will definitely spark vigilance and opposition in the countries of the region," Wang said. Sullivan pushed back against the Chinese concerns. "It's explicitly not a NATO for the Pacific," Sullivan said.

"This partnership is not against anyone, it is for something. It is for a vision of the Indo Pacific that is free, open, secure and prosperous."

The "duty to consult" pledge is intended to acknowledge that the three countries share "fundamentally interlinked security environments" and that a threat to one of the nations is "a threat to all," according to a senior Biden administration official. The

official spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the coming announcement.

Under the pledge, the three countries agree to consult, share information and align their messaging with each other in the face of a threat or crisis, the official said. The commitment does not infringe on each country's right to defend itself under international law, nor does it alter existing bilateral treaty commitments between the US and Japan and the US and South Korea, the official added. The United States has more than 80,000 troops based in the two countries.

The summit is the first Biden has held during his presidency at the storied Camp David. Yoon arrived Friday. The three leaders will hold formal talks and a press conference. But Biden is hoping to use much of the day with the two leaders as a more informal opportunity to tighten their bond.

UJJAIN SMART CITY LIMITED Mela Office, Kothi Road, Ujjain (M.P.) 456001 Ph. 0734- 2525856 NOTICE INVITING TENDER No USCL/256 Tender ID: 2023_UAD_299973_1 Date: 18/08/2023 Ujjain Smart City Limited invites Interested parties for "Construction of Boundary Wall at Parking Area, Shed, and Railing for Crowd Management at Plaza area of Kalbhairav Temple, Ujjain". Interested bidders may purchase and submit their proposals online at www.mptenders.gov.in.

Table with financial data for United Textiles Limited. Columns include Particulars, Quarter Ended, and Year Ended (31.03.2022, 31.03.2023). Rows include Total Income from operations, Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, etc.

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, FARIDKOT Ph: 01639-256232, 256236 Advt. No.BFU-23/14 VACANCIES Online applications are invited on regular/deputation basis w.e.f 23/08/2023 to 14/09/2023 from eligible candidates through University website for the recruitment to posts of Audit Officer-(UR-1), Executive Engineer-(UR-1) and Law Officer/Legal Advisor)-(UR-1) under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. For details/updates/eligibility/No. of Posts/ terms & conditions visit website www.bfuhs.ac.in REGISTRAR n/12/145/2023/26907 Dated CHD :- 8/18/2023

REGISTRAR n/12/145/2023/26907 Dated CHD :- 8/18/2023 PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Shiraz who is purchasing the entire first floor along with 25% undivided indivisible and impartible ownership rights of land area measuring 300 Sq. Yds. constructed property bearing No. S-54, situated at Greater Kirti Park, New Delhi, from Mrs. Urvasi Juneja, who is owner of the aforesaid property vide Sale Deed dated 26.09.2009, which is duly registered vide Document No. 12815, at Sub-Registrar, V, New Delhi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from DDI Bank Limited. That original Regd. General Power of Attorney dated 07.04.2008, executed by Subhash Chander Budhwar and Mr. Satish Chander Budhwar in favour of Ravinder Nangla in respect of aforesaid property, duly registered vide Doc. No. 1708, on 07.04.2008, at SDCV, New Delhi is Lost/Misplaced/Not available on online Lost Report vide LR No. 767617/2023, dated 12.08.2023 has been lodged by Mrs. Urvasi Juneja in this regard. To comply the requirements of BANKING, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim, right, title/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances. Item etc:

UK nurse found guilty of killing seven babies London (AP): A neonatal nurse in a British hospital was found guilty on Friday of killing seven babies and trying to kill six others. Lucy Letby, 33, was charged with murder in the deaths of five baby boys and two girls, and the attempted murder of five boys and five girls, when she worked at the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between 2015 and 2016. She was accused of deliberately harming the newborn infants in various ways, including by injecting air into their bloodstreams and administering air or milk into their stomachs via nasogastric tubes. She was also accused of poisoning infants by adding insulin to intravenous feeds and interfering with breathing tubes.

Gaza Strip gets its first cat cafe AP ■ GAZA CITY The global cat cafe trend, where people pay to have coffee and hang out with cats, has finally come to the besieged Gaza Strip. In the impoverished Palestinian enclave run by the Hamas militant group and crippled by a 17-year blockade, residents seeking to escape the territory's troubles flocked on Thursday to the new Meow Cafe — Gaza City's answer to the quirky concept tried successfully around the world. The cafe's founder, 52-year-old Naema Mabel, said she envisioned the spot as a unique escape from the pressures of life in Gaza — with its lack of recreational options, a youth unemployment rate of over 60% and frequent rounds of conflict with Israel since Hamas violently seized control of the strip in 2007. At the cozy hang-out, Mabel offers a modest drink service and encourages guests to head straight to the cat corner to pet and play with furry friends. The rules of entry are simple: Visitors must cover their shoes with plastic and wash their hands before cuddling the cats. "I have spent my life raising cats, and they're a source of joy and quiet, a release of pressures," Mabel told The Associated Press, as cats roamed around her. She described feline communion as a "global anti-depressant." Her customers seem to agree. They looked exuberant as they played and lounged with the 10 cats in residence, including some named Tom, Dot, Simba and Phoenix. Some guests were quiet as they soaked in the cats' calming presence. The cats are not adoptable, says Mabel, who is strongly bonded to her feline friends. "The feeling, honestly, is that you just come to feel the psychological comfort of the cats," said 23-year-old Eman Omar, who had paid the entrance fee of 5 Israeli shekels (\$1.30) to spend half an hour snuggling with cats. "Everything is beautiful!" Experts said the cafe does far more than indulge the cat-crazed and give visitors a chance for a good selfie. Psychologist Bahzad al-Akhras said that in places like Gaza such havens can serve as therapy for those scarred from the strip's devastating wars and other hardships. "Any place that provides humans a kind of interaction with animals has a positive psychological impact," al-Akhras said. It wasn't easy for Mabel to bring the cat cafe trend to Gaza. Opening shop in the enclave presented a range of challenges — not only financial. The idea of paying to hang out with cats when stray cats roam free on Gaza City's streets every day struck some residents as ridiculous.

20 churches, 86 houses burnt by Pak mob

At least 20 churches and 86 houses of Christians were burnt down by the mob in Pakistan's Punjab province...



he brought to justice," he said at a press conference. The caretaker chief minister said the violent attacks on churches and homes of the Christians...

radical Islamists' onslaught. All educational institutions, markets and business establishments remained closed in Jaranwala on the second day Friday as well.

the government would restore all churches in Jaranwala by next Tuesday and give compensation money to the Christian families whose homes had been damaged.

Iran's FM visits Saudi Arabia's crown prince

Dubai (AP): Iran's foreign minister met Friday with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as part of his visit to the kingdom...

Won't support 'forces of darkness', says Pak caretaker PM Kakar

Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Friday said the interim government would not support "the forces of darkness" in the society as he took strong exception to the unprecedented attack on minority Christians...

Sharif dissolved the National Assembly three days ahead of its mandated period to get 90 days time for holding elections. According to the schedule announced by the election commission on Thursday...

Imran says ready for 1,000 years in jail if necessary

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Friday said he was ready to endure imprisonment even for 1,000 years and continue to stay incarcerated for his country...

trying to finalize a deal with Iran to free detained American citizens in exchange for the release of billions of dollars frozen in South Korea...

UN: North Korea increasing repression with people starving. AP UNITED NATIONS. North Korea is increasing its repression of human rights and people are becoming more desperate...

Radical Islamists' onslaught. All educational institutions, markets and business establishments remained closed in Jaranwala on the second day Friday as well.

freedom," Niazi quoted Khan as saying. Khan is facing more than 140 cases across the country and faces charges like terrorism, violence, blasphemy, corruption and murder since his ouster in April 2022.

Suppliers Limited Inviting e Auction for the purchase of following items through NCDFI Portal. Includes details of items and contact information.



The Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship, Joseph Schulte, crosses the Bosphorus in Istanbul, Turkey, on Friday.

AP ATLANTA. Several Republican White House hopefuls are set to greet a conservative conference with hopes of making up ground against Donald Trump.

Trump's 2024 GOP rivals converge on Atlanta days after his latest indictment

Several Republican White House hopefuls are set to greet a conservative conference with hopes of making up ground against Donald Trump.

with President Trump," said Terry Lathan, a former Alabama Republican Party chairwoman who has previously backed Trump but now supports Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for the 2024 nomination.

APPENDIX- IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property. E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

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India using all platforms to flag non-tariff barriers: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is using all multilateral and bilateral platforms including G20 to flag concerns with regard to non-tariff barriers (NTBs) which are impacting the free flow of trade, a top government official said on Friday.

India has already raised its concerns on issues like the European Union's (EU) carbon tax on different platforms, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Such measures by G20 member countries are likely to figure in the trade ministers' meeting of the grouping next week in Jaipur.

"Definitely, we are discussing those NTBs and we are also discussing how to find a good solution, how to find a platform where we can coordinate on these issues and we can understand these issues," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters here.

The two-day Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting (TIMM) is scheduled on August 24 and 25 in Jaipur.

The secretary also said that on the sidelines of TIMM, several high-level bilateral meetings will be held with countries such as the UK, Canada and the EU to discuss progress with regard to proposed free trade agreements.

Negotiations on such agreements are underway with all these countries.

The five priority areas which



will be discussed in the meeting are trade for growth and prosperity; trade and resilient global supply chain; integrating MSMEs in global trade; logistics for trade; and WTO reforms.

Strengthening mutual cooperation in the G20 to increase transparency in the use of non-tariff measures will be discussed in the meeting.

Barthwal said that "all platforms will be used" to discuss these barriers.

Citing an example of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which is going to impact exports of certain sections of Indian industry, he said there will be compliance with this mechanism and there are certain regulatory requirements.

"We will be discussing those issues multilaterally as well as bilaterally, wherever the opportunity arises," the secretary said.

According to a report by think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), India needs to act in a fast-track manner for the removal of NTBs, being faced by domestic exporters in different countries like the US, China and Japan, to achieve one trillion dollar out-bound shipment target for goods by 2030.

These barriers come in the form of cumbersome registration requirements and unreasonable standards/rules.

Key Indian exports that routinely face high barriers include chillies, tea, Basmati rice, milk, poultry, bovine meat, fish, chemicals products to the EU; sesame seed, black tiger shrimps, medicines, apparel to Japan; food, meat, fish, dairy, industrial products to China; shrimps to the US and bovine

meat to South Korea.

On bilateral meetings, the secretary said that a lot of ministers will be coming from countries including the US, UK, and Canada.

"This G20 ministerial meeting is useful for us to conduct some of the important bilaterals with respect to our FTAs. The UK is coming with their team. We will be having high-level meetings with the UK on FTA," Barthwal said.

There will also be discussions on what "we have done" so far with respect to Canada and the EU, he said, adding EU executive vice president and DG trade are coming to India.

On the TIMM, he said that the meeting assumes significance as there is a slowdown in the world and falling commodity prices.

"Focus would be on the G20 ministerial declaration and we are hopeful that all the Indian priorities... Will be converted into definite outcomes," he added.

More than 300 delegates are reaching Jaipur for TIMM. G20 members will be represented by their ministers/secretaries/vice ministers.

The G20 members include Canada, France, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UK, the USA and the EU. Representatives from six invitee countries — Bangladesh, Egypt, Netherlands, Oman, Singapore and UAE — will also participate.

Sensex below 65K; IT, metal weigh on weak global trend

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark index Sensex buckled under reselling pressure for the second straight session to close below the 65K mark on Friday, as investors offloaded IT, tech and metal stocks amid a bearish global trend. Besides, fresh foreign fund outflows also hit investor sentiments, traders said.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 202.36 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 64,948.66. During the day, it fell by 396.3 points or 0.60 per cent to 64,754.72.

The NSE Nifty dipped 55.10 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 19,310.15.

On a weekly basis, the BSE gauge fell 373.99 points or 0.57 per cent, and the Nifty declined 118.15 points or 0.60 per cent.

"It turned out to be a roller coaster ride on Friday as Nifty oscillated on both sides and ended lower. Meanwhile, majority of sectors felt the heat, wherein IT and realty were among the top losers. The broader indices too traded in sync and lost nearly half a per cent each.

"Fresh weakness in the US markets is largely weighing on the sentiment, however, the pace of decline is still capped," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

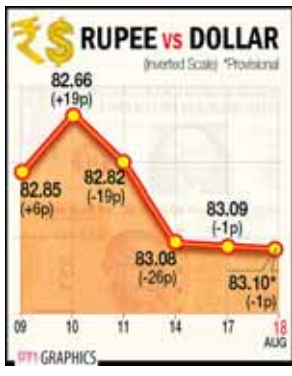
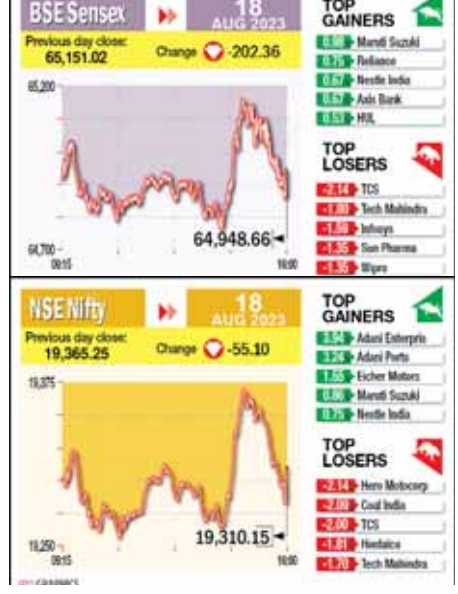
Tata Consultancy Services was the biggest laggard in the Sensex list, falling 2.14 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Power Grid, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Finance. In contrast, Reliance Industries, Maruti, Nestle, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.41 per cent, and smallcap index dipped 0.23 per cent.

"A sharp fall in tech-heavy Nasdaq triggered a sell-off in domestic IT stocks, while other sectors too came under selling pressure due to weak global cues," Amol Athawale, Vice President - Technical Research, Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

Among the indices, IT fell by 1.46 per cent, teck declined by 1.26 per cent, metal (0.88 per cent), realty (0.73 per cent), telecommunication (0.62 per cent) and consumer durables (0.57 per cent).

Power, FMCG and utilities were the gainers. "World equity markets, including India, are



Rupee below 83 not abnormal; currency fluctuation not exclusive to India: FinMin official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee dipping below 83 to a US dollar is not abnormal and the fluctuation in currency rate is not exclusive to the Indian currency, a finance ministry official said, hoping that RBI's inflation control steps will factor in exchange rate volatility.

The rupee hit an all-time intra-day low of 83.16 to a US dollar on Thursday and settled at a record closing low of 83.10 on Friday. The fall in the rupee made imports on which India is dependent for meeting its oil, electronics and fertiliser, costlier, fuelling inflationary concerns.

The Finance Ministry official told PTI that the rupee movement as of now was not of any concern as exchange rates are always volatile when US yields change it has an impact on all currencies and the rupee is no exception.

The official said fluctuations in foreign exchange markets "are normal and nothing abnormal or exclusive to the Indian rupee".

Lord's Automotive launches 8 EVs

New Delhi: Lord's Automotive Pvt Ltd., a subsidiary of Lord's Mark Industries, has launched an exclusive range of eight electric vehicles to fortify its position as a market leader in the country's booming EV space. Six three-wheeler EV models and two two high-speed two-wheeler EV scooter models. Priced in the range of Rs. 49,999-175,000, Lord's Automotive's focus markets will be tier 2 and tier 3 towns across the country. "The roll out of the eight sophisticated EVs is a significant milestone in our journey," said Sachidanand Upadhyay, MD & CEO, Lord's Mark Industries.

India's tablet market falls 22% in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tablet market shipment in India declined by 22 per cent year-over-year in the June 2023 quarter, while it grew 29 per cent quarter-on-quarter, CyberMedia Research said in a report.

Apple led the tablet market with a marginally higher share than Samsung. "The overall tablet market witnessed a 22 per cent YoY decline in the second quarter, 2023," CMR's Tablet PC market report said. According to the report, 5G tablets show a 7 per cent year-on-year growth.

"WiFi tablet shipments surged 12 per cent YoY, claiming a 54 per cent shipment share," the report noted. Both Apple and Samsung tablet shipments during the quarter grew by six per cent. However, Apple led the market with 25.38 per cent share, closely followed by Samsung at 25.31 per cent.

"Apple retained leadership with a 25.38 per cent market share, driven by its premium offerings. Samsung secured the second spot with a 25.31 market share," the report said.

Metropolis launches diagnostic centre

New Delhi: Metropolis Healthcare Ltd, a diagnostic service provider, on Friday announced the launch of a new and advanced diagnostic testing centre in Rohini in Northwest Delhi. High quality diagnostic testing services that are easily accessible and available in a timely manner are crucial for providing prompt and successful treatment, saving lives and improving community health outcomes, said Naresh Chawla, National Joint Secretary, IMA Headquarters and Vice President Delhi Medical Council.

RBI bars banks from levying penal interest, allows them to impose 'reasonable' fine

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Concerned over the practice of banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) using penal interest as a revenue enhancement tool, the Reserve Bank on Friday came out with modified norms, under which lenders would be able to levy only "reasonable" penal charges in case of default in repayment of loans.

The banks and other lending institutions will not be allowed to levy penal interest with effect from January 1, 2024, the RBI said in its notification on Fair Lending Practice-Penal Charges in Loan Accounts.

"Penalty, if charged, for non-compliance of material terms and conditions of loan contract by the borrower shall be treated as 'penal charges' and shall



not be levied in the form of 'penal interest' that is added to the rate of interest charged on the advances," RBI said in a notification. It further said the quantum of penal charges "shall be reasonable and commensurate with the non-compliance" of material terms and conditions of loan contract without being discriminatory within a particular loan/product category.

Also, there shall be no capitalisation of penal charges — no further interest computed on such charges.

However, the instructions will not apply to credit cards, external commercial borrow-

ings, trade credits and structured obligations which are covered under product-specific directions, the RBI said.

The RBI said that many entities regulated by it use penal rates of interest, over and above the applicable interest rates, in case of defaults/non-compliance by the borrower.

"The intent of levying penal interest/charges is essentially to inculcate a sense of credit discipline and such charges are not meant to be used as a revenue enhancement tool over and above the contracted rate of interest," the Central bank said.

However, supervisory reviews have indicated divergent practices amongst the entities regulated by it with regard to levy of penal interest/charges leading to customer grievances and disputes, it said, while issuing the modified norms.

Govt will adhere to fiscal deficit target of 5.9% for FY 2023-24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government will stick to the fiscal deficit target of 5.9 per cent of the GDP as robust tax, non-tax collections will help meet the spending requirement and make up for any shortfall in disinvestment proceeds, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said on Friday.

Although there would be a shortfall with respect to disinvestment, he said, this shortfall would be met by non-tax revenue mobilisation.

"Disinvestment target is unlikely to be met. However, I would say in aggregate the collective amount between disinvestment and non-tax revenue



is likely to be very close to the budget," he told PTI in an interview.

The total of disinvestment receipts, plus non-tax receipts are likely to be very close to the Budget Estimates, he said.

"We expect to adhere to our fiscal deficit target this year...None of the events so far have caused anything for us to deviate from it," he said.

The government has already got a higher dividend from the Reserve Bank of India and expects higher dividends from public sector banks and other PSUs than estimated in the Budget.

The Reserve Bank of India in May approved a Rs 87,416 crore-dividend payout to the central government for 2022-23, nearly triple of what it paid in the previous year.

The government was expecting Rs 48,000 crore from the RBI, public sector banks and financial institutions in the current fiscal.

The dividend payout by the RBI was Rs 30,307 crore for the accounting year 2021-22.

Give fixed rate option on EMI-based loans while resetting interest rates: RBI to banks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Friday directed banks to allow individual borrowers paying loans through EMIs to opt for fixed interest rate system or extension of loan tenor, a move aimed at preventing loanees from falling into the trap of negative amortisation, in wake of rising interest rate.

The interest rates have moved northward since May 2022 after the central bank started raising the benchmark lending rate (repo) in a bid to check inflation following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. As a result of 250 basis points increase in the repo rate, a large number of borrowers faced negative amortisation, wherein the Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI) works out to be less than the interest obligation, resulting in persistent increase of the principal amount.

RBI said that at the time of sanction of EMI-based floating rate personal loans, banks and

NBFCs should take into account the repayment capacity of borrowers to ensure that adequate headroom is available for elongation of tenor and/or increase in EMI, if interest rate rises.

Home, auto and other personal loans are linked to external benchmark rates, like repo rate.

RBI said several consumer grievances have been received in relation to elongation of loan tenor or increase in EMI amount with regard to EMI-based floating rate personal loans, without proper communication or consent of the borrowers.

"At the time of reset of interest rates, REs shall provide the option to the borrowers to switch over to a fixed rate as per their Board-approved policy. The policy...May also specify the number of times a borrower will be allowed to switch during the tenor of the loan," RBI said in a circular to banks and NBFCs, including housing finance companies.

It further said at the time of sanction, regulated entities (REs) should clearly communicate to the borrowers about the possible impact of change in benchmark interest rate on the loan leading to changes in EMI and/or tenor or both.

"Subsequently, any increase in the EMI/ tenor or both on account of the above shall be communicated to the borrower immediately through appropriate channels," RBI said.

Banks and NBFCs have been asked to ensure compliance of the instructions for the existing as well as new loans by December 31, 2023.

Also, the borrowers should be given a choice to opt for enhancement in EMI or elongation of tenor or for a combination of both options; and to pre-pay, either in part or in full, at any point during the tenor of the loan. Levy of foreclosure charges/ pre-payment penalty should be subject to extant instructions.

BUSINESS BRIEF

'MERI MAATI MERA DESH ABHIYAAN' HELD AT POWERGRID

On the occasion of 76th years of India's independence, POWERGRID, Northern Region-1 celebrated 'Meri Maati Mera Desh Abhiyan' under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, during which various cultural programmes were organised at its regional headquarters Faridabad office and various establishments. 'Meri Maati Mera Desh Abhiyan' was held on 14th August 2023 at Faridabad office and all its establishments. The celebration started with taking of pledge 'Panch Praan Shapath and Mitti Ke Vandan' in the presence of AK Mishra, Executive Director, NRTS-1, AK Behera, Chief General Manager (Asset Management), and other senior officers. On this occasion, banners, posters, and creative standees related to 'Meri Maati Mera Desh Abhiyan' were also displayed for public awareness. In the Faridabad regional headquarters, sub-stations and offices of POWERGRID, Northern Region-1, various types of saplings were planted by the employees under the 'Vasudha Vandhan' programme, which was followed by a massive tree plantation drive.



CCI slaps ₹40 lakh fine on Axis Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has slapped a fine of ₹40 lakh on Axis Bank for failing to notify the regulator about its acquisition of a stake in CSC e-Governance. The transaction under consideration comprised acquisition of a 9.91 per cent stake in CSC e-Governance by Axis Bank and got completed in November 2020, the CCI said in an order.

For the transaction, Axis Bank was required to give notice

to the fair trade regulator. However, it failed to do so, according to the order.

"It is apparent that the acquisition of stake in CSC e-Governance by Axis Bank was neither solely as an investment nor can be considered to be in ordinary course of business."

"Therefore, the Axis-CSC e-Governance acquisition is not eligible for the benefit of the Item 1 of Schedule I (combination regulation) and accordingly, it is immaterial whether the transaction led to acquisition of control or not," the regulator said.

Malabar opens unit in Bengal

Mumbai: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest gold and diamond retail chains of the country, has launched its first state-of-the-art jewellery manufacturing facility in West Bengal at an investment of Rs150 crore. "West Bengal is one of the major jewellery manufacturing hubs and the state has a deep-rooted tradition of excellent workmanship," said MP Ahammed, chairman, Malabar Group.

Corporate India's deal activity jumps 58% to USD 3.1 bn in July: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Corporate India's deal activity witnessed a 58 per cent jump in value terms to USD 3.1 billion in July, largely driven by big-ticket transactions, while caution in the private equity world led to a reduction in overall volumes.

According to data collated by Grant Thornton, the month of July recorded 95 deals worth USD 3.1 billion, registering a 46 per cent plunge in volume terms and 58 per cent increase in value terms.



Shanthi Vijetha, a partner at the consultancy, said the impact of the global slowdown is visible in the deal street which has been subdued since the beginning of the year.

While cross-border transactions propelled the surge in deal value, caution in the private equity world led to a reduction in overall volumes, Vijetha said.

This surge in deal value was anchored by 29 deals valued at USD 2 billion, where six high-value transactions encompassing traditional sectors like IT, auto, retail, and manufacturing took the centre stage.

The deal value was driven by Proximus Opal's 58 per cent controlling stake acquisition in Route Mobile for USD 721 million.

History beckons with England, Spain one win from World Cup glory



On that occasion, England had the backing of fervent home support, a luxury they will not have this time. If anything, Australian fans at the final are likely to cheer for Spain.

The anticipated sell-out crowd at Stadium Australia will bookend a tournament that is the best-attended in Women's World Cup history. Wiegman has a world-class squad to call upon, but it is the coach herself who is arguably England's biggest asset.

She is the standard-bearer for woman coaches, having won the Euros with her native Netherlands and then repeating the feat with England.

Described by her players as calm but direct, Wiegman took the Dutch to the World Cup final four years ago, where they lost 2-0 to the United States.

"Having the chance as a coach or a player to make it to two finals is really special," the 53-year-old said after her side defeated co-hosts Australia 3-1 in Wednesday's semi-final.

"I never take anything for granted, but it's like I'm living in a fairytale or something."

Wiegman is already hugely respected in her adopted country but now she is one victory away from joining Alf Ramsey, who took England to the men's title in 1966, in winning a World Cup for England.



Kerr eyeing 2027 WC as Aus look to go out on a high

AFP ■ BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

Australia captain Sam Kerr said Friday the Women's World Cup had been the best weeks of her career and she planned to stick around for the next one in four years' time.

The 29-year-old will lead her side out for one last game on Saturday when they face Sweden in the third-place playoff in Brisbane, with a bronze medal at stake.

The talismanic striker said Australia were already winners regardless of the result after going further than expected and taking a home nation with them, with bumper crowds and record-breaking TV audiences.

"I think for us all it has been the most amazing four weeks of our careers. Not only what has happened on the pitch, but what has happened off has been amazing," she said.

"When we first started at this World Cup, we could have never dreamed this would happen, the way the

country has got behind us, the way we have been playing.

"But we have one more game where we can really end on a high. There's that extra motivation to... really leave a legacy. Coming third place at a World Cup is something you can only dream of as a kid."

It has been a rollercoaster ride for the Chelsea forward, who picked up a calf injury before their opening game and missed the first four matches.

But she played a full 90 minutes in their 3-1 semi-final loss to England, scoring a sensational goal, and said the experience had left her wanting more, with a fifth World Cup in her sights.

"I hope to still be here, if that's what you are asking me. I'm only 29," she said.

"I think most of us will still be here if we have the opportunity to be, we have to play at our club, play well, stay injury free.

"There might be a few more babies, who knows, four years is a long time. But I hope the core group is together.

AFP ■ SYDNEY

Women's World Cup that has broken records on and off the pitch will reach a suitable climax on Sunday when England or Spain are crowned champions for the first time.

About 75,000 fans will pack

Stadium Australia in Sydney for the final of a World Cup that began with 32 teams, compared to 24 four years ago, and saw many of the favourites fall early.

Germany bowed out in the group phase together with Brazil, Italy and Olympic champions Canada, then holders the United States followed

them out the trapdoor in the last 16 -- their earliest exit ever.

South Africa, Jamaica and Morocco all reached the last 16 for the first time, and Colombia made a maiden quarter-final appearance before a 2-1 defeat to England.

The exploits of the lower-ranked sides are evidence that the gap has closed significant-

ly in international women's football, but in the end, it is two of the leading sides who will contest the final.

'Fairytale' for Wiegman

Sarina Wiegman's England are European champions and came into the World Cup as favourites along with the United States.

But like Spain, England have never reached the World Cup final before.

The two teams met in the quarter-finals of last year's European Championship, with Wiegman's Lionesses winning 2-1 in extra time and going on to beat Germany in the final for their first major title.



Klopp glad to bring 'late bloomer' Endo to Liverpool

AFP ■ LONDON

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said on Friday he was happy to sign "late bloomer" Wataru Endo, with the Japan midfielder arriving at Anfield after Moises Caicedo and Romeo Lavia opted to join Chelsea instead.

No fee has been disclosed for the 30-year-old Endo's "long-term contract" but reports valued his move from Bundesliga club Stuttgart at £19 million (\$24 million, 22 million euros).

Liverpool have been on the hunt for a defensive midfielder since both captain Jordan Henderson and Fabinho made the move to Saudi Arabia during the ongoing transfer window.

The Reds' attempts to sign Brighton's Caicedo and Southampton's Lavia failed, with both players heading to big-spending Chelsea.

But Klopp, speaking ahead of Saturday's match against Bournemouth -- the Reds' first home game this season following last week's draw at Chelsea -- told a press conference he had long been an admirer of Endo.

"First of all, I'm really happy that we can have an agreement with a club and a player which is really cool," Klopp said.

"I am from Germany, I watch a lot of Bundesliga, I've

known him since he is at Stuttgart, I liked him pretty much from the start when he started playing there.

"He's a little bit of a late bloomer and usually for us for the way our owners see it, he was already too old when he joined Stuttgart but I obviously have a different view on that and I always liked him."

On Liverpool's transfer market issues, Klopp added: "The last week was obviously a tricky one, no doubt about that. But when you have a problem you can stick to the problem or find a solution, I'm more than happy to have the solution.

"The transfer business is like that -- you talk to people, the players and clubs and sometimes it works out and sometimes not."

"There's nothing else to say about that. All things that were said in these conversations, they stay between me and the specific other party, nothing to say about that, really."

Endo told Liverpool's website that signing to play for one of the biggest clubs in the Premier League was a "dream come true for me".

"I'm very happy right now and I'm so excited to join a big club in Liverpool," he said.

"It feels amazing and this is my dream."

Dutee to challenge four-year NADA ban

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Double Asian Games silver medalist Dutee Chand will challenge the four-year ban imposed on the celebrated Indian athlete by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for failing two out-of-competition dope tests for a banned substance.

The 27-year-old 100m national record holder was on Thursday served the ban after two samples taken in December last year were found to contain "other anabolic agents/SARMS", which is listed under "WADA's 2023 prohibited list of non-specified substances".

The samples were taken on December 5 and 26 respectively and both returned positive for almost identical substances.



SARMS, or selective androgen receptor modulators, are non-steroidal substances commonly used to treat osteoporosis, anaemia and wound healing in patients.

Dutee's ban will be effective from January 3 this year and all her competitive results will be scrapped from the date the first sample collection took place (December 5, 2023).

Dutee's counsel Parth Goswami told PTI on Friday that the sprinter had been a "clean athlete" all her professional career and it was a case of "unintentional consumption". The athlete had won silver medals in 100 and 200m at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games and holds the national record of 11.17 sec in 100m (2021).

"For us, this is a clear case of unintentional consumption of a banned

substance. We were clearly able to establish the source of the substance in the body, which is a substantial proof of lack of intent. The substance was never used to gain any sporting advantage," said Goswami.

"We are in process of filing an appeal. We are hopeful that we will be able to convince the appeal panel," he added.

"Dutee is the pride of India and is a clean athlete. She has had an illustrious career of over a decade. She has undergone hundreds of dope tests internationally and nationally and has always been clean in her long career," added Goswami.

Dutee and her counsel had also claimed before NADA's Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) that it was a case of "unintentional consumption".

Luis Enrique happy to have 'perfect' Mbappe back in PSG

AFP ■ PARIS



Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said on Friday he was delighted to have Kylian Mbappe back in his squad after the France star's latest transfer saga.

Mbappe was reinstated to the PSG first team earlier this week following a contract dispute.

The 24-year-old sat out the reigning champions' goalless draw with Lorient in their Ligue 1 opener at the Parc des Princes last weekend.

But he is set to be back for Saturday's clash at French Cup holders' Toulouse, with PSG chasing a first win and first goal under former Barcelona and Spain boss Luis Enrique.

"Obviously it's good news, for what he brings football-wise but also in terms of his per-

MBAPPE WAS REINSTATED TO THE PSG FIRST TEAM EARLIER THIS WEEK FOLLOWING A CONTRACT DISPUTE.

sonality," Luis Enrique told a pre-match press conference.

"He is perfect from a training point of view... From what I've seen so far, he has a lot of desire, he has arrived in a good state of mind."

The Spanish coach also said Ousmane Dembele was "ready to play from the first minute" after joining from Barcelona.

The French winger has taken the number 10 shirt vacated by Neymar following the Brazilian's move to Saudi Arabia.



Former F1 driver Massa claims conspiracy

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Former Formula One driver Felipe Massa has accused auto racing's governing body of conspiring to prevent him from winning the 2008 title, and the Brazilian claims he is the "rightful" champion.

Massa, who was the runner-up to Lewis Hamilton in the 2008 season, made his claim in a letter sent to the FIA in the first step of a legal battle to take place in Britain.

A member of Massa's management team told The Associated Press on Thursday that the letter was also sent to Formula One Management, alleging the two bodies failed to act after learning that same year that Renault's Nelson Piquet Jr. Had deliberately crashed at the Singapore Grand Prix to help then-teammate Fernando Alonso win the race.

The crash caused a safety car to come in with Massa in the lead and squandered his advantage. A calamitous pit stop at the Ferrari boxes soon after

cost the Brazilian the race, where he finished 13th.

McLaren's Hamilton finished third in Singapore. The British driver went on to lift the first of his seven titles that year with a dramatic fifth-place finish at the Brazilian Grand Prix, which was won by Massa. The difference between the two drivers was one point.

"Simply put, Mr. Massa is the rightful 2008 champion, and F1 and the FIA deliberately ignored the misconduct that stripped him of that title," the letter states.

Massa's letter was triggered by an interview of former F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone, who said in March that he was aware of Piquet's deliberate crash in that same year but chose not to investigate it until Hamilton received the season's title at an FIA ceremony.

Massa argues that such decision is also a breach of contract, accusing the two bodies of failing to preserve the integrity of the sport. The Brazilian driver did not respond an AP request to comment.

Definitely, I'm close to breaching 90m: Neeraj

PTI ■ BUDAPEST

Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra has been trying it for a while now and the ace javelin thrower says he is "close" to breaching the coveted 90-metre mark and just needs "favourable conditions" to assist him in his quest.

Last year, the Tokyo Olympics gold medallist had fallen agonisingly short of the 90m mark, throwing the spear to a distance of 89.94m at the Diamond League meet in Stockholm.

"Definitely, I'm close. I just need one perfect day with favourable weather conditions and I am confident I'll be able to achieve the throw," Chopra said during an interview with Jio Cinema.

The Indian ace will lead-



ing the country's challenge in the World Championship here. He said he has got used to dealing with the huge expectations from him every time he takes to the field.

"I have somewhat become accustomed to handling pressure. However, when I participate in competitions that occur once every two to four years (like the World Championships and the Olympics), there is undoubtedly a sense of responsibility.

"But, I always give my hundred percent and perform with complete focus. Initially, there were other factors which used to overwhelm me but gradually I have gotten used to it."

On June 30, Chopra clinched the prestigious Diamond League title for the second consecutive time by

throwing his spear to 87.66m but the 90m mark eluded the star.

Coming back from a one-month injury lay-off, Chopra's title-winning performance at the Lausanne leg in challenging conditions was below his own top-10 efforts but he still stamped his authority in the prestigious one-day meet.

"Competing and being consistent at the highest level against the world's best athletes is definitely challenging. At the beginning of the year, I had prepared quite well, but then I got injured which led me to skip a few competitions.

"After that, I returned and participated in the Lausanne Diamond League, where my performance was good. Since then, everything has gotten better, and I am happy with my performance and training."

Bumrah shines in comeback as India restricts Ireland to 139/7

PTI ■ DUBLIN

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Prasadh Krishna shone bright on their return but Barry McCarthy's unbeaten fifty took Ireland to a competitive 139 for seven in the opening T20I of the three-match series, here on Friday.

Bumrah, who spent 11 months away from the game due to a lower-back stress fracture, picked up 2/24, while Prasadh, who also was nursing a lower-back injury, scalped 2/32.

Ravi Bishnoi (2/23) and Arshdeep Singh (1/35) also were among wickets after Bumrah opted to field.

Things looked bleak for the hosts after they were down 59/6 in the 11th over but a seventh wicket 57-run partnership between Curtis Campher (39) and McCarthy staged Ireland's recovery.

McCarthy was the stand out batter for the hosts as he reached his maiden half-century with a last-ball six off Arshdeep. His innings was laced with four boundaries and as many sixes.

Bumrah started with a four but came back to rattle the off-stump of opener Andrew Balbirnie (4).

An over-ambitious Lorcan Tucker (0) then brought out the ramp shot, only to be caught by keeper Sanju Samson as Bumrah bagged his second wicket.

After four overs, Prasadh, who made his T20I debut, was handed the ball and he ended the struggle of Harry Tector (9) with the batter giving a simple catch to Tilak Varma while looking for a ramp shot.

The wily Bishnoi then bamboozled skipper Paul Stirling (11)? with a googly as Ireland slumped to 27/4 in the powerplay.

The hosts continued to pay the price for poor execution as Prasadh had George Dockrell (3) caught by Rituraj Gaikwad at cover with a back-of-a-length delivery.

Campher hit a welcome boundary with a



reverse sweep, while Mark Adair (16) picked up two fours to take Ireland to 50 for 5 in 9 overs.

However, Bishnoi came back to remove Adair after winning a video referral for an LBW decision. The batter danced down the track and looked to play a slog shot only to be hit on the pads by a ball turing in from outside.

McCarthy brought up Ireland's first maximum when he deposited Bishnoi over long on in the 13th over.

Campher ramped one over short fine, while McCarthy clubbed one across the mid-wicket boundary as the two kept Ireland ticking.

When Bumrah returned, Campher sent a low full toss across extra cover before smoking the India pacer for a maximum.

Prasadh was next in line as McCarthy slammed him across the point region before depositing the next on over long-on. He ended the over with another four as 15 runs came off it.

Bumrah bowled a brilliant penultimate over but Arshdeep went for 22 runs in the last with McCarthy going hammers and tongs with two sixes and a four.

Shastri, Patil back Varma to be included in India's middle-order

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former stars Ravi Shastri and Sandeep Patil on Friday batted for the inclusion of the talented Tilak Varma in India's middle-order for the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup 2023.

The mega event will be held in India from October 5 to November 19.

Shastri said the 20-year-old Varma is at an advantageous position because he is a left-hander.

Speaking on Star Sports, Shastri said, "I'm very impressed with Tilak Varma. Very, very impressed. And I want a left-hander. So, if I'm looking for a left-hander in the middle order, like Yuvraj Singh and before that was Suresh Raina at five, I would really look in that direction (of Varma)."

"Sandy (Sandip) and MSK (Prasad) have been selectors, and if I was a selector along with my panel, I would be looking at that current form, looking at how he's getting his runs.

"So, when I look at the way he has got his runs over the last three months, whether it was for Mumbai Indians, for India, whether it was handling pressure, opposition, or different sit-



uations of the game, he has ticked all the boxes for someone so young," said Shastri.

Varma impressed everyone with his fine performances during his debut international series against the West Indies recently, scoring well in all the three T20I matches.

"When it comes to shot selection, when it comes to the range of shots, the ability to be unorthodox, he (Varma) has everything."

"So I'll be looking at him very closely because he is hot at the moment, his mindset, his confidence, he understands situations, which is for me the most important thing," the former India coach added.

Shastri's 1983 World Cup-

winning teammate Patil, who turned 67 this day, spoke highly about Varma, also bringing Suryakumar Yadav into the equation.

"100 per cent (India should hand ODI debut to Tilak Varma) I will go with Tilak Varma and Suryakumar Yadav," Patil said.

"Who will be in the playing XI can be decided after looking at the balance and the opposition. But Tilak Varma and Suryakumar Yadav will both be in my team," he added.

On Wednesday, Shastri had said he would include three left-handed batters in the top seven to bolster India's middle-order ahead of the Asia Cup and the subsequent World Cup.



Bazball left Aus scratching their head during Ashes: Ponting

PTI ■ HOBART

Legendary Australian cricketer Ricky Ponting said England's 'Bazball' approach had left the Australians a befuddled group during the Ashes, which saw the Englishmen making a remarkable comeback from 0-2 down.

Australia led the series 2-0 after the first two Tests at Edgbaston and Lord's but England bounced back to make the series scoreline 2-2 with wins in the third Test at Headingley and in the fifth Test at the Oval.

The rain-marred fourth Test

at Manchester ended in a draw. Though the Aussies managed to retain the Ashes urn, former captain Ponting said the home side gave them a tough ride. Australia are yet to win a Test series in England since 2001. Talking to SEN Radio, Ponting explained, "The two contrasting styles of play were great to sit back and watch. There was a lot of talk about Bazball and how England would approach it, and would that style stand up against the quality of the Australian attack.

"I think the 2-2 result, albeit probably slightly biased with a bit of controversy in that last Test with the ball changed, the way that it was, that gifted England some conditions they probably shouldn't have got. "I think the level of cricket played across the series, the 2-2 result was probably fair," he added.

It probably had some of the Australian players, coaches and the captain at different times scratching their heads as to how they were going to combat it." Ponting was all praise for the quality of cricket played during the Ashes.

SL Cricket accepts Thirimanne's retirement



PTI ■ COLOMBO

Left-hand batter Lahiru Thirimanne's retirement from international cricket has been accepted, the country's cricket board said in a statement on Friday.

Having made his international debut in January 2010, the 34-year-old Thirimanne had called time on his international career in July during an announcement made on social media.

"Sri Lanka Cricket's Executive Committee accepted the resignation of Lahiru Thirimanne from playing all forms of international cricket," Sri Lanka Cricket said.

Thirimanne's last appear-

ance for the island nation was in March 2022, when he played against India in the Bengaluru Test in March 2022.

In 44 Tests, he averaged a mere 26.43 with three centuries - two against Bangladesh and one versus England - and 10 fifties, making an overall 2,088 runs. Thirimanne played 127 ODIs and scored 3,194 runs with four tons and 21 fifties at 34.71.

However, Thirimanne's career failed to take off in T20Is - he managed just 291 runs in 26 outings at 16.16. He was, though, a member of the 2014 World T20 winning Sri Lankan side which beat India in the final.

"It has been an absolute honour to represent my country for past few years. This game that has given me so much over the years. But, with a lot of mixed feelings, I am here to announce my retirement from international cricket with an immediate effect," the batter said while announcing his retirement.

Thirimanne hinted he was taking the call 'unwillingly'.

"It was a difficult decision to make, but I cannot mention here the many unexpected reasons that influenced me to take this decision willingly or unwillingly," he added.

GANGULY BACKS TILAK TO BE INDIA'S NO 4



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday said promising left-hander Tilak Varma should be India's choice for No 4 batsman at the ICC World Cup 2023 if a front-line player like Shreyas Iyer is not available.

Shreyas has been recuperating at the NCA after a surgery on his injured back. But Ganguly said India has several options for the crucial No 4 slot.

No. 4? We have so many (batsmen) who can bat at that spot. I think differently; my mindset is different. This is a fantastic side," Ganguly said on the sidelines of a Denver event where he was announced as the 'Brand Face'.

"I see Tilak Varma as an option, being a left-hander," Ganguly said, highlighting Varma's adaptability and fearless approach to the game.

The 20-year-old left-hander made an impressive 22-ball 39 on his T20I debut against the

West Indies, followed by scores of 51 and 49 not out in his next two outings.

Ganguly further mentioned that the left-handed trio of Yashviji Jaiswal (back-up opener), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper-batter), and Varma can play fearless cricket and they should be picked when selectors announce India's World Cup squad before the September 5 deadline.

"He (Tilak) is a very good young player, not with much experience, but it does not mat-

ter. I also want to see the young left-hander (Jaiswal) in the side at the top of the order. He has enormous ability and he's fearless. So, this is a great side," said Ganguly.

Rahul underlines return to fitness

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India received a boost ahead of the Asia Cup and the ODI World Cup as KL Rahul on Friday underlined his readiness to return to international cricket while batting and wicket-keeping for an extended period during the match simulation at the NCA.

In this scenario, Rahul will, in all probability, travel to Sri Lanka for the Asia Cup and the India team for the tournament will be selected on August 21.

"(KL) Rahul showed impressive fitness levels over the match simulation programme (at the NCA) while batting and doing the wicketkeeping duties for an extended period (today). He has started batting from earlier this week and has now added wicketkeeping as well," a source close to the

development told PTI. While Rahul's return to top-flight cricket seems imminent, Shreyas Iyer, who also has been recuperating at the NCA, might just have to wait a bit longer.

Shreyas too has been undergoing a match simulation process at the NCA and the they just have to identify and pick the best XI," he said.



Shreyas too has been undergoing a match simulation process at the NCA and the

middle-order batsman has shown marked improvement in fitness. However, a final call on Shreyas could only be taken over the next couple of days.

The return of Rahul will spare the Indian team management a major headache as they can seal one spot in the middle-

order. Rahul has a fine record at No 4 in ODIs, making 241 runs from 7 innings at an average of 40.17 with a hundred.

At the No 5 position, Rahul has amassed 742 runs, including a hundred and seven fifties, from 18 innings at an average of 53. In the absence of Rahul, the Indian think tank has experimented with Suryakumar Yadav and Sanju Samson in the middle-order but none of them could produce consistent performances.

Rahul last played for India in an ODI against Australia on March 22 at Chennai.

He was ruled out of action following a thigh injury that he suffered during Lucknow Super Giants' match against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL 2023. Later he underwent a surgery before entering the rehabilitation phase.

England, India, Pakistan and New Zealand," he said. With Rishabh Pant still recovering from an accident, Ganguly said Kishan could be the choice for wicketkeeper batsman.

"Pant is the best wicketkeeper in the country, but you can see Ishan Kishan, KL Rahul (depending on his fitness); these two will be right up in Rohit's and Rahul's minds. "I like Ishan Kishan because he just opens up the game for any team. I am sure Dravid will keep him in his plans," he signed off.

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middle-order batsman has shown marked improvement in fitness. However, a final call on Shreyas could only be taken over the next couple of days.

development told PTI. While Rahul's return to top-flight cricket seems imminent, Shreyas Iyer, who also has been recuperating at the NCA, might just have to wait a bit longer.

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