OPINION 6

IS THE IDEA OF

PAKISTAN DEAD?

WORLD 9

RUSSIA CONFIRMS PRIGOZHIN

DIED IN PLANE CRASH

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CHANDRAYAAN SPIRIT OF NEW INDIA: PM

PNS NEW DELHI

Mission 'Chandrayaan-3' has emerged as the symbol of the spirit of a 'New India', which wants to emerge victorious under any circumstances, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in the latest edition of his monthly radio broadcast — 'Mann Ki Baat — on Sunday.

India entered the record books as the first country to successfully place a lander on the Moon's uncharted South Pole last week and the successful conduct of what was the maiden lunar landing mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ÎSRO) also put India in an elite club of nations featuring the US, Russia, and China.

In his radio programme, the Prime Minister spoke on a range of issues including the country's big strides in the field of sports as also the prestigious forth-coming G-20 Summit in the national Capital.

The main focus of his talk. however, remained the historic soft landing of the Vikram space module on the South Pole of the Moon.

"On August 23, our Chandrayaan-3 mission proved to the world that the dawn of revolution and resolve can also light up the dark side of the Moon. Mission Chandrayaan has become a symbol and the spirit of a 'New India.' This is an India, which wants to emerge victorious at all costs. It wants to break new grounds regardless of the circumstances," Modi said. "India wants to break new grounds regardless of the circumstances," said the Prime Minister, Without referring to the Opposition parties' comments on the issue, Modi said a discussion on India's maiden lunar landing mission would



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his radio programme 'Mann ki Baat'

struggle to do justice to the enormity of its success.
"The suc

success Chandrayaan-3 has seen the entire country immerse itself in unbridled celebrations. It has been more than three days since our lunar lander, 'Vikram', touched down on the Moon's surface. Such is the enormity of the mission's success that any discussion on it seems futile," Modi said. The PM also lauded the key role played by the women scientists at

"The key role played by ISRO's women scientists in the successful conduct of the daunting lunar landing mission is a classic illustration of women power. India's daughters are not only shattering glass ceilings but ments. It took everyone's efforts also challenging Space, which is and contributions to make this

considered 'infinite. Many women scientists and engineers were directly involved with this mission. They handled vital responsibilities such as those of a project director and project manager," he said. The Chandrayaan-3 mission of ISRO is estimated to have involved over hundred women scientists.

Also lauding the contribution of other sectors for the success of Chandrayaan-3, Modi said, "Today, our dreams are big and so are the efforts to realise them. Along with our scientists, other sectors also contributed to the success of Chandrayaan-3. Many of my fellow countrymen contributed to the mission by meeting the technical requiremission a success. This is the biggest success of our mission."

Modi also spoke about the September 9-10 meeting of G-20 in New Delhi and said next month the world is going to witness the potential of India.

Heads of 40 countries and many global organisations are coming to the national Capital to participate in the event.

"This will be the biggest participation ever, in the history of the G-20 Summit. During her presidency, India has made G-20 a more inclusive forum. The African Union also joined the G-20 on India's invitation and the voice of the people of Africa reached this important platform of the world. Friends, since India took over the presidency of the G-20 in Bali last year, so much has happened that it fills us with pride", he said.

"Moving away from the tra-dition of holding big events in

Delhi, we took them to different cities. About 200 meetings related to this were organised in 60 cities across the country. Wherever the G-20 Delegates went, people warmly welcomed them. These delegates were very impressed, seeing the diversity of our country and our vibrant democracy," he said.

"They also realised that there are so many possibilities in India," he said. "Our presidency of the G-20 is a People's Presidency, in which the spirit of public participation is at the forefront. Among the 11 Engagement Groups of G-20, i.e. academia, civil society, youth, women, our parliamentarians, entrepreneurs and people associated with urban administration played an important role. In one way or the other, more than 1.5 crore people are associated with the events being organised across the country regarding this. In this effort of ours for public participation, not just one, but two world records have also been created. The participation of 1.25 lakh students from 800 schools in the G-20 Quiz held in Varanasi became a new world record", said Modi.

"At the same time Lambani artisans also did wonders as 450 artisans have showcased their skill and craftsmanship by creating an amazing collection of around 1,800 unique patches. Every representative who came to the G-20 was amazed to see the artistic diversity of our country.

"One such grand program was organised in Surat and 15,000 women from 15 States participated in the 'Saree Walkathon' held there. This program not only gave a boost to Surat's textile industry, 'Vocal for Local' also got a fillip and paved the way for 'Local to become Global" said the Prime Minister. "I urge all countrymen to come together to make the G-20 summit successful and bring glory to the country", he said.

Speaking about the potential of the young generation Modi said, "Sports is one area where our youth are continuously achieving new successes."

A few days ago the World University Games were held in China. India displayed her bestever performance in these games this time. "Our players won 26 medals in all, out of which 11 were Gold Medals. Even if we add all the medals won in all the World University Games that have been held since 1959, this number reaches only 18. In all these decades (we won) just 18 whereas this, time our players won 26 medals," he stressed.

He also spoke with sportspersons, students who have won medals in the World University Games.

Khalistanis deface Delhi Metro

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

In a major security lapse in the run up to the G20 Summit next month, unknown suspects, allegedly associated with the US-based banned terror outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFI), defaced the walls of Metro stations in the national Capital with pro-Khalistan slogans like "Delhi Banega Khalistan (Delhi will become Khalistan)" and "Khalistan Zindabad (long live Khalistan)", prompting the Delhi Police to register a case and launch an investigation.

A purported video was released simultaneously by the Pakistan-backed SFI in which its chief Gurpatwant Singh Pannu is seen talking about the graffiti. "The battle of G20 Pragati Maidan has started today... (Prime Minister) Modi and India are targets. G20 nations, when you will be meeting in Delhi on September 8, we will be organising a Khalistan referendum in Canada," he said in the clip. The organisation said their members went to four to five Metro stations and sent a message to G20 nations with the graffiti. In the pictures shared by Delhi Police, slogans are seen inscribed on the walls of Metro stations.

Police sources identified the Metro stations as Shivaji Park station, Madipur, Paschim Vihar, Udyog Nagar, Maharaja Suraimal Stadium, Government Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya Nangloi, Punjabi Bagh and the Nangloi Metro Station as being the ones which were spray-painted with several pro-Khalistan slogans.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said the issue has been reported to the law and order agencies concerned.

"Some objectionable graffiti has been observed on the outer walls of some of our metro stations on the Green Line. The issue has been reported to the law and order agencies concerned. All necessary cooperation is being (Prevention) Act, 1967.

extended to them from the DMRC's side," said Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director, corporate communication, DMRC.

A slogan on the walls of Shivaji Park Delhi Metro station. Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

"Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) also released raw footage of Delhi Metro stations which were defaced with pro-Khalistan slogans," a senior police officer said. This also comes just two

days after a special NIA court in Delhi ordered the confiscation of a property of absconding pro-Khalistan terrorist Lakhbir Singh Sandhu alias "Landa" in a village in Tarn Taran district of Punjab.

SFJ has long been involved in reviving the Khalistani separatist movement at the behest of their Pakistani masters in the Pakistan Army-ISI combine.

This is not the first time that graffiti with slogans in support of the separatist Khalistani movement have surfaced in Northern India. Earlier, such instances have been reported from places in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

provisions of Section 3(1) of the

Unlawful

The Union Home Ministry had earlier banned SFJ for its anti-national activities. The fringe organisation, run by a few radical Sikhs of foreign nationality in the US, Canada and the UK was declared an unlawful association under the

Activities

In July, SFJ founder Gurpatwant Singh Pannu's close aide Hardeep Singh Nijjar, head of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Sahib was liquidated in Surrey, Canada by

He was the chief of the separatist organisation Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF).

unknown assailants.

SFJ is mostly active via online platforms and has more than two lakh supporters around the world but its physical presence is miniscule with just eight to 10 active members.

On January 19, ahead of the Republic Day celebrations in Delhi, "anti-national" and "Khalistan-related" graffiti appeared on walls in some areas of west Delhi, including Vikaspuri, Janakpuri, Paschim Vihar, and Peeragarhi police said.

The walls were painted with slogans like "Khalistan Zindabad" and "Referendum

2020". The Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested two men in connection with the incidents.

The G20 summit which will be held in the national Capital from September 9 to 10 is likely to be attended by more than 40 Heads of States and top officials from the European Union, guest countries, and 14 heads of international organisations who have been invited for the landmark

India scripts history at relay, enters World Championship final



The Indian 4x400m men's team poses for photographers after the historic race.

The Indian 4x400m men's team ran a lightening fast 2minute 59.05 seconds race to qualify for the finals of the World Championships for the first time in history and rewrote the Asian record of 2:59.51secomds held by Japan, on Saturday. The Indian quartet of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Amoj Jacob, Muhammed Ajmal Varivathodi and Rajesh Ramesh finished second in heat number one behind the US (2:58.47) to make it to the final to be held later in the night on Sunday.

The top three finishers in each of the two heats and the next two fastest qualified for the final. The earlier Asian record of 2:59.51 was in the name of the Japanese team. The earlier national record was 3:00.25 set in 2021. The Indians gave the world record holders Americans a run for their money, finishing closely behind them. India eventual-

ly finished second overall also after the two heats, behind the US, but ahead of strong teams like Great Britain (3rd; 2:59.42) and Jamaica (5th; 2:59.82). Rajesh Ramesh, who worked as a ticket collector at Trichy in 2018, ran the anchor leg and almost overtook his American counterpart. He was nudged physically by the US runner who didn't want to budge. Mohammed Anas, the 400m national record holder, gave India a good start as the rest of the runners kept the tempo up. Amoj Jacob, who has been plagued with injuries since the 2018 Commonwealth Games. would be a relieved man. As Amoj and the rest took to the field in Budapest his family was

Amoj's mother Mary Kutty, the head nurse at the Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, was naturally ecstatic to see her son on the world stage. Mary was so

fervently praying for the race to

happy that she was at a loss for words. "What can I even say? It feels amazing to see my son do so well. He has a tough time. You should talk to his Dad, he speaks well," Amoj's mother said.

Ramesh, who ran the anchor leg, was the standout performer It's hard to fathom that in 2018 he almost quit sports entirely and worked as a ticket collector in Trichy, Tamil Nadu. The Federation Cup at Ranchi in May this year was his comeback event where he showed his mettle beating seasoned runners for the

Earlier, talking about Ramesh, his coach Raj Mohana MK had said, "He has great potential and I can tell you that he is among the handful who we expect to run below 45 seconds by the end of this year. He has a smooth-running technique that almost looks effortless. He also has a great presence of mind and has learnt the art of pacing his

summit. **CAPSULE**

TEMP GRAPH OF LUNAR SURFACE RELEASED **BENGALURU:** ISBO on Sunday

released a graph of the temperature variation on the lunar surface with increase in depth measured by the Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE) payload onboard Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander module. According to the space agency, ChaSTE measured the temperature profile of the lunar tonsoil around the South Pole to understand the thermal

behaviour of the surface SECURITY TIGHTENED IN NUH FOR YATRA

Gurugram: Security arrangements have been stepped up and outsiders will be harred from entering Nuh district and other areas following the Sarv Jatiya Hindu Mahapanchayat's call for a 'Shobha Yatra' on Monday. despite the authorities denving nermission for the procession. Meanwhile Harvana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday asked the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal to not carry out their Jalabhishek Yatra on Monday and urged people to instead worship in local temples but the VHP has defied the directive and has said they would go ahead with the procession on Monday in Nuh district.

PROBE INTO MADURAI TRAIN FIRE BEGINS

MADURAI: Commissioner of Railway Safety, Southern Circle, A M Chowdhary commenced his inquiry into the train compartment fire accident here on Sunday. Chowdhary, while answering a question, told reporters that at present, he did not see any conspiracy angle. The senior official said he held enquiries with passengers. who were treated here for their injuries, and he had even recorded their statements about the fire that killed nine people

Ramanujan's poetry comes to life 3 decades after death

PNS KOCHI

Three decades after his demise, AK Ramanujan, noted Leftwing poet who had courted controversy through his essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas" is making a "comeback" next month. A collection of his hitherto unpublished poems is being brought out by Penguin Random House and the literary world is anxiously waiting for the same.

Titled "Soma", the poems were discovered and collected by Guillermo Rodriguez, a Spanish intellectual who was infatuated with Ramanujan's avant-garde style of writing and Krishna Ramanujan, son of the late poet, through sifting

Ramanujan's archives.

Peter Modoli, Associate Vice-President, Penguin Random House, said in a release on Saturday that the series of unpublished 'Soma' poems" differed in style and theme from Ramanujan's earlier works. Soma is the mysterious plant used by vedic priests to extract ambrosia, an intoxicating drink. Much has been written about the significance of Soma in Rigvedic ritual and Ramanujan used the "divine concoction" to elaborate the culture as he perceived under the

Ramanujan was no ordinary scholar and had proficiency in English, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit. The poems he

wrote had smooth sailing through the waters of conventional literature as well as modern poetry (where many poets fell by the wayside). 'Soma' has, besides the poems, a collection of essays and an interview the late poet had with Malayalam literature's enfant terrible K Ayyappa Panicker.

The occasion assumes significance because it is rare nowadays for even connoisseurs of literature to remember the post-modern writers within years of their death. "Puritans are likely to disown Ramanujan for his stance on Ramayana but the truth is that he was bold enough to travel in an untested field," said Sreekumar, Assistant Professor of Sanskrit, Sree Sankara Sanskrit University.

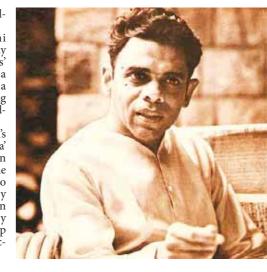
An author who portrays Sri Rama and Seetha as siblings and makes the critics fall in line is not an ordinary person, he pointed out. Interestingly, other than Valmiki Ramayana, Rama Charitha Manas and Kamba Ramayana, all other forms of the epic failed to cut any ice with the readers. That's what makes Ramanujan distinct from others.

While Soma focuses on Ramanujan's experimental poems and his creative mindset as an expatriate in America in the 1970s and early 1980s, it also provides a glimpse into a fascinating period in Western Indology when Indian philosophies and traditions were debated, some of which became so ingrained that

they influence contemporary culture to this day. The decision by Delhi

University to remove the essay 'Three Hundred Ramayanas' from the syllabus had created a furore in academic circles with a section of intelligentsia launching an agitation across India demanding freedom of expression.

Ramanujan's essay 'Hummel's Miracle: The Search for Soma' explores the connections between the poems and the quest for the plant's identity from the 1960s to the present. 'The "Ordinary Mystery" Trip: Soma in Ramanujan's Poetry' by Guillermo Rodriguez dives deep into Ramanujan's layered perspective on Soma.



10 killed, over dozen hurt in WB cracker factory blast | Mumbai hotel blaze

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

t least 10 people were Akilled and 13 severely injured in a massive blast that on Sunday occurred at an alleged fire-cracker factory at Dutta Pukur area off Barasat-Neelganj highway in the northern suburbs of Kolkata, police said.

The blast was so intense that it pulled down several houses including the doublestory building where things were being manufactured, sources said adding blast brought down not only a 15inch wall and pulled down concrete roofs but it also flung bodies and heavy chunks of concretes on to the nearby rooftops 10s of metres

The incident occurred barely a few months after similar blasts at Egra in East Midnapore and Maheshtala in South 24 Parganas prompting Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to apologise with folded hands in a public meeting from where she gave out

The owner of the factory Keramat Sheikh and his son Rabiul Sheikh, a college student also perished in the attack, locals said, alleging a strong Trinamool Congress link to the incident.

According to eye-wit-nesses a large number of drums apparently stuffed with explosives had been brought to the area in a truck on Saturday night. "They were arranging the drums when the explosion occurred," Rafikul, a local, said, adding that many migrant labourers from Murshidabad were brought to the area by Keramat Sheikh the owner of

Notwithstanding claims made by the top police brass of an accidental blast in a "fire-cracker factory" materials chanced upon by the media persons let slip a different narrative.

What media men witnessed in the blast site was a lab stuffed with tables and test such things for a mere firetubes of German make. cracker."



Dozens of tiny paper bundles stuffed with stone-chips and gunpowder were also found in one of the several makeshift camps set up inside a wooded area pointing at something more than a mere fire-cracker factory.

As the media men wondered whether stone-chips and nails were used for used for general fire crackers, locals said "there is strong suspicion among us that they did something with RDX here ... or else why will they use stonechips, sharp-nails and other

police takes money and the people cannot say a word as the miscreants get the patronage of TMC leaders ... even the local MLA (and State Food Minister) Rathin Ghosh return so many wasted lives.

informed about this illegal factory," a woman said wondering whether the Chief Minister would be able to

Which day is West Bengal Day?

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Controversies have erupted over the decision of various agencies to mark different days as West Bengal Day.

While the Centre has earmarked June 20 to celebrate the West Bengal Day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wants to mark Poila Baisakh or the first day of the month of Baisakh (usually taking place around 14th or 15 April) according to the Vangabda calendar --- as the Paschim Banga Divas. She has also proposed a song like many others States as the State Song

While convening an allparty meeting on August 29 to arrive at a consensus Banerjee

has also written a letter to the Centre criticizing its "unilateral decision" to declare June 20 for the purpose.

"I did not hear that West Bengal was established on June 20. The Centre's unilateral decision is surprising and

alarming."
Incidentally June 20 is associated with the infamous Radcliffe Awardpartitioning eastern frontiers of India and Pakistan --- in this case West Bengal and East Bengal or Bangladesh.

The Chief Minister had criticized Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose for celebrating the day as Bengal Day saying "there is nothing special about June 20 ... we have no information that Bengal was born on thisday."

kills 3, 2 injured

T N RAGHUNATHA

Three persons were and two others injured Three persons were killed when a massive fire broke out in a four-storey hotel at Santacruz (East) in north-west Mumbai on Sunday.

The fire, which originated at 1.17 pm, ripped through rooms located on the first and second floors of the Hotel Galaxy at Prabhat Colony, Santa Cruz (East).

Apart from claiming three lives and leaving two others injured, the fire gutted electric wiring, electric installation, split AC Unit, curtains, mattresses, wooden furniture in the first and second floors of the hotel.

Scores of guests rushed out of the hotel in panic as the blaze spread to the laundry, staircase lobby and threatened to engulf the entire hotel

The fire brigade personnel, who arrived at the hotel with four engines shortly after the

fire was noticed, battled with the blaze and extinguished it after more than three hours. They rescued several of the guests trapped inside the hotel rooms. Of the five persons who sustained severe burns, three of them succumbed to the wounds.

Those killed were identified as Rupal Kanaji (28), Kisan M (28) and Kantilal Goverdhan Wara (48). The condition of the two injured, who were admitted to a nearby hospital, was described as "stable" by the doctors attending on them.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known. There was a lot of smoke when we arrived at the mishap site. We broke open the windows and rescued the guests trapped inside the hotel rooms. Though there was fire extinguishing equipment inside the hotel, it was quite old. We are investigating whether negligence on the part of the hotel staff led to the mishap," a senior fire brigade official said.

Major fall in India's bird population in last 30 years worrying trend: Ramesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $F_{ ext{Environment}}^{ ext{ormer}}$ Union Minister Jairam Ramesh on Sunday said the recent 'State of India's

Birds' report points to worrying trends and asserted that the protection of birds and many other species requires an approach incorporating entire landscapes.

According to the report

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and 140A) Noida

Green Belt parallel to BGIR Sector-37) Noida.

Electrical Room in Dog Park Sector-137) Noida

Exp.H.way 0 km to 20 km R.H.S) Noida

Exp.H.way 0 km to 20 km L.H.S) Noida.

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footpath & boundary wall in park block-B Sector-81 Noida

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)

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Which can be uploaded by date 04/09/2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/

Job no/Work name

14/D(H)/DGM (H)/DD(H)-I/2023-24, D/o Park (Open Gym) Rs. 30.80 Lacs

Sector-68 park near Village Garhi chowkandi with five year Maintenance

Job no/Work name

20/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-I/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o Compost Pit & fencing

concertina coil in Nursery Sector-8 and Making Chain Link wire fencing in

35/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-I/2023-24, M/o Park (R/o gate, grill & gazebo hut in

different parks and R/o footpath in Children park & Vrindavan park sector-

35/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-II/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o Rain water harvesting

recharge structure in soft area of different Parks & Green belt in Sector-47)

37/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-II/2023-24, D/o Green Belt (P/f MS Grill for safety of

11/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, D/o Park (C/o Parking, Guard Room and

15/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o 2-nos. Gazebo huts & R/o

17/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o Footpath & Gazebo huts &

18/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Green Belt (P/f Concertina coil in

boundary wall of green belt on both side of 75.00 mtr wide road in sector-140

19/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Green Belt (Subhead Fencing work in

20/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Green Belt (P/f Concertina wire

fencing in boundary wall of green belt between 45 mtr wide road in sector-90)

21/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Green Belt (Subhead Fencing work in

24/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o Gazebo huts & R/o footpath

& boundary wall in different park front of A-81, A-98 & A-106 in block-A,

27/D(H)/GM/DD(H)-III/2023-24, M/o Park (C/o Rain water Rs. 40.68 Lacs

harvesting recharge structure in soft area of different Parks & Green belt in

Which can be uploaded by date 11/09/2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

R/o boundary wall in two different parks in block B Sector-151 Noida

based on data from about 30,000 birdwatchers across the country, of the 338 bird species studied in India for changes in numbers over the last 30 years, 60 per cent have experienced a decline. Also, 40 per cent (142) of the 359 species evaluated for change over the last seven years have declined, it said.

The Congress general secretary said that another key takeaway from the report is

Amount

30.80 Lacs

Amount

40.78 Lacs

50.71 Lacs

Rs.

41.14 Lacs

51.31 Lacs

94.59 Lacs

33.49 Lacs

83.24 Lacs

62.60 Lacs

80.03 Lacs

Rs.

39.67 Lacs

69.47 Lacs

Rs.

41.67 Lacs

40.68 Lacs

Director (Hort.)

Noida

G-18874/23

that the Schedules listed in the recently amended Wildlife Protection Act, which the Parliamentary Standing Committee studied in detail, need to be periodically reviewed and updated based on the latest scientific evidence and consultation with

The blast occurred on a

highway lined with a number

of private and Government

universities and offices of

multinational companies,

sources said adding many

more people could have died

if it were not a Sunday.
While top police officials

remained tight-lipped about

the matter, locals complained

mass petitions to the nearby

police station but no action

was taken ... the owner was

arrested a few months ago but

was later released and started

the same business ... the

'We have given several

of police inaction.

In a post on 'X', Ramesh said, "The second iteration of the diligently curated State of India's Birds, released couple of days ago, points us to some worrying trends: Out of the 942 bird species assessed, 204 species, i.e. almost onefourth, have declined in the last 30 years." "That many species that are rapidly declining are those with a large range in habitats outside the Protected Areas, especially

habitats like grasslands, rivers and coasts," he said. Birds face three major common threats across India - forest degradation, urbanisation and energy infra-structure, Ramesh said, citing the report. Climate change and illegal hunting and trade continue to be significant threats, he added.

THE PIONEER (

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KIRTI DUTTA D/o Sh. NARINDER DUTT R/o WZ-1531, VIDHAN SABHA, SHAKURBASTI, RANI BAGH, NORTH -WEST, DELHI-110034 have changed my name to KIRTI DUTT for all future purposes

PD(142)A

I, NARINDER DUTTA S/O Sh. V.D. DUTT R/o WZ-1531, VIDHAN SABHA, SHAKURBASTI, RANI BAGH, NORTH -WEST, DELHI-110034 have changed my name to NARINDER DUTT for all future purposes

Kerala news portal editor Scaria gets bail

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

In a major setback to Kerala Police, Shajan Scaria, chief editor of a popular news portal who was arrested from Nilambur in Malappuram district was granted bail by the Ernakulam District Court late Saturday evening. The action of police team which arrested Scaria while coming out of Nilambur Police Station came under severe criticism of the

"He presented himself before the Nilambur Police Station for questioning as per the directive of the Kerala High Court.

Arresting a person who presented himself before the police inspector as per the Court directive for questioning in connection with a case is like ridiculing the judicial system," said the District Judge while granting Scaria

While the journalist reached the Nilambur Police Station for being interrogated in connection with a case of spreading hatred against two communities, the Ernakulam Police team took him into custody based on a based businessman to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan against Scaria.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Information is given to general public at large that Mr. Mukesh Kumar Sharma is the owner of Portion of Property No. Municipal Shop No. 93 and 94, Current No. 108, area admeasuring 84.03 sq. mtr., situated at Rite Ganj Garbi, Tehsil and Distt., Ghaziabad. U.P., Owner Ithrough Regd Gift Deed dated 01.11.2022 as Document No. 11872 executed by Mrs. Sobhagyawati, Mrs. Manju Sharma, Mr. Rakesh Sharma, Mrs. Neelam Sharma, Mr. Rakesh Sharma in favour of Mr. Mukesh Kumar Sharma in respect of said property, and same property to be financed by Anand Rathi Global Finance Ltd. having its Regd. Address at Express Zone, 8th floor Western Express Highway Goregaon (East) Mumbai 40063 and Branch Address at Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi.If any person(s) having any objection regarding, title, mortgage for subject property, then kindly may contact the undersigned along with original property document, within 7 days from date of this notice on below mentioned address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and voir in deresigned. oned address, failing which, the claim as pe foresaid shall be treated as null and void in

the subject property.

HARIOM SHARMA (ADVOCATE)

Puthuppally bypoll: Cakewalk likely for late Oommen Chandi's son

 $A^{\text{Ggovernment}}$ rocked by corruption charges and a rudderless Opposition caught in the whirlwind of group war and one upmanship mark the political landscape of Kerala as the State is getting ready for the by-poll to be held at Puthuppally Assembly con-

Former chief minister Oommen Chandi who breathed his last in July 2023 had been representing the constituency continuously for the last 53 years. His son Chandy Oommen is the Congress candidate for the by poll to be held on September 5, while the CPIM has fielded Jake C Thomas, a former SFI leader. Though the BJP too has fielded a candidate the chances are that he may end up as an also ran contestant as pollsters are unanimous in their production that Chandy Oommen would have a cake walk over others.

Saturday was the 45th day of Oommen Chandy's demise and if the crowd which had gathered for the special prayers held at Puthuppally is any indication, the victory of Congress candidate is a foregone conclusion. The CPI-M led Left



fight as the Congress has levelled serious corruption charges against him and his family members. The Income Tax Interim Settlement Board's findings that the Rs 1.72 crore received by Veena, daughter of the chief minister, from a mineral sand mining company as "monthly allowance" is enmeshed in

of Vijayan. According to the Board, Veena has not provided any service to the sand mining company and hence there is no justification in her accepting the amount from the company. Last week saw A C Moideen

mystery has added to the woes

Directorate for financial embezzlement to the tune of Rs 125 crore from a cooperative bank in Thrissur. Moideen has been summoned by the ED to appear before its Kochi office for interrogation next week. There is widespread

resentment among the people against the government. Employees of the public sector undertakings and pensioners have not received their dues for many months. The State Treasury is liter-

ally empty while KN Balagopalan, the finance minister has put the blame on the Centre's doors. Though Onam, the State's biggest festival falls on Tuesday, people are yet to get the free ration kits offered by the government.

Deadlock over Jammu toll plaza suspension dents BJP's image

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The recent deadlock over the suspension of the Sarore toll plaza in Samba and the installation of Smart electricity meters in Jammu has severely dented the image of the local unit of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP).

At the same time, the manner in which the local unit of the party responded to the crisis and internally handled the situation has also exposed the fault lines within the J&K

Instead of presenting the united face of the party, several senior party leaders pulled in different directions at a crucial time and buckled under the pressure. The local BJP unit also failed to get its act together and could not

sense the growing public anger Political observers claimed, "The faction-ridden J&K unit of the party failed to see the writing on the wall despite repeated warnings by the civil society to respond to their genuine grievances before it was too late to

make amends". Meanwhile, a day after Jammu witnessed a complete shutdown over two dozen workers including leaders of Yuva Rajput Sabha were released from the Kathua jail early

Sunday morning.

The custody of the arrested leaders was handed over to the Samba police before they

were set free.

Office of The Executive Engineer, P.W.D (B & R) Division, Chhatarpur (M.P.)

Email: eepwdchhatar@mp.nic.in,

Fax No.: 07682-246518, **Tender Notice**

Phone No. 07682-246516

NIT No- 13/2023-24 Chhatarpur, Date-24/08/2023 Online Tender for mentioned below are being invited. The Tender have been uploaded on the E-procuremen system of Public Works Department on the Portal www.mptenders.gov.in Tender details are as below:-

S. No.	Tender I. D. No.	Nature of work	Name of work	Call No.	Cost of Project (PAC) (In lack)	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2023_PWD RB_301450	Construction Work	Construction of Terracotta Museum (Maati) Near Chandranagar Distt. Chhatarpur (M.P.)	First	417.00	EMD & Technical Proposal/Propo
2	2023_PWD RB_301451	Construction Work	Design & Construction of E-Library (Granthalay) at Chhatarpur (M.P.)	First	416.00	EMD & Technical Proposal/Propo
			Total		833.00	

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The lastdate & time for purchase on Dated 08/09/2023 and submission of tender Document online is on Dated 08/09/2023 upto (17:30) Bid will be open on 11/09/2023 at office of the CE PWD Sagar Zone Sagar (M.P.). Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. Amendnents to NIT, if any, would be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

(Ram Sanehi Shukla) Executive Engineer. PWD (B&R) Division. Chhatarpur (M.P.)

Vikram lander observes temperature variation on lunar surface, records high of 70 degrees Celsius

PTI ■ BENGALURU

rSRO on Sunday I released a graph of the temperature variation on the lunar surface and a senior

scientist of the space agency expressed surprise over the high temperature recorded on the Moon.

The national space agency said Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE) payload onboard Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander measured the temperature profile of the lunar topsoil around the pole to understand the thermal behaviour of the Moon's surface.

"Here are the first observations from the ChaSTE pay-

load onboard Vikram Lander. ChaSTE (Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment) measures the temperature profile of the lunar

topsoil around the pole to understand the thermal behaviour of the moon's surface," ISRO said in an update on social media platform 'X'.

Speaking about the graphic illustration, ISRO scientist B H M Darukesha told PTI: "We all believed that the temperature could be somewhere around 20 degree centigrade to 30 degree centigrade on the surface but it is 70 degree centigrade. This is surprisingly higher than what we had expected.

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Security tightened in Nuh for 'shobha yatra'

GURUGRAM/NEW DELHI

Security arrangements have been stepped up and outsiders will be barred from entering Nuh district and other areas following the Sarv Jatiya Hindu Mahapanchayat's call for a 'shobha yatra' on Monday, despite the authorities denying permission for the procession.

Meanwhile Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday asked the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal to not carry out their Jalabhishek Yatra on Monday and urged people to instead worship in local temples but the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) has defied the directive and has said they would go ahead with the religious processon on Monday in Nuh.

Permission has not been granted for the 'yatra', Khattar said in Panchkula on Sunday, referring to the Nuh violence



that took place a few weeks

:Instead of the 'yatra', people can visit temples in their areas for 'jalabhishek',: he said and asserted that it is the State Government's responsibility to maintain law and order. Khattar's remarks came days after the two groups insisted that they would go ahead with their planned procession.

It is the same religious procession that could not be concluded on July 31 when it came under attack from a mob. On July 31, a religious procession organised by VHP came under attack in Nuh. Five people, including two Home Guard personnel, were killed. The violence then spread to nearby Gurugram district where mosques and shops were attacked and a Muslim cleric was killed.

In light of the VHP's defiance, security has been beefed in Nuh and internet and bulk SMS services hae been banned in the district. It has also imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, preventing the assembly of four or more people in an area, till Monday. Gurugram police has appealed people not to join the Yatra.

sonnel, including those from paramilitary forces, have been deployed to keep a strict vigil. Security at inter-State and interdistrict borders has also been tightened, they said. A few locals said they have no objection to holding the religious procession if it is allowed but asserted that there should be no provocative

sloganeering during the yatra.

Officials said security per-

August 28 is the last Monday of the holy month of Shravan. As a precautionary measure, the district administration has ordered the closure of educational institutions and banks on the day, suspended mobile internet and bulk SMS services, and imposed prohibitory orders in the communallysensitive district. It has also imposed Section 144 of the CrPC, prohibiting the assembly of four or more people in an area, till Monday.

Multiple layers of barricades have been erected by police at various points and vehicles entering Nuh were thoroughly checked by security per-

is learnt to have held a meeting with Director General of Police (DGP) Shatrujeet Kapur in Chandigarh on Sunday to take stock of the situation. ADGP CID Alok Mittal was also pre-

be held on September 4.

pone the exam was taken in the wake of the imposition of prohibitory orders and the closure of schools in Nuh on Monday. The government has also announced the suspension of mobile internet from August 26

The Haryana Chief Minister

sent at the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Board of School Education, Haryana, on Sunday announced the postponement of the diploma in elementary education exam in Nuh. The exam, which was to take place on Monday, will now It said the decision to post-





6.75 lakh pots of flowering plants, shrubs to adorn roads for G20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 6.75 lakh pots of flowering plants and ever-greens will adorn the 61 roads and venues of Delhi during the G20 Summit.

According to Raj Niwas officials, the major locations that have been beautified with potted plants include Sardar Patel Marg, Mother Teresa Crescent, Teen Murti Marg, Dhaula Kuan-IGI Airport Road, Palam Technical Ârea, India Gate C-Hexagon, Mandi House, Akbar Road roundabout, Delhi Gate, Rajghat, and ITPO among others.

After a preparatory meeting headed by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, directions were issued identifying agencies who would under-

take this drive and they were tasked with procuring a specific number of plants/pots, preferably from their own nurseries, officials said. :This resulted in seamless

coordination between five departments/agencies undertaking the procurement and placement of these potted plants with the LG personally monitoring the progress of work and inspecting different corridors in the last couple of months,: said

While the Department and the Delhi Parks and Garden Society placed 3.75 lakh plants (1.25 lakh foliage and 2.5 lakh flowering), the PWD placed 50,000 (35,000 foliage and 15,000 flowering), the DDA 1 lakh (85,000 foliage and 15,000 flowering), the NDMC 1 lakh

and the MCD 50,000 pots, the official added.

While 4.05 lakh potted foliage have already been placed along the 61 roads, the remaining potted flowering plants will be put up in the first week of September so that the plants are in full bloom during the duration of the G20 Summit, officials said.

According to officials, Delhi residents and foreign delegates will be able to see the 54 roundabout and key avenue roads in

:Commuters will be able to witness visually appealing arrangements of flowering plants that can withstand high temperatures, such as vinca, zinnia, celosia, gladiolus, gomphrena, portulaca, cosmos, sunflower and balsam,: they said.

G20 beautification programme in city funded by Centre: Sachdeva

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva has said the city beautification programmes which Delhi is witnessing for the G20 summit preparations are funded by the

Even the wall painting concept has been introduced by the Centre first at the Pragati Maidan tunnel and later in the

Delhi BJP president said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Ministers are shame-



lessly trying to steal credit for Delhi's makeover by making

social media posts. Sachdeva challenged the Delhi Chief Minister to cite even one project of beautification or development done by his government in Delhi for G

Delhi BJP will soon hold a Press conference and present a full list of only G 20 related development projects in Delhi funded by the Centre.

Delhi BJP spokespersons and office bearers through small videos will take Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government contribution in Delhi's makeover to the people.

The Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also slammed Government for not releasing funds for G 20 projects.

Declare Raksha Bandhan on August 31, traders' body urges Centre

STAFF REPORTER

As the brother-sister bond festival:Raksha Bandhan: scheduled on August 30, the traders' body on Sunday urged the Centre to declare the festival for August 31 as the original date falls in :Bhadra Kaal:, which is considered inauspicious in the Hindu traditions

In a communication sent to the Ministry of Culture, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has urged that most inauspicious : Bhadra Kaal: is falling on August 30 and the celebration of Rakhi during this period will be inauspicious.

Many people are confused about whether Raksha Bandhan is on August 30 or August 31st this year. According to Vedic Astrology Raksha Bandhan festival is always celebrated in the period without Bhadra.

Every year, Rakhi is celebrated on the last day of Sawan, which is a full moon day, and this year due to Bhadra Kaal people are confused about whether Raksha Bandhan is on August 30 or 31.

Recruitment of principals tainted: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Alleging wrongdoing in the recruitment of 334 principals for Government schools in the national Capital, the Delhi BJP on Sunday demanded proper cross verification of documents of the selected can-

Making this claim here, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said the recruitment of principals is as tainted as the JBT recruitment scam seen in Haryana in the year 2000.

He also called for a probe into alleged massive misuse of SCERT funds by Delhi's Education Department for political promotion of AAP's

Sachdeva said he has written to the Lt. Governor of Delhi that as per the facts brought to his knowledge Delhi Government sent a request for recruitment of 334 principals in Delhi Government schools and there are lots of flaws in the recruitment process.

Sachdeva said it is also learnt there are discrepancies in the documents submitted by over one third of the selected 334 principals.

He claimed that due to the connivance of Delhi Government's education department officials under the

pressure of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Education Minister Atishi forged documents have been submitted by many selected principals.

The basic education degrees submitted by many selected Principals are forged, similarly the caste certificates, economic status certificates, experience certificates too have been forged. Crores of rupees have exchanged hands in this corrupt process, Sachdeva said.

Delĥi BJP president also drew the attention towards the rampant misuse of SCERT funds by the education department officials of Delhi







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Sulhakul Mandir with NSIT Dwarka

UTSAY PANDAL

at Sector 10, Dwarka

ЬУ

Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena

Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Delhi

Guests of Honour

Shri Ramesh Bidhuri

Hon'ble MP, South Delhi

Hon'ble MP, West Delhi

Shri Parvesh Sahib Singh

August Presence

Shri Subhasish Panda Vice Chairman, DDA

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Modi calls for global framework for ethical use of Al

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for a global framework for ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as he flagged concerns surrounding bias in such modern technologies and their impact on the society. Days ahead of the G20 Summit, the Prime Minister also made a strong case for developing an integrated approach to deal with issues concerning cryptocur-

Modi, addressing B20 Summit India 2023 organised by CII, said India is preparing a global framework for Green Credit and urged industry leaders to adopt life and businesses with emphasis on planet pos-

Highlighting issues concerning climate change, energy sector crisis, food supply chain imbalance, water security, Modi said such matters have a big impact on business lenges, there is a need to increase common efforts.

Now, there is a challenge related to cryptocurrencies. There is a need for more and more integrated approach in this matter. I think, a global framework should be created for this, in which all stakeholders are taken care of," Modi said at the gathering attended by global and domestic business leaders.

A similar approach, he said, is needed regarding artificial intelligence as well. "Today, the world is showing a lot of excitement regarding AI. But amidst the excitement there are also some ethical considerations. Regarding skilling and re-skilling, concern is being raised about algorithm bias and its impact on the society. Such issues also have to be resolved together," he added.

Modi called business communities and governments to work together to ensure usage in different sectors. This problem has to be solved under the global framework.'

The Prime Minister asked for a reconsideration of the traditional approach to business, stating they should go beyond brand and sales. "As a business, we also have to focus on creating an ecosystem that will benefit us in the long term," said

Modi stressed that businesses should focus on improving the purchasing power of more and more people as a selfcentric approach will harm everyone. Referring to a similar chal-

lenge of uneven availability and universal need in critical material and rare earth metals, Modi said, "If those who have them do not look at them as global responsibility then it will promote a new model of colonialism."

He also underlined that a profitable market can be sus-

in the interests of producers and consumers, and it also applies to nations.

He said treating other countries only as a market will

eventually harm the producing way forward is to make everyone equal partners in this

Modi urged business lead-

businesses more consumercentric. "Every year, can global businesses come together to pledge themselves for the good of the consumers and their markets?", the prime minister

Modi suggested the global business to fix a day to talk about the interest of the consumer. "When we talk about consumer rights, should not we also be mindful of consumer care as it will automatically take care of many consumer rights issues? We should definitely think about a system for 'International Consumer Care Day. This will help in strengthening trust between businesses and consumers", he said.

He elaborated that consumers are not confined to retail consumers within a particular geography but also the nations that are consumers of global trade, global goods and

Referring to the success of

advanced to August 23, and the country is in a celebratory mood. He also acknowledged the role of the industry in the mission as many components of Chandrayaan-3 were provided by the private sector and MSMEs. "This is a success of both science and industry", he said.

Referring to G20, he said they have invited the African Union for a permanent seat at G20. Talking about lessons learnt from Covid-19 pandemic, Modi said it has taught a lesson that there is a need to increase investment in "mutual trust". Emphasizing the attractiveness of partnership with India for the global business community, the prime minister mentioned India's young talent pool and its digital revolution. "The more your friendship deepens with India,

Questioning the efficiency of the global supply chain that

the more prosperity will accrue

required it the most, Modi underlined that India is the solution to the disruptions that the world is dealing with today. He said half of the issues will be reduced when both the lifestyle and the businesses are pro-planet.

He added businesses have successfully gone beyond borders and boundaries and now it's time to take businesses beyond the bottomline. It can be carried out by focusing on supply chain resilience and sustainability.

The Business 20 (B20) is the official G20 dialogue forum with the global business community. B20 Summit India brings policymakers, business leaders and experts from across the world to deliberate and discuss the B20 India Communique. The B20 India Communique includes 54 recommendations and 172 policy actions for submission to G20. The G20 summit is scheduled for September 9-10 here.

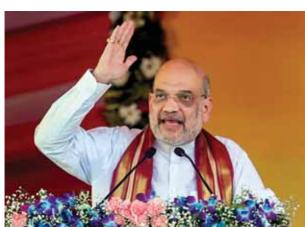
Shah to chair 26th Western Zonal Council meet today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair the 26th meeting of the Western Zonal Council at Gandhinagar, Gujarat on Monday.

The Zonal Councils hold discussions on a wide range of issues including infrastructure, mining, water supply, environment and forests and Staterestructuring, as well as direct benefit transfer (DBT), wider expansion of telecommunications/internet and issues of general regional interests.

Many issues of national importance are also discussed in each meeting of the Zonal Councils. These include speedy investigation of cases of sexual offence/rape against women and children, implementation of the scheme of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for expeditious disposal of rape and POCSO Act cases, facilitation of banks/India Post Payment Bank branches within 5 km in each village, address-



ing malnutrition among children through Poshan Abhiyan, reducing drop-out rate of school children, participation of government hospitals in Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and issues of general interest at national level.

The Western Zonal Council comprises the States of Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman

and Diu. The meeting is being organized by the Inter State Council Secretariat under the

Government of Gujarat. The 26th meeting of the Western Zonal Council will be attended by the Chief Ministers of the member States and the Administrator of the Union Territories, along with two senior ministers from each State. The Chief Secretaries,

Union Home Ministry in col-

Advisors and other senior officers of the State governments and Union Territories and Union Home Secretary, Secretary Inter State Council and other senior officers of the Central Government will also participate in the meeting, the Home Ministry said in a state-

Five Zonal Councils were established in 1957 under Section 15-22 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956. Union Home Minister is the Chairman of these five Zonal Councils, while the Chief Ministers of the States are included in the respective Zonal Council and the Administrator/Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territories are its members.

Two more ministers from each state are nominated by the Governor as members of the council. Each Zonal Council has also constituted a Standing Committee at the level of Chief Secretaries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has stressed the need to leverage cooperative and competitive federalism for the allround development of the country. In the spirit that strong States make strong nations, The Zonal Councils provide a platform to enhance coopera-tion through a systematic mechanism for regular dialogue and discussion on issues affecting two or more states or the Center and the States,

according to the statement. Shah has stressed on the need for cooperative federalism approach to empower States and promote better understanding on the policy framework between the Centre and the States. He has advocated using Zonal Councils to resolve disputes and promote cooperative federalism.

Under the chairmanship of the Union Home Minister, meetings of all five Zonal Councils were organized last year. This year, all meetings of the respective standing committees have been held prior to the meetings of the Zonal

Modi to distribute job letters to 51K recruits in Rozgar Mela today

Drime Minister Narendra P_{Modi} will distribute over 51,000 appointment letters to newly-inducted recruits on Monday via video conferencing.The Rozgar Mela will be held at 45 locations across the country, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Through this Rozgar Mela event, the Union Home Ministry is recruiting personnel in various paramilitary or central armed police forces (CAPFs) such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Shashtra Seema Bal (SSB), Assam Rifles, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) as well as the Delhi Police.

Modi will distribute more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly inducted recruits on Monday at 10:30 AM via nal security, counter terror-

video conferencing.

Modi will also address the appointees on the occasion, the statement said. The new recruits, selected from across the country, will be joining the various positions such as constable (general duty), sub-inspector (general duty) and non-general duty cadre posts in various organisations under the Home Ministry, it said.

Strengthening of CAPFs as well as the Delhi Police will help these forces to play their multidimensional role more effectively like aiding in inter-

ism, combating insurgency, anti-left-wing extremism and protecting the borders of the nation, the statement said. The Rozgar Mela is a step

towards fulfilment of the commitment of the Prime Minister to accord highest priority to employment generation, it said. The Rozgar Mela is expected to act as a catalyst in further employment generation and provide meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in national development, the

5 MiG-29, special commandos join exercise in Egypt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed a battery of five MiG-29 fighter jets, six transport aircraft and a group of its special forces commandos at a 21-day multilateral war game in Egypt that began on Sunday.

The biennial tri-services exercise, Bright-Star 23, is taking place at Cairo (West) Air Base and the militaries of the US, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Qatar besides of the host country and India are participating in the multilateral exercise, officials said.

It is for the first time that the IAF is participating in the

"The IAF contingent will consist of five MiG-29, two IL-78, two C-130 and two C-17 aircraft. Personnel from the IAF's Garud special forces, as well as those from the Numbers 28, 77, 78 and 81 squadrons will be participating in the exercise," the IAF said in a statement

Around 150 personnel from the Indian Army are also part of the Indian contingent who was airlifted by

"The objective of the exercise is to practice planning and execution of joint operations. Besides leading to the formation of bonding across borders, such interactions also provide a means to further strategic relations between participating nations. IAF contingents to flying exercises abroad are thus no less than Diplomats in Flight Suits, "the IAF said in its statement.

"Besides leading to the formation of bonding across borders, such interactions also provide a means to further strategic relations between

participating nations," it said. It said India and Egypt have had "exceptional relationship and deep cooperation wherein the two jointly undertook development of aero-



engine and aircraft in 1960s and training of Egyptian pilots was done by Indian counter-

The relations between the two countries were elevated to the level of strategic partnership during Egyptian President Abdeh Fattah El-Sisi's visit to India in January. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi visited Egypt in June during which the two sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen their overall strategic partnership.

The defence and strategic cooperation between India and Egypt has been on an upswing in the last few years.

The Indian and Egyptian armies conducted the first ever joint exercise in January

Egypt has already shown interest in procuring Tejas light combat aircraft, radars, military helicopters and other platforms from India. In July last year, the IAF

participated in a month-long tactical leadership programme in Egypt with three Su-30 MKI jets and two C-17 transport aircraft. In September last year,

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh undertook a three-day visit to Egypt.
"The relationship between the two civilizational countries

was further strengthened with the recent visits by the Chief of Air Forces of the two countries and Indian Defence Minister and Prime Minister to Egypt. The two countries have also enhanced their joint training with regular exercises between their Armed Forces, " reads the IAF state-



midst the vague indica-led NCP whether to be part of

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

called INDIA or not, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) comprising the Shiv Sena (Udhhav), the Congress and the NCP have held series of meetings during the weekend to leave no stone unturned in "concretising" the third meeting beginning this Friday at Mumbai.

While a logo with some slogans are to be unveiled during the meet as earlier reported by The Pioneer, the MVA, as host of third meeting has formed several committees to plan various aspects of the meeting on August 31 and September 1.



The Opposition meeting will also be watched by the BJP and its NDA partners as the race for the 2024 General

Elections is gearing up.
Besides, NCP stalwart Sharad has created confusion with each passing day with his comments on the breakaway faction led by his nephew Ajit Pawar who is part of NDA and



tained that his party was never ripped off albeit a few MLAs are on other side. Sharad is oscillating between NDA as well INDIA.

While 26 Opposition parties alliance as of now is confirmed, the Mumbai meet may see expansion with some more

MVA holds meets amid Sharad's vague signals over INDIA

June, while the second one took place in Bengaluru in mid-July.

Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) Bihar Chief Minister Nitish

Kumar on Sunday said a few more political parties were likely to join the Opposition INDIA bloc during its upcoming meeting. However, the JD(U) leader,

who played an instrumental role in bringing together different parties opposed to the BJP, did not reveal the names of the likely entrants but said poll-related modalities such as seat-sharing will be discussed at the meeting.

regional outfits joining.

The INDIA bloc's first bloc's strategies for next year's coneral elections during the general elections during the upcoming meeting in Mumbai. Issues such as seat-sharing will The Bengaluru conclave had be discussed and several other more political parties will join our coalition. I wish to unite the maximum number of parties before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. I am working in that direction... I have no desire for myself," Nitish said in Patna.

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) leader Sanjay Raut too indicated last week that there is a possibility that new political parties, especially from northeast India, will take part in the two-day gathering.

"The INDIA (alliance) logo will be unveiled (during the meeting). Discussions are on

SC to hear plea relating to demolition of 'illegal'

for the same. We are trying to "We will discuss the INDIA reach out to 140 crore Indians. The logo will symbolise the country, its unity, and reflect the energy needed to keep the country together," Raut said.

> will handle media and publicity, while the NCP will take care of transport and Shiv Sena to look after accommodation with two leaders from these parties in each committee.

The management is being supervised by Congress leaders Milind Deora, Naseem Khan and Varsha Gaikwad, while former Maharashtra Chief Minister and senior leader Ashok Chavan will be overall in charge of the organising committee. A Press conference has been scheduled on Thursday to announce details

of the meeting.

Rahul: Creating industrial hubs, implementing single GST rate imperative for shielding MSMEs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Chared a video of his recent Ovisit to a chocolate-making factory at Ooty in Karnataka, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said creating industrial hubs and implementing a single GST rate are imperative measures to shield MSMEs which collectively possess the power to drive India's growth engine. Rahul Gandhi, who is cur-

rently visiting Srinagar with his mother and former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, had visited "one of Ooty's most celebrated brands" - Moddys Chocolates – earlier this month while on his way to his parliamentary constituency Wayanad after his Lok Sabha membership was restored.

Nestled amidst the picturesque Nilgiris lies a globally renowned Indian industry the chocolate-makers of Ooty, a statement issued by the



delightful experience of visiting one of Ooty's most celebrated brands: Moddys Chocolates. The entrepreneurial spirit of the couple behind this small business, Muralidhar Rao and Swati, is inspiring," Rahul Gandhi was quoted as saying in

Equally remarkable is the all-women team which works alongside them, he said. "This dedicated team of 70 women crafts some of the most exquis-

the statement.

ite couverture chocolates I've "However, like countless

other small and medium businesses across India, Moddys is grappling with the burden of the same adversary - the Gabbar Singh Tax," he said. "In a landscape where the

government appears to favour larger corporations to the detriment of the MSME sector, it is the pure grit of hardworking Indians like the women I met here that sustains India's growth," he said.

constructions near Krishna Janmabhoomi PTI ■ NEW DELHI The Supreme Court is sched-■ uled to hear on Monday a plea relating to the demolition drive to clear alleged illegal

Pradesh's Mathura. As per the cause list of Monday uploaded on the apex court website, the plea would come up for hearing before a bench comprising justices Aniruddha Bose, Sanjay Kumar

and SVN Bhatti. The matter pertains to demolition of settlements near the Krishna Janmabhoomi.

While hearing the matter on August 16, the apex court had halted for 10 days the demolition drive being carried out by the railway authorities to clear the alleged illegal

constructions. It had issued notices to the Centre and others seeking their responses on a plea filed by

petitioner Yakub Shah. "Let there be an order of status quo as regards the subject premises for a period of 10 days from today. List after one week," the bench had said in its August 16 order.



Later on August 25, the matter again came up for hearing before the top court which had refused further extension

"List on August 28. In the meantime, rejoinder, if any, be filed by the petitioner. No further extension of the interim order," the bench had said. On August 16, the peti-

tioner's counsel had told the apex court that 100 houses have een bulldozed. There are 70-80 houses

left. Whole thing will become infructuous. They conducted the exercise on a day when Uttar Pradesh courts were closed," he had argued.

SC rejects plea seeking setting up of national level agency to deal with organised crimes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea seeking a direction to the Centre to set up a national level agency to deal with organised crimes like smuggling, inter-state trafficking, cyber crimes and political violence. The plea had also sought setting up of a National Internal Security Coordination

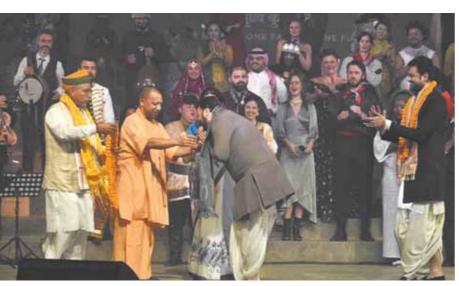
Council (NISCC) under the control of a committee constituted by the President on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India.

The petition came up for hearing before a bench headed Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud which said directions sought in the plea pertained to the legislative and pol-

CM Yogi honours artistes DM hears problems of people at G20 cultural event

The Culture Ministers of G20 countries met on the last day of the four-day G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) here on Saturday and in the last evening hours G20 Global Orchestra 'Sur Vasudha' by international artistes mesmerised the audience at Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC), Bada Lalpur. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the event gave a message of the spirit of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' which was based on the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. He felicitated Mahesh Babu and his team for presenting an enthralling cultural programme.

On the occasion, the CM handed over the G20 Orchestra baton to Brazil's Quinn Beaten as the next G20 Summit will be held under the Brazil Presidency. The CM also attended the dinner organised



CM Yogi Adityanath felicitating an artiste during G20 meeting in Varanasi on Saturday night.

in honour of the guests of 20 CWG. The function was also attended by Union Minister of State for Law and Justice

(Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal and Union Minister of State for Culture Meenakashi Lekhi.

Yogi honoured the composer of Sur Vasudha by presenting angavastram. The cultural programmes were pre-

sented realising the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the ancient tradition of India. In order to promote sustainable development, the message of environmental protection was also given through the cultur-

al programme.

The artistes from G20 countries as well as eight invited countries (Bangladesh, Mauritius, Netherlands, Oman, Singapore, Spain, Niggria, IJAE) Singapore, Spain, Nigeria, UAE) also took part in the international cultural programme 'Sur Vasudha'. Six international organisations also participated. Such programmes were earlier organiseď in Saudi Arabia, Italy and Indonesia when the G20 Summits were organised under their respective presidency. UP Tourism Minister Jaiveer Śingh, Union Secretary (Culture) Govind Mohan, Chief Secretary (UP) Durga Shankar Mishra and representatives of G20 countries were present in the function.

District Magistrate Sanjay Kumar Khatri reached three police stations of the district. The DM while listening to the problems of the public in Tharavai police station gave instructions to dispose of all complaints a timely. The DM reached the Phaphamau police station and listened to the problems of the people. A total of four complaints were received and all were disposed of on the spot. A total of eight complaints were received at Soraon police station out of which four complaints were disposed of on

The DM immediately sent the team of the Revenue department and the Police department to the spot for redressal of complaints on the Samadhan Diwas and gave instructions for their quality redressal. He directed the officers present that negligence will not be pardonable. DCP Gangapar Abhishek Bharti, sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Phulpur Saurabh Bhatt, SDM Soraon Ganesh Kanaujia

and other officers were present on the occasion.

FIR AGAINST SHAISTA OTHERS: The Prayagraj police lodged an FIR against slain gangster Atiq Ahmed's wife Shaista Parveen and other relatives and associate Guddu Muslim for failing to turn up before the court and investigating officer (IO) probing the Umesh Pal murder case.

A local court had on July 26 passed an order under Section 82 of CrPC and notices were pasted on the houses of Shaista Parveen, Ruby alias Jainav (wife of slain gangster Khalid Azim alias Ashraf), Guddu Muslim, Sabir, Arman in Prayagraj and Ayesha Noori (wife of Akhlaq) and resident of Meerut.

The notices gave the accused a stipulated time to present themselves before the court failing which legal action leading to the attachment of their property will be initiated. The development is seen as another step forward for the police to initiate proceedings related to attachment of property of individuals evading police questioning after being

named as accused in a criminal offence.

Inspector (Dhoomanganj) Rajesh Kumar Maurya in his FIR claimed that these persons were wanted by Dhoomanganj police in connection with a case registered under Sections 147, 148, 149, 302, 307, 506 and 120 B of IPC, Section 3 of explosive act, 7 CLA and Section 3(2) 5 of SC/ST Act regarding the killing of Umesh Pal. Pal, the prime witness in BSP MLA Raju Pal murder case, and two of his police gunners were shot dead in Sulemsarai area on February 24 this year.

SHO said these persons have neither appeared before the court concerned nor the IO despite fixing a stipulated date and time and made contempt of court. Following this an additional FIR under Section 174 A of IPC (whoever fails to appear at the specified place and specified time as required by a proclamation published under sub-section (1) of section 82 of the CrPC was lodged with Dhoomanganj police. All the persons named in the FIR are still elusive and carry reward on their head.

CS inspects progress of ropeway project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Chief Secretary (CS) Durga Shankar Mishra inspected the progress of the ropeway project at Bharat Mata Mandir here on Sunday. During the inspection, company officials informed the CS about the current progress of the project. The company officers said that at present load and pile testing work is going on there where a station of ropeway project is being constructed. During the inspection of the 'dream project' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the CS directed the concerned company officers to speed up the progress of the project by taking utmost care.

Prior to this, Mishra inspected the Phulwaria fourlane in the morning and reviewed the progress of this ambitious project. During the inspection, he said that the project is already running late from its scheduled time, so he directed the concerned officers to complete the project by September this year. During the inspection, Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma and District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam

The CS along with other senior local officers also conducted a site inspection of the Divisional Office to be built in the Commissionerate com-



pound. He sought the detailed information about the proposed project. The construction of the Divisional Office is being done Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) and its Vice Chairman (VC) Abhishek Goyal gave details about the progress

During his stay, Mishra also visited the International Hindu School located in the Assi area and speaking on the occasion, he recalled his childhood days. He called upon the children to learn good manners while remembering the values given by the teachers in their childhood. Praising the functioning of the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary described the CM as a 'Karmayogi'. He also inspected the laboratory, building etc located in the school. He asked to make presentations on the vacant walls of the school for the chairman Dr Suman Kumar Mishra and secretary Revati Mishra welcomed the CS and gave detailed information about







1. The applicant above-named has made an application before the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi for determination of Transmission Tariff from DOCO to 31-03-2024 for Petition-1 Transmission Asset: Replacement of 1x315 MVA.400 /220KV ICT(ICT-1 at 400/220KV Ludhiana (PG) Substation with 1x500MVA, 400/220 kV ICT under "Replacement of 1x315 MVA 400/220kv ICT (ICT-1) at 400/220 kV Ludhiana (PG) S/s with 1x500 MVA 400/220kV ICT. Petition-2 Transmission Asset: Replacement of 1x250 MVA,400/220 kV ICT at 765/400/220 kV Moga(PG) Substation with 1x500 MVA, 400/220kV ICT along with associated works at 220kV level under "Replacement of 1x250 MVA,400/220 kV ICT at 765/400/220 kV Moga(PG) Substation with 1x500 MVA, 400/220kV ICT along with associated works at 220 kV level.

2. The beneficiaries for Combined Assets of the above-mentioned Transmission system are: (1) Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (2) Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (3) Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (4) Punjab State Electricity Board. (5) Haryana Power Purchase Centre (6) Power Development Deptt, Govt of Jammu & Kashmir. (7) Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (8) BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (9) BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (10) North Delhi Power Ltd. (11) Chandigarh Administration. (12) Uttaranchal Power Corporation Ltd. (13) North Central Railway (14) New Delhi Municipal Council. (15) Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board.

S.No	Particulars	Petition-I	Petition-2		
1	Approved apportioned capital cost of the project. (Rs. In Cr)	29.19	29.52		
2	Authority which has approved the Capital Cost	Board of Directors	Board of Directors		
3	Scheduled date of commercial operation	27.05.2024	27.05.2024		
4	Date of commercial operation	Asset-1 : 27.05.2023	Asset-1 : 26.05.2023		
5	Capital cost on DOCO for all assets (Rs. In Crs)	1.91	0.32		
3. Deta	3. Details of tariff: (Rs. in lak				

Petition-1 310.19 Petition-2 248.71 4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the

2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24

website of the applicant at www.powergrid.in 5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, $\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty$ including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3^{rd} and 4^{th} Floor, Chanderlok Bhawan, 36, Janpath, New Delhi -110001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice

Place: GURGAON Date: 18.08.2023

Petition

Senior General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED

(A Government of India Enterprise)

Corp. Off.: "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurgaon-122001 (Haryana), Ph. No.: 0124-2822999 Regd. Office: B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110016, Ph. No.: 011-26560112-15 Website: www.powergrid.in, CIN: L40101DL1989GOI038121

A Maharatna PSU





हरियाणा सरकार की ओर से बहनों के लिए ावशाष उपहार

हरियाणा राज्य परिवहन की बसों में सभी महिलाओं एवं 15 वर्ष तक के बच्चों के लिए

निःशुल्क यात्रा सुविधा

29 अगस्त, 2023 दोपहर 12 बजे से 30 अगस्त, 2023 रात्रि 12 बजे तक*



राज्य परिवहन, हरियाणा

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Slowdown

Amid slumping corporate profits and the US squeeze, China is going through a rough patch

hina's economic prowess has been a remarkable global phenomenon over the past few decades, transforming it into the world's second-largest economy. However, recent signs of a slowdown, notably reflected in the declining profits of Chinese companies, have prompted economists and policymakers to reevaluate the trajectory of China's economic growth. The global economic landscape has been closely monitoring China's growth rate as it had been averaging around 10% annually for several years. However, recent times have seen a shift in this momentum. The slump in profits across various sectors, such as technology, real estate and manufacturing, raises concerns about the sustainability of China's growth model. Profits of China's industrial firms fell 6.7% in July from a year earlier, extending this year's slump to a seventh month with weak demand squeezing companies of the world's second-biggest economy. Earnings have shrunk 15.5% year-on-year for the first seven months, following a 16.8% decline



in the first half of the year, as per data from the National Bureau of Statistics. Major banks have downgraded their growth forecasts for the year to below the government's target of about 5%. Many factors are contributing to China's economic slowdown. Its substantial corporate debt burden is a big factor. Many Chinese companies have heavily borrowed to fund expansion and innovation, resulting in elevated debt levels. This, in turn, has impacted their profitability as interest payments weigh down on earnings. Besides, increased regulatory scrutiny has impacted industries. The regulatory crackdown on tech giants like Alibaba has led to decreased investor confidence. However, the

biggest cause of worry and the major reason for its slowdown is the ongoing trade tensions with the United States. Other countries are also looking beyond China. This has impacted China's exports and supply chains.

As China grapples with these challenges, India, its neighbour and fellow emerging market, could seize opportunities to advance its economic interests. As global companies diversify their supply chains to mitigate risks associated with relying heavily on China, India could position itself as an attractive alternative manufacturing hub. A conducive business environment, lower labour costs and a skilled workforce give India a competitive advantage. Besides, India's technology sector has the potential to attract investments and partnerships. India could leverage its diplomatic ties to strengthen trade relationships with countries impacted by the China slowdown. By enhancing trade agreements India could become a key player in global trade networks. While challenges loom large, they also provide windows of opportunity for countries like India to step up and position themselves as alternative destinations for investments, manufacturing and innovation. India's abiliy to seize these opportunities will however, depend on its policy initiatives, business environment and proactive efforts to attract foreign businesses.



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesha ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

Is the idea of Pakistan dead?



PRAFULL GORADIA

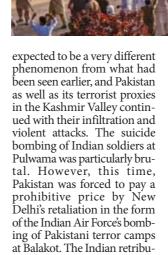
Pakistan has taken many blows in recent times which put a question mark on its future

ecently, former Congressman Ghulam Nabi Azad stated publicly that six ►hundred years ago, there were no Muslims in Kashmir. This is well known, but a distinguished politician should say this is historic. Is this a symptom of the loss of confidence that the above-mentioned leader's community has suffered with the march of time? Contrast this statement with M.A. Jinnah's speech of March 22, 1940, preparatory to the Pakistan Resolution passed the next day. On that occasion, the Qaid stated rather bluntly, but unambiguously, that Hindus and Muslims could not live together in the same country. They are two different people with not only different but mutually antagonistic views of life, he had said.

As if this was not enough, a few weeks ago, Afghanistan's Taliban rulers even more bluntly said "The idea of Pakistan is dead". The Balochs, Pakhtoons and Sindhis are now out on the streets, openly demanding independence from the New Medina, whose dream was sold to them in 1947. Pakhtoons and Balochs have gone so far as to threaten Pakistan, "The Bengalis (i.e., East Pakistanis) took off your pants (in 1971), but we Pakhtoons and Balochs will skin you this time". Over these 83 years, the sub-

continent of India has turned a full 180 degrees. The secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan was the first blow. It proved that their religion could not hold a country together. The theory spun by the Qaid-e-Azam had been shown as being hollow. If the theory perpetuates itself, it would contain the portents of further disintegration. Pakistan, which had come into being as a dream of a New Medina, suffered a shattering loss of prestige. With it, the image of the country in the world was also shaken. The next setback was Pakistan's defeat in the Kargil War of 1999. Its humiliating withdrawal from Indian territory further eroded whatev-

er military prestige it had left.
A very unexpected development in due course was the coming of Narendra Modi to power at the Centre. Initially, it was not



tion shook Pakistan and its

sympathizers as never before.

The next blow was the abrogation of Article 370, which, for all practical purposes, drove virtually the last nail in the coffin of the socalled Kashmir dispute. Uncannily, Pakistan has fallen in line with the reality that it is no use raising the issue anymore. Moreover, some leaders in the Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have begun to claim that they belong to India because as per the Indian Independence Act of 1947 passed by the British Parliament, the (erstwhile) Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir had acceded to the Indian Union.

Even more than the Balakot strike, what has hurt Pakistan is demonetization,



THE NEXT BLOW

WAS THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370. WHICH, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, **DROVE** VIRTUALLY THE LAST NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF THE SO-CALLED **KASHMIR** DISPUTE

carried out by the Modi government in 2016. Previously, Pakistani as well as Indian currency notes were supplied by the same printer in Britain, giving Islamabad free access to Indian currency. The change of currency was a huge economic setback to the Pak economy. Eventually, this led to virtual bankruptcy in that country. The impression in India is that the middle and lower classes across the border are mostly subsisting on a single meal a day. The American dollar is valued at over 300 Pakistani rupees and has lost any meaningful value. Internationally, the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York on 9/11 has generated a great deal of prejudice. Terrorism in general has certainly not added goodwill. To add to all this, of course, are the pressures brought upon by moderniza-tion, particularly the revolution let loose by Information Technology on a community that is essentially conservative but also orthodox, wedded to taqlid (orthodoxy) rather than experimenting with ijtehad reinterpretation)

In light of the total of these developments, Ghulam Nabi Azad's statement about Islam being no older than

1,400 years in the Kashmir Valley may well be pregnant with vision. It may be calling for a revolution in the thinking of the community's clergy. For example, its attitude towards the advent of a uniform civil code. While the legal and constitutional journey towards this goal will be a saga by itself, what is pertinent is that many Muslim women have begun speaking up against the practice of instant talaq (divorce), and in favour of their rights as citizens governed by an egalitarian constitutional framework. Added to this, there is a small but growing community of people who're no longer afraid to call themselves "Ex-Muslim"; the nomenclature is self-explanatory.

But while the churn in the community merits our attention and study, its attendant turmoil in the neighbourhood, particularly what was advertised and sold as the New Medina, must immediately occupy the attention of our rulers and policymakers, as a breakdown there has all the potential of adversely affecting India's rise.

(The writer is a well known columnist, an author, and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views *expressed are personal*)

Strive for personal freedom and reproductive empowerment



CHOUDHURI

Open conversations, accurate information dissemination, and accessible support are crucial to achieving reproductive health

s India commemorates its 77th year of inde-Apendence, notable strides have been taken in comprehending the concepts of personal freedom and reproductive empowerment. A notable shift is observed in the increasing candidness surrounding discussions about reproductive wellbeing. However, the journey is far from complete. Within numerous cultures, including that of India, women and individuals continue to grapple with limited autonomy to shape their destinies. This scarcity of agency stems from their economic, political, and sociocultural standings, resulting in a disproportionate power dynamic within relationships. A study by Lancet helps

in understanding the degree of the problem globally - with 16 crore women and adolescents having an unmet need for contraception. In India the problem is more complex. For the majority of married women, the prerogative is to make contraceptive choices independently, as decisions about contraception primar-

ily rest with their husbands. In addition, a prevailing

reluctance persists among individuals to engage openly in dialogues regarding their reproductive choices. This apprehension stems primarily from the fear of societal judgment. The conventional link between family planning and marital unions has fostered the misconception that family planning holds no relevance for the unmarried. Urgent awareness surrounding reproductive health is imperative within the nation. India's public health system grapples with multifaceted challenges, encompassing inadequate funding, subpar infrastructure, scarcity of medicines and diagnostic facilities, and a shortage of skilled medical practitioners. The country contends with one of the world's highest

maternal mortality rates,

largely attributed to inade-

quate access to quality reproductive healthcare. Privatisation and corporate involvement in healthcare, coupled with lax regulation, have further compromised healthcare quality, accessibility, and affordability, disproportionately affecting girls, women, and marginalised communities.

The cost of birth control pills is also not accessible and can be financially burdensome for lower-middle-class individuals. Similarly, access to safe, top-tier abortion services, inclusive of information, counselling, and postabortion care, remains insufficient. Moreover, the adverse effects of early marriage on reproductive health and rights stand inadequately addressed.

Stigmatisation taints discussions on reproductive choices, shrouding them in and secrecy. Disentangling from this stigma is pivotal for the complete empowerment of individuals. Unbiased access to services, discreet counselling, and youth-friendly healthcare, alongside the elimination of

judgment, emerges as crucial. Affordability is a keystone in ensuring sexual and

reproductive health services are accessible to all. Equitable cost considerations for essential goods and services, encompassing elements influ-encing sexual and reproductive health, are pivotal in averting undue healthcare expenses on individuals and families. Ensuring vulnerable groups possess the means to access and disseminate health-related information, coupled with the right to partake in decisions influencing their health, necessitates careful policy crafting.

Reproductive health transcends mere contraceptive solutions; it encompasses agency and the quality of one's reproductive health. Such decisions are inherently personal. It is imperative to foster a shared understanding that sexual health services and contraceptives extend beyond select individuals. Open conversations, accurate information dissemination, and accessible support are crucial to facilitating decisions that align

with individual well-being. (The writer works with MSÌ Reproductive Choices-Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India; Views are personal)

SMART CITY AWARDS NEED TO BE SCRUTINIZED

Sir — Smart city awards in the country were announced recently. The awards include Indore in Madhya Pradesh, Surat in Gujarat in second place, and Agra in Uttar Pradesh in third place in the country. Many Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra had spent a large amount of money on this scheme. Pimpri city bagged the second rank in the Prashasan category for the Smart Sarathi app. Solapur city won the smart city award in the western division. Municipal Corporation of Nashik, Pune, Nagpur, Aurangabad, as well as Pimpri Chinchwad had spent a large amount of money on this; the government also allocated funds freely for this competition. Despite spending so much, these cities fell behind in the Smart City competition. Among the 66 winners in various categories, the Madhya Pradesh government won the best state award. Why did Maharashtra lag behind in this department? It is expected that the state government should take appropriate steps to conduct a thorough study of the cities that have won the first, second, and third awards. **Shantaram Wagh** | Pune

PRESIDENT RULE IN PUNJAB?

Sir —Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was threatened by Governor Banwarilal Purohit to impose President's rule in the state under Article 356, while his counterparts in Manipur and Haryana are observing silence on the law and order situation there. Purohit had warned the Mann government on Friday that he could recommend President's rule in the state and also launch criminal proceedings if his letters are not answered. Purohit has been accusing Mann of not responding to the letters sent to him in defiance of his authority, whereas Mann has claimed he has replied to all. Mann said that his government had been taking proactive steps to tackle the scourge of drugs, confiscating and raiding properties of smugglers, and going after gangsters with the formation of an Anti-Gangster Task Force.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Putin skips BRICS summit



ven as Russian President Vladimir Putin was conspicuous by his physical absence from the BRICS Summit, just concluded in Johannesburg, South Africa, where PM Modi welcomed six new members including Argentina, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt to the BRICS, his spokesperson in the Kremlin, Dmitry Peskov, announced on Friday that the President is not going to attend the G20 summit on

September 9 and 10 in New Delhi either, citing his 'busy schedule'. The format of his participation in the high-profile event will be declared later, while the focus on Special Military Operations in Ukraine still assumes significance as the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has completed as many as eighteen months now. The New Delhi G20 conference is to be held with the heads of 29 States, many top European Union officials, and invitees from the guest countries, along with 14 heads of International Organizations in attendance. The conclusion of the Summit will also witness a 'G20 Leaders Declaration'. British PM Rishi Sunak, Chinese President Xi Jinping, French President Emmanuel Macron, Japanese PM Fumio Kishida, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are set to grace the high-profile BRICS occasion.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

The governor claims law and order in the state is not good. Did the Haryana governor write any letter to Khattar? No, because their government is also ruling at the Centre. In his latest communication on Friday, the governor indicated he was upset over not getting any reply to his previous letters and told the Punjab Chief Minister that he could send a report to the President on the failure of constitutional mechanisms in the state. Purohit advised Mann to act before he takes his final decision under Article 356 of the Constitution and Section 124 of the Indian Penal Code. A state is brought under the direct rule of the Centre with the invocation of Article 356, usually after a report is sent by the governor. Section 124 of the IPC relates to assaulting or wrongfully restraining the President or a governor from exercising their lawful powers.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVE WATER

Sir — Japan's release of treated radioactive water is a step forward in decommissioning the facility that suffered a meltdown during the 2011 Tsunami. But this has

sparked protests in its neighborhood; protestors were arrested in South Korea while China has banned imports of seafood from Japan. The initial release has not detected any anomalies, so in the coming 17 days, approximately 7800 tons of treated water will be released into the ocean. Though assured by Japan and approved after investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency, neighbors are not fully confident about the consequences. The water released has undergone treatment using the Advanced Liquid Processing System to eradicate radioactive elements from water except Tritium. The procedure of releasing water safely will take decades, including regular filtration and dilution. Besides, wastewater release must cease in case of a natural disaster to ensure proper water treatment. Though the scientific process involved in the release of the treated water is highly reliable, vigilant eyes should be kept to ensure regional safety and peace.

Arka Goswami | Durgapur

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FIRST COLUMN WOMEN ARE DIVINE DIRECTIVE

Women are superpower beings who are elegant yet strong



SAKSHI SETHI

India is the land of powerful women. Since ages, the status of women In society has been determined by several factors including economic, social and political factors. The existence of human life is possible only with the equal participation of both men and women as both of them are equally responsible for the survival of the human race on

Today, a lot of men aspire to have a good woman in their lives until it requires them to be a better man. It's time to admire women who take the high to hold their heads high, maximise compliments, focus on their lane and are actively improving not only vulnerably and compassionately but also relatable. These are the real ones who inspire through their actions and words and the day is not far when they will be the only ones who will challenge and change the mindset of the society that a girl is a liability from the grassroots level by spreading awareness about the same.

Today's youth culture encourages females and males to have freedom of expression. In a world that does not sometimes but always glorify negativity or try to bring down the strength of a woman, these women shine as beacons of positivity and resilience. These are the ones who consistently remind us about the incredible strength within while demonstrating the transformative power of kindness and under-



It is believed that every woman on this earth is beautiful, no matter how young or old; small or big; short or tall they may be. Every one of them is unique and it just adds to their beauty. There is no denying the fact that a woman of today believes that She is the happiness; She is the sadness; She is the love; She is the lust; She is the one who can turn a house into a home, a hell into heaven and a bad into good. She has the power to organize; the power to change and lead the world as per her terms. In other words, she is an absolute success in all her endeavours taken up. Not only this, a woman is powerful from her inner side and has the supremacy of being bold and

Without a woman, there is no existence in this world. Behind her silence, She has a loud mind that can crush anyone; Behind her beauty, She has dignity and courage that can amaze anyone; Behind her skimpy clothes, She has nerves of steel that can break anyone; Behind her body and mind, She has a spark that can burn anyone and Behind her colour and flesh, She has the wisdom that can confound anyone.

A woman gives protection, nurtures and enriches life. Her love is like an art; like a sculptor applying the chisel or like a skilled painter enlivening the brush. As a woman, one must cherish the very element of being 'A Woman' who is not only independent, courageous, and confident but also at the same time courteous.

Every human being- be it a man or a woman, crave attention. Every woman is a unique snowflake in her special way. She is out there to expand her wings, fly high and see the silver lining amongst the darkest cloud. Nothing can stop a woman from following their dreams. What is required is the strength to forget about society and their age-old school thinking and at the same time to start putting themselves first

Remember, where there is a woman, there is magic. The woman is not an identity. She is a Divine directive; Woman is not a feeling. She is a responsibility and Woman is not a commodity. She is a specific and unique expression of God.

(The writer is an educator)

India needs an integrated approach to flood management

A long-term flood disaster management strategy must be developed writes Yashobanta Parida, Joyita Roy Chowdhury & Prakash K Sahoo



eavy rain triggered by the monsoon has devastated many parts of Indian states, causing disastrous floods and landslides. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs report, 332 districts have been affected due to floods and landslides, and 87,457 houses are partially or fully damaged. In addition, 485334 hectares of crop area have been affected, 137134 electric poles and pillars have been damaged, and around 1053 people have died due to floods and landslides in 28 states and three union territories of India. Bihar experienced the highest number of deaths (342), followed by Himachal Pradesh (166), Madhya Pradesh (77), Gujarat (63), Punjab (46), Haryana (36), Maharashtra (35) and Uttarakhand (32) due to floods and landslides. According to the Himachal Pradesh government report, the state has experienced economic losses worth 8,000 crore rupees due to floods and landslides.

Indian states experience different types of natural disasters each year, but floods are the most common calamity in the country. Due to its unique geo-climatic conditions, the country is highly vulnerable to floods, witnessing a rise in frequencies, damages, and fatalities from floods. According to the Central Water Commission report, deaths due to floods increased from 37 in 1953 to 1815 in 2020. In contrast, economic losses measured in terms of damage to crops, houses, and public utilities increased from 52 crores to 21,189 crore rupees.

During this period, on average, 1676 human lives were lost yearly, economic losses were around 6428.6 crore rupee, 1213606 houses were damaged, and 4.05 million hectares of crop area were affected due to floods. The data shows that the current flood management policy is inadequate to minimize floodrelated damages and deaths. Other reasons include unprecedented rainfall due to rapid climate change, unplanned urbanization, deforestation, and lack of flood forecasting and warning systems. Moreover, frequent breaching of river embankments due to lack of proper



IMMEDIATE IMPACTS OF FLOODS LEAD TO THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIVES, **DESTRUCTION OF** CROPS, AND DAMAGE **PHYSICAL** INFRA-STRUCTURES

(Dr. Parida and Dr. Roy Chowdhury are Assistant Professor in Economics at FLAME University, Pune & Dr. Sahoo is Lecturer in Economics at Vikram Deb University,

Jeypore, Odisha; Views are personal)

maintenance and deposit of silt on the river beds obstruct natural water flow. In addition, Indian cities are also prone to floods due to encroachment on waterways in cities, illegal constructions, unplanned development, and inadequate waste management, which further aggravate the situation by clogging drains and canals, leading to growing urban

Immediate impacts of floods lead to the loss of human lives, the destruction of crops, and damage to property and other physical infrastructures. Floods disrupt people's lives and displace thousands who live in slums and low-lying areas. According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), 2023, pub-lished by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), around 32.6 million people in the world were displaced in 2022 due to natural disasters, which is 41 per cent high-TO PROPERTY er than the annual average of the AND OTHER past 10 years. Out of this, 31.8 million people were displaced because of weather-related events. Among them, 19.2 million people (60.35 per cent) were displaced by floods. As per the report, India ranked 4th in internal displacements in 2022 due to natural disasters, with 2.4 million people being displaced due to floods.

Frequent floods hurt employment opportunities in the rural agricultural sector, leading to inequality, poverty, and a food crisis. Flood damage also adversely impacts the country's economic development and increases the fiscal pressure on the central and state governments for reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation activities. Per official statistics, India loses around 0.46 per cent of its gross domestic product annually (Parida et al., 2020).

Moreover, poor town planning, unauthorized and illegal construction, and inadequate urban infrastructure expose Indian cities to flooding. Furthermore, the catastrophic flooding has hit the tourism, business, and manufacturing industries. In addition, frequent flooding also creates health hazards in both rural and urban

Revamping the flood management policies and increasing the budgetary allocation for pre and post-flood mitigation measures is essential to minimize the flood risk. Moreover, improved flood warning and forecasting systems, especially in coastal districts using advanced technology such as satellite and remote sensing equipment, may enable prompt action and reduce the impact of disasters. The government should emphasize the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) based flood monitoring and rescue systems to reduce flood risk and improve water management. Flood fatalities and damages can be reduced by adopting better flood management policies, such as building disaster-resilient measures, including maintaining river embankments and constructing canals and minor dams. Improving river connectivity, as well as constructing multipurpose shelters in low-lying areas, can also help to minimize flood risk.

Moreover, providing housing to poor and needy households under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Aawas Yojana can minimize the disaster risk for those living in low-lying and flood-prone areas. Increased budgetary allocation on restoration, mitigation, and evacuation measures during floods by the disaster management authorities can help to reduce flood fatalities. In addition, loss of life

and damage increased in cities in India. To minimize the impact of urban flooding, local district administration can implement an urban flooding action plan proposed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in 2010. Also, massive community awareness campaigns related to environmental issues, disaster prevention, and mitigation measures are required.

In 1980, for the first time in India, Rashtriya Barh Ayog (RBA) estimated the state-wise area liable to flood-prone areas. According to official data, as highlighted above, the number of people killed and damages caused by floods has increased over the period from 1953 to 2020. This necessitates the government to constitute a committee to undertake taluk, district-wise, and state-wise flood inundation mapping using advanced techniques. Adequate policies must be implemented to reduce the growing climate-induced displacements with a better framework and sustainable solution. To ensure a sustainable devel-

opment action plan, a long-term disaster management strategy must be developed to limit the flood impact in terms of loss of both human and physical capital. In short, India must adopt an integrated approach to flood management by considering flood risk management in conjunction with land use, agriculture, urban planning, and the conservation of natural resources. In addition, the government must prepare a district and block-level disaster database to help government and academicians devise better flood management policies. Finally, better coordination between district administrators, state, and central government is essential for preventing disaster

Forest fires are devastating, must be controlled

Forest fires in the hills not only harm the environment but also play havoc with people's lives

hile visiting the mountains, one may frequently encounter the sight of flickering lights in the distance, prompting thoughts about whether they signify distant lights or just an illusion. Unfortunately, more often than not, these flickers turn out to be forest fires, a recurring phenomenon each year before the onset of the monsoon. Uttarakhand, boasting a substantial forest cover spanning 53.48 lakh hectares, grapples with the challenge of forest fires, which escalated to a staggering 2,131 incidents in 2022 alone. These blazes ravaged over 3,348 hectares of land, resulting in a financial loss amounting to Rs 87.31

Located 14 kilometres



(The writer is a student from

Pothing village in Bageshwar,

Uttarakhand)

in the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand, nestles Pothing village in the foothills of the Himalayas. With a population of slightly more than 2,000 people, Pothing is known for its abundance of natural resources. However, continuous forest fires have become a source of distress for the residents, and even the animals are succumbing to diseases. The smoke rising from the forest fires is proving to be highly detrimental for the people, and it is adversely affecting the environment as

Pooja, an adolescent girl from the village highlights how the smoke emanating from the forest fires pollutes the entire village. "We are having difficulty breathing.

away from the Kapkot block Due to the outbreak of fires, a blanket of fog has enveloped the entire village. New diseases are emerging among people and animals," Pooja Although periodic fires

are required to maintain ecological balances, recurring fires have a larger implication for the weather as they lead to the melting of Himalayan glaciers apart from increasing diseases among humans and

Khakhauti Devi, a 65year-old woman from the village, holds the belief that a significant number of these fires are human-induced. She pointed out that it's often individuals within the village itself who deliberately ignite these fires, particularly those who own substantial herds of



cows, buffaloes, and goats. Their rationale is rooted in the notion that after the forest is burnt, fresh grass will emerge, providing a more abundant source of fodder for their livestock. Moreover, Khakhauti Devi noted that smokers also contribute to the

her observation, when people venture into the forest to gather firewood or forage, some engage in smoking. Unfortunately, in the process, lit matchsticks or bidi ends are sometimes carelessly discarded, inadvertently sparking forest fires

Neha, another adolescent girl from the village, expressed that they are not even aware of the diseases that are spreading among the cattle. According to her, these diseases occur due to the increased heat from the fires. Supporting Neha's statement, Shanti Devi,47, a woman from the village highlights due to smoke and the heat, small lesions form on animals. Once these lesions burst, they ooze blood, mak-

for sowing crops, but the animals are falling sick. In such a situation, farming is incurring the most damage. Apart from this, there is also a shortage of firewood for cooking. Earlier, groups of women used to go into the forests where fodder, flowers, fruits, and firewood were easily obtainable. However, this year, a fire broke out in the forest, turning every-thing into ashes," Shanti

highlighted. Apart from human activities, forest fires are also caused naturally due to excessive heat and low moisture as dry branches catch fire after they rub against one another. However, according to Pushpa Devi, more incidents of forest fires are breaking out occurrence of forest fires. In ing the animals ill. "It's time in Pothing due to human neg-

ligence. "Due to a lack of awareness, people unknowingly are destroying the forest with their own hands. They are not aware of its adverse consequences. Similar to cities, pollution levels here have started to rise." Emphasized Pushpa Devi, the Sarpanch of the village. However, addressing for-

est fires requires more than just raising awareness among people. Out of the total forest land in Uttarakhand, 26 per cent is covered by Chir Pine trees. While human activities undoubtedly play a significant role, it is crucial to delve further into identifying alternative species that can be cultivated to replace Chir Pine, as this particular tree species creates conditions that are conducive to fires.

Sunak to make life terms US Marine Osprey crashes during drills, 3 killed, 20 hurt mandatory for murderers

 $B^{\text{ritish Prime Minister Rishi}}_{\text{Sunak has unveiled plans}}$ for tough new laws which would mean those convicted of heinous murders will face life behind bars for the rest of their lives, with no chance of being considered for parole or early

The 43-year-old British Indian leader said in a statement on Saturday that "life means life" and judges will be required to hand down mandatory whole-life orders to criminals who commit the most horrific types of murder.

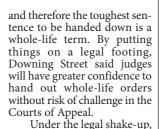
The new law will place a legal expectation on judges to hand down whole-life orders, except in extremely limited circumstances."I have shared the public's horror at the cruelty of crimes we have seen

recently. People rightly expect that in the most serious cases, there should be a guarantee that life will mean life. They expect honesty in sentencing, said Sunak

"By bringing in mandato-ry whole life orders for the heinous criminals who commit the most horrific types of murder, we will make sure they never walk free," he said. It comes in the days after nurse Lucy Letby was

handed a wholelife order after being found guilty of killing seven newborn babies under her care at a hospital in northern England.

The UK's statutory provisions do not allow capital punishment



whole-life orders will also be the default sentence for any sexually motivated murders.

"A whole-life order will now be the expectation for murderers where the killing involves sexual or sadistic This important law

change will ensure that the worst of the worst can now expect to spend the rest of their lives in prison," said UK

Justice Secretary

Alex Chalk.

Philippines and East Timor. "Our thoughts and deepest

United States Marine AUnited States Marine Corps aircraft with 23 Marines aboard crashed on a north Australian island Sunday, killing at least three and critically injuring at least five during a multinational training exercise, officials said. Three had been confirmed dead on Melville Island and five were flown in serious condition 80 kilometres (50 miles) to the mainland city of Darwin for hospital treatment after the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey aircraft crashed around 9.30 am, a statement from the Marines said."Recovery efforts are ongoing," the statement said, adding the cause of the crash was under investigation.

Aircraft had been sent from Darwin to retrieve more survivors from the remote location but no further details on the fate of the other 15 Marines on board had been released hours later. A US military official



controllers a "significant fire in the vicinity of the crash site, according to an audio recording of the conversation broadcast by Nine News television.

Melville resident Shane Murphy was fishing from a beach when the Osprey crashed and told Australian Broadcasting Corp. he saw a "big mushroom of black smoke" rise from the wreckage. Northern Territory Police Commissioner Michael Murphy said no one on board had escaped injury.

One of the injured was

condolences are with the three US service personnel who lost their lives, those who have been injured, the rest of the crew and indeed the entire United States armed forces," Albanese said in a statement. "Australia will continue to

provide assistance to our friends

for as long as is required," he

added. Around 150 US Marines are currently based in Darwin and up to 2,500 rotate through Territory Chief Minister Natasha the city every year. They're part Fyles said around six hours after of a realignment of forces in the the crash. "We acknowledge Asia-Pacific that's broadly meant to face an increasingly assertive China. The 12-day exercise is Fyles said."The Northern Territory government stands by scheduled to end September 7. to offer whatever assistance is It involves troops on land, in the sea and in the air. The exercise Australian Prime Minister has been paused since the crash. Anthony Albanese said only The Osprey is a hybrid aircraft Americans were injured in the that takes off and lands like a crash during Exercise Predators helicopter, but during flight can Run, which involves the milirotate its propellers forward and taries of the United States, cruise much faster like an air-Australia, Indonesia, the plane. Versions of the aircraft are

Navy and Air Force.Before Sunday, there had been five fatal crashes of Marine Ospreys since

2012, causing a total of 16 deaths. The latest was in June 2022, when five Marines died in a fiery crash in a remote part of California east of San Diego. A crash investigation report last month found that the tragedy was caused by a mechanical

failure related to a clutch.

There had been 16 similar clutch problems with the Marine Ospreys in flight since 2012, the report found.

But no problems have arisen since February when the Marine Corps began replacing a piece of equipment on the aircraft, the report said. Melville is part of the Tiwi Islands, which along with Darwin are the focus of the exercise that involves 2,500 troops.

It's Indigenous-owned land and is mostly covered by tropical woodland. Its population is around 1,000 mostly Indigenous

White man shoots Blacks at US store

Awhite man fatally shot three people inside a Jacksonville, Florida, Dollar General store on Saturday in a predominately Black neighbourhood in an attack that the local sheriff called "racially motivated." The shooter then killed himself.

"He hated black people," Sheriff T K Waters told a news conference. "There is absolutely no evidence the shooter is part of any larger group."

Waters said the shooter, who was in his 20s, used a Glock handgun and an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle with at least one of the firearms painted with a swastika.

He left behind writings that led investigators to believe that he committed the shooting because it was the fifth anniversary of when another gunman opened fire during a video game tournament in Jacksonville, killing two people

before fatally shooting himself.
The shooting happened just before 2 pm at a Dollar General near Edward Waters University, a small historically Black university.

The shooter had driven there from neighbouring Clay County. Shortly before the attack, the shooter had sent his father a text message telling father found writings and the family notified 911, but the shooting had already begun, Sheriff Waters said.

Edward Waters University students were being kept in their dorms, the school said in a statement. No students or faculty are believed involved, the

Penny Jones told the The Associated Press that she worked at the store until a few months ago. She lives a few blocks away in the predominantly Black neighbourhood.

"I'm just waiting to hear about my co-workers that I used to work with," Jones said. "I don't know if it's safe to move about the neighbourhood."

Jones added that she was "feeling awkward, scared."

"I don't want to leave my house. I'm thinking, do I want to go back to the store? Is this going to start happening more frequently? I don't know what the cause of it is. I'm confused. It's a lot of different feelings going on right now," she said Saturday afternoon.

The deadly shooting took place within hours of the conclusion of a commemorative March on Washington in the nation's capital, where organizers drew attention to the growing threat of hate-motivated violence against people of color.

An attack on a shopping centre in a predominately Black neighbourhood will undoubtedly evoke fears of past shootings targeting Black Americans, like the one at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket in 2022, and one at a historic African Methodist Episcopal church in Charleston, South Carolina, ket shooting, in particular, stands apart as one of the deadliest targeted attacks on Black people by a white lone gunman in US history. Ten people were killed by the gunman, who has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.



Student fatally shot in US

Columbia (AP): A University of South Carolina student was shot and killed as he apparently tried to enter the wrong home on his off-campus street early on Saturday, police said.Nicholas Anthony Donofrio, 20, of Connecticut, was dead by the time police responded to reports of a home burglary and shooting, according to a Columbia Police Department news release. Officers found his body on a front porch around 2 am, and Donofrio had a gunshot wound to his upper body, the release said.Police said preliminary information indicated that Donofrio, a sophomore, lived on the same street as where he was shot but apparently was attempting to enter another home. The shooting occurred in a Columbia neighbourhood adjacent to the campus.

The statement didn't say who shot the student or whether any charges were immediately filed. In an email on Saturday afternoon, a department spokesperson said the investigation "remains active" but didn't release more information.

Now, Biden's commerce secretary to visit China in a bid to improve ties

AP WASHINGTON

Commerce Secretary Gina CRaimondo is the latest member of President Joe Biden's Cabinet to visit China as his administration tries to mend the deteriorating ties between the world's two largest economies. She promises to be "practical" without compromising the US push to "responsibly" manage that economic relationship. Raimondo plans meetings with Chinese officials and US business leaders in Beijing and Shanghai in an effort to "promote a healthy competition, a competition on a level playing field, playing by "I'm also very realistic and

clear-eyed about the challenges. And the challenges are significant," she told reporters before leaving Washington on Saturday on a trip that ends Wednesday.

The secretary said she wants to find "actionable, concrete steps where we can move forward on the commercial

relationship," but she offered few details.

One matter to be discussed is promoting Chinese travel and tourism to the United States, with Raimondo noting the recent easing of restrictions on large Chinese groups visiting the US. Raimondo's visit, like the

July trip by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, is meant to show the administration's willingness to partner with China on economic development at a time of escalating tensions on foreign policy and national security and as Washington bolsters alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia and the European Union.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a two-day stop in Beijing in June, the highestlevel meetings in China in the past five years. Blinken met with President

Xi Jinping and the two agreed to stabilise US-China ties, but better communications between their militaries could not be agreed upon. There are

divisions around the economy, too, particularly after the imposition of US foreign investment controls that have stung numerous Chinese companies.China has accused the US of "using the cover of risk reduction' to carry out decoupling and chain-breaking," and has increased its own trade in Asia.The controls pertain to advanced computer chips, microelectronics, quantum information technologies and artificial intelligence.

that this is a terrible incident,"

The US says the effort stemmed from national security goals rather than economic interests, and that the categories covered were intentionally narrow.The US moves are meant to blunt China's ability to use American investments in its technology companies to upgrade its military, while preserving broader levels of trade that are vital to both nations.But China's Ministry of Commerce said it has "serious concern" about Biden's executive order. Raimondo said the US was not interested in "containing China's economic development." "We want the Chinese economy to prosper. We do not want to contain or hold back China," she said. "We do need to protect our national security, and we're going to use our export controls to the fullest extent possible to do that."She said attempts to boost the US economy by promoting manufacturing, a centrepiece of Biden's 2024 reelection campaign, "does not mean, at all, that we want to decouple from China's economy. And I plan to make that very clear in my meetings?

"The US and China share a large, dynamic, growing economic relationship," Raimondo said."And both of our countries — in fact, the entire world need us to manage that relationship responsibly." Raimondo added that she is seeking "to have a stable commercial relationship, and the core to that is regular communication." It's hard to solve problems in any relationship if you don't communicate.

Trump campaign reports raising more than \$7 million after Georgia booking

New York (AP): For former President Donald Trump, a picture is worth... more than USD 7 million. Trump's campaign says he has raised USD 7.1 million since Thursday when he was booked at the Fulton County Jail in Georgia on charges that he illegally schemed to overturn the 2020 election in the state and became the first former president in US history to ever have a mug shot taken.

Spokesman Steven Cheung said that, on Friday alone, the campaign brought in USD 4.18 million — its highest-grossing day to date.

The record haul underscores how Trump's legal woes have been a fundraising boon for his campaign, even as his political operation has spent tens of millions on his defence.

The mounting legal charges have also failed to dent Trump's standing in the Republican presidential primary, with the former president now routinely beating his rivals by 30 to 50 points in polls.

While Trump described his appearance Thursday as a "terrible experience" and said posing for the historic mug shot was "not a comfortable feeling," his campaign immediately seized on its fundraising power.Before Jersey, his campaign was using it in fundraising pitches to supporters. Trump amplified that message both on his Truth Social site and by returning to X, the site formerly known as Twitter, for the first time in twoand-a-half years to share the image and direct supporters to

a fundraising page. Within hours, the campaign had also released a new line of merchandise featuring the image that began with tshirts and now includes beer Koozies, bumper stickers, a signed poster, bumper stickers and mug shot mugs. Cheung said that contributions from those who had purchased merchandise or donated without prompting skyrocketed, especially after Trump's tweet.

Cause of Kenya's power outage remains unclear

The longest nationwide power outage in Kenyans' memory remained a mystery Sunday as the governmentowned power company blamed a failure at Africa's largest wind farm, which laid the responsibility on the power grid instead. Some of Kenya's more than 50 million people, including in the capital, Nairobi, saw power return almost 24 hours after the massive outage occurred late Friday. It was an embarrassment to the East African economic hub that has sought to promote itself as a tech center on the continent but remains challenged by alleged mismanagement and poor infrastructure. Hundreds of people were stranded in darkness for hours at Kenya's main international airport in Nairobi, leading to a rare public apology



from a government minister in a country where tourism is a key part of the economy. "This situation WILL NOT happen again," transport minister, Kipchumba Murkomen, said.

The head of the Kenya Airports Authority was fired after a generator serving the main international terminal had failed to start.

Shortly before midnight Saturday, Kenya Power offered the first detailed explanation of the outage, blaming it on a loss of power generation from the Lake Turkana Wind Power plant, Africa's largest wind farm, causing an imbalance that "tripped all other main generation units and stations, leading to a total outage on the

But Lake Turkana Wind Power in a statement denied it was to blame. Instead, it said it

es the wind power plant to automatically switch off." The plant had been producing nearly 15% of the national output at the time. Such an interruption

should be immediately compensated by other power generators in the system, the company said, but the continuing outages in the national grid were preventing the wind plant from being brought back Kenya Power said it could-

n't even turn to importing power from neighboring Uganda, a relatively fast option that for some reason had been unavailable.

'We are jointly working on having the Uganda interconnector restored so as to enhance our grid recovery

had been forced to go offline efforts," it said. President by an "overvoltage situation in William Ruto, whose own the national grid system which, office told The Associated to avoid extreme damage, caus- Press on Saturday it was still running on generator power hours after Kenya Power announced it had restored electricity to "critical areas" of the capital, did not comment publicly on the crisis. Instead, he again criticized opposition calls for anti-government protests over the rising cost of living, calling them a threat to investors. "Shame of a nation," was

the main headline of one of Kenya's leading newspapers, the Sunday Nation. It said the outage was costing businesses millions of dollars and leaving some major hospitals to run on generators. Kenya gets almost all its electricity from renewable sources, a fact that the government will promote as it hosts the first Africa Climate Summit early next month.

Security forces to stop women from visiting Af national park

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

he Taliban will use securi-I ty forces to stop women from visiting one of Afghanistan's most popular national parks, according to information shared by a spokesman for the Vice and Virtue Ministry.

The ministry alleges that women have not been observing the proper way to wear the hijab, or Islamic headscarf, when going to Band-e-Amir in the central Bamiyan province.

This comes a week after the minister, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, visited the province and told officials and religious clerics that women haven't been adhering to the correct way of wearing the hijab, asking security personnel to stop women from visiting the tourist

"Going sightseeing is not a must for women," Hanafi said at the time.

Mohammad Sadiq Akif shared a report of Hanafi's remarks late Saturday night, including the use of security forces, clerics and elders to carry out Hanafi's A recording of the minis-

Ministry spokesman Molvi

ter's speech in Bamiyan, aligning with Akif's report, was shared on social media. Akif was not immediately available for comment on Sunday."Not content with depriving girls and women of education, employment, and free movement, the Taliban also want to take from them parks and sport and now even nature, as we see from this latest ban on women visiting Band-e-Amir," said Heather Barr, the associate women's rights director at Human Rights Watch in an emailed statement. "Step by step the walls are closing in on

women as every home becomes

a prison."Last, November, the

Taliban-led government barred

women from using public

spaces, including parks, saying that they were not wearing the hijab correctly or following gender segregation rules.

Since taking over the country on August 15, 2021 after the withdrawal of US and NATO forces, they have imposed several restrictions targeting Afghan girls and women, including stopping girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade, and prohibiting Afghan women from jobs at local and non-governmental organisations while cracking down on media.

These harsh measures triggered a fierce international outrage, including from Muslim-majority countries.

Band-e-Amir is a major tourist attraction in Bamiyan. It became the country's first national park in 2009 and pulls in thousands of visitors every year.It is a major source of income for locals and their sightseeing, restaurant, hotel and handicraft businesses.

Myanmar expels East Timor's diplomat

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's military government has ordered East Timor's senior diplomat to leave the country in retaliation for the East Timorese government holding meetings with Myanmar's main opposition organisation, the Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

The statement said East Timor has conducted engagements with Myanmar's shad-National Unity Government, which views itself as the country's legitimate administration after the military seized power from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, 2021.

Government also serves as an umbrella organization for opponents of military rule.

Embassy in

The National Unity

The Foreign Ministry said it informed the charge d'af-

Myanmar's biggest city, on Friday to leave the country no later than September 1. The charge d'affaires is

believed to be the first foreign diplomat expelled from Myanmar since the army

Many countries have downgraded their relations with Myanmar and left behind the No. 2 diplomat in place of ambassadors. The military takeover was met with massive public opposition, which security forces quashed with deadly force, in turn triggering widespread armed resistance as the country slipped into what some UN experts characterise as a civil war. More than 4,000 civilians

have been killed by security forces and nearly 20,000 are imprisoned, said the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which keeps tallies of casualties and faires of the East Timor arrests linked to repression by Yangon,

Egypt, Ethiopia & Sudan resume negotiations over disputed dam without elaborating. Tensions have heightened

AP CAIRO

Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan Eresumed their years-long negotiations Sunday over the controversial dam Éthiopia is building on the Nile River's main tributary, officials said. The resumption of talks came after President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said last month that they aim to reach within four months an agreement on the operation of the USD 4.6 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile. The Blue Nile meets the White Nile in Sudan's capital of Khartoum, before winding northward through Egypt to the

Mediterranean Sea. Egypt fears a devastating impact if the dam is operated without taking its needs into account. It called it an existential threat. The Arab world's most populous country relies



supply water for agriculture and its more than 100 million About 85 per cent of the

river's flow originates from Ethiopia The Egyptian Irrigation

Ministry announced the new round of talks in Cairo. Irrigation Minister Hani Sewilam said Egypt wants a legally binding agreement on how the giant dam is operated and filled.Sewilam said there are many "technical and legal solutions" for the dispute,

between Cairo and Addis Ababa after the Ethiopian

ing an agreement.

about how much water Ethiopia will release downstream if a multi-year drought occurs and how the three countries will resolve any future disputes. Ethiopia has rejected binding arbitration at the final stage of the project. Ethiopia says the dam is

government began filling the dam's reservoir before reach-

Key questions remain

essential, arguing that most of its people lack electricity. Sudan wants Ethiopia to coordinate and share data on the dam's operation to avoid flooding and protect its own power-generating dams on the Blue Nile, the main tributary of the Nile.

The dam is located just 10 kilometres from the Sudanese

Russia confirms Prigozhin died in plane crash Imran Khan admits misplacing

 $R^{ussia's} \ \ \, \text{Investigative} \\ R^{committee \ \, said \ \, on \ \, Sunday}$ Investigative that it confirmed that Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder and head of the mercenary force Wagner who led a short-lived armed rebellion against Russia's military, was killed in a plane

Committee spokeswoman Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement that forensic and genetic testing identified all 10 bodies recovered at the site of Wednesday's crash and the findings "conform to the manifest" of the plane

The statement didn't offer any details about what might have caused the crash.

Russia's civil aviation authority earlier this week said Prigozhin, 62, and some of his top lieutenants were on the list of the passengers and crew members on board the plane. All seven passengers and three crew died when the plane plummeted from the sky halfway between Moscow and St. Petersburg, Prigozhin's

Prigozhin mounted a daylong mutiny against Russia's military, leading his mercenaries from Ukraine toward Moscow. President Vladimir Putin decried the act as "treason" and vowed punishment for those involved.

Instead, the Kremlin quickly cut a deal with Prigozhin to end the armed revolt, saying he would be allowed to walk free without facing any charges and to resettle in Belarus.

Questions have remained, however, about whether Prigozhin eventually would face a comeuppance for the brief uprising that posed the biggest challenge to Putin's authority of his 23-year rule.

A preliminary US intellience assessment concluded that an intentional explosion caused the plane to go down. As suspicions grew that the Russian president was the architect of an assassination, the Kremlin rejected them as a "complete lie."

One of the Western offi-

Ukraine probes incident that killed three pilots

try a lot."

Kyiv (AP): Ukrainian authorities have launched an investigation after a midair collision between two warplanes in the west of the country killed three pilots. Ukraine's air force spokesman Yuri Ihnat told Ukrainian television on Sunday it wasn't immediately clear how long the probe would

According to the air force's Telegram page, two L-39 training military aircraft collided on Friday during a combat mission over Ukraine's western Zhytomyr region.

Three pilots were killed, including Andriy Pilshchykov, a well-known pilot with the nickname "Juice" who was an outspoken advocate for Ukraine getting F-16 fighter jets. President Volodymyr

assessment said it determined

wounded two people, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said. ly" targeted and that an explo-

Zelenskyy in his nightly

address on Saturday paid trib-

ute to Pilshchykov, describing

him as a "Ukrainian officer, one

of those who helped our coun-

aviation brigade on Sunday

identified the other two pilots

killed in the collision as

Viacheslav Minka and Serhiy

Prokazin. Russian forces, in the

meantime, targeted central and

northern regions of Ukraine with cruise missiles overnight.

Ukraine's air force on Sunday

reported air defences success-

fully intercepted four of them.

rounding the Ukrainian capi-

tal, the falling debris damaged

a dozen private homes and

In the Kyiv region sur-

Ukraine's Vasilkiv tactical

Putin's "long history of trying to silence his critics."

Prigozhin's second-incommand, Dmitry Utkin, as well as Wagner logistics mastermind Valery Chekalov, also were killed in the crash. Utkin was long believed to have founded Wagner and baptized the group with his nom de guerre. The fate of Wagner, which until recently played a prominent role in Russia's military campaign in Ukraine and was involved in a number of African and Middle Eastern countries, has remained uncertain.

After the mutiny, the Kremlin said Prigozhin would be exiled in Belarus, and his fighters were offered three options: to follow him there, retire or enlist in Russia's regular army and return to Ukraine, where Wagner mercenaries had fought alongside Russian troops. Several thousand Wagner

mercenaries opted to move to Belarus, where a camp was erected for them southeast of

confidential diplomatic cable

ailed former prime minister Imran Khan admitted misplacing a confidential diplo-matic cable as he was interrogated by Pakistan's top investigative agency at the Attock Jail in a case filed under the Official Secrets Act for wrongful use of the classified document, according to media reports on Sunday.

Khan, 70, is currently serving a three-year jail term after he was sentenced by a court in a corruption case earlier this month.The cable in question was the same document Khan had for long mentioned as evidence of a US-backed conspiracy to remove him as the prime minister last year.Khan had waved a document at a rally days before his ouster as prime minister in April 2022, saying it was proof of foreign conspiracy.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's interrogation in the matter comes days after he was booked under the Official Secrets Act for making the content of a confidential diplomatic cable from the country's embassy in the US public. The counter-terrorism wing (CTW) of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Saturday visited the former prime minister in the jail, media reports said.

FIA sources said a six-member joint investigation team, led by FIA Deputy Director Ayaz Khan, met Khan in the office of the Attock Jail's deputy superintendent and interrogated him for over an hour, the Dawn newspaper reported. During interrogation, Khan admitted to losing the cypher, saying he couldn't recall where he kept it, The News newspaper reported.

Khan also denied that the paper he waved at a public gathering last year, days before the ouster of his government, as proof of the conspiracy was the diplomatic cable."The paper I gestured in the public were Cabinet meeting minutes and not cypher," the paper quoted

The investigation agency had registered the case against Khan and PTI vice chairman and former foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, after ascertaining their deliberate involvement in misusing the cypher and its misplacement following a probe. The FIR also stated that the role of the former prime minister's principal secretary, Azam Khan, ex-planning minister Asad Umar, and other associates involved would be determined during the investi-

Qureshi, a close aide of Khan, was arrested by police from his house here on August 19, and during Saturday's interrogation, Khan was questioned about the former's revelations.

Citing the cypher, Khan has been alleging the US of hatching a conspiracy to topple his government. The US has time and again denied such allegations, terming them "categorically false".

The purported cypher contained an account of a meeting between US State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu and then Pakistani envoy Asad Majeed Khan. The cricketer-turnedpolitician came under increased scrutiny following the publication of a purported copy of the secret cable by the US media outlet The Intercept, with many in the previous government led by Shehbaz Sharif pointing fingers at the PTI chief for being the source of the leak.

Former interior minister Rana Sanaullah has said that if Khan had indeed lost the copy of the cypher provided to him, it would constitute a crime under the Official Secrets Act Citing the cypher, The Intercept, in a report published earlier this month, said, "The US State Department encouraged

the Pakistani government in a March 7, 2022, meeting to remove Imran Khan as prime minister over his neutrality on the Russian invasion of Ukraine." The publication, however, also stated it made extensive efforts to authenticate the doc-

ument, but "given the security climate in Pakistan, independent confirmation from sources in the Pakistani government was not possible".

The US State Department had said it could not verify the

authenticity of the document. The cypher case against Khan became serious after his principal secretary, Azam Khan, stated before a magistrate and the FIA that the former premier had used the US cypher for his 'political gains' and to avert a noconfidence vote against him last year. On August 5, Imran was arrested and sent to Attock Jail after a trial court found him guilty in the Toshakhana corrup-

Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar also disqualified the PTI chief for five years, apparently ending his prospects for taking part in the upcoming general elections, dates for which have not been fixed. Dozens of cases had been launched against Khan after his removal from office last year. It is believed that he may be arrested by the FIA in the cypher case if his sentence in the Toshakhana case is sus-

UK MP calls for inquiry into women | Mnangagwa re-elected given radioactive chapatis in study

AUK Opposition Labour Party member of Parliament and shadow minister for women and equalities has called for a statutory inquiry into medical research dating back to the 1960s that led to Indian-origin women being given chapatis containing radioactive isotopes to combat iron deficiency.

Taiwo Owatemi, who is the MP for Coventry in the West Midlands region of England, said in a post on X - formerly Twitter - recently that she is "deeply concerned" for the women and families impacted

Around 21 Indian-origin women identified through a general practitioner (GP) in the city were given the bread containing Iron-59, an iron isotope, as part of a research trial in 1969 into iron deficiency in the city's South Asian popula-

1 killed in fire

fuelling station

Bucharest (AP): A fire at a fuelling station in Romania

caused an explosion that killed

at least one person and injured

at least eight others Saturday,

immediate area, authorities

said. A second explosion at the

station injured at least 26 fire-

fighters, emergency officials

said. The explosions happened

at a fuelling station that pro-

vides liquefied petroleum gas

a fuel used in household appli-

ances and as a gasoline and

diesel alternative in some vehi-

cles. They took place in the

town of Crevedia, around 30

kilometers northwest of

Romania's capital, Bucharest.

Alexandru Rafila, confirmed to

local media that one person

had died. Several burn victims

had been transported to hospi-

tals in Bucharest for treatment.

at least one of whom suffered

cue service SMURD said in a

press release that a second

explosion took place shortly

Romanian emergency res-

extensive injuries, he said.

Romania's health minister,

at Romanian

tion. "My foremost concern is for the women and the families of those who were experimented on in this study," said Owatemi. "I will be calling for a debate on this as soon as possible after Parliament returns in September followed by a full Statutory Inquiry into how this was allowed to happen, and why the recommendation of the MRC [Medical Research Council] report to identify the women was never followed up so that they can share their stories, receive any support needed, and so that lessons are learnt," she said.

An MRC spokesperson said an independent inquiry, commissioned following a documentary on Channel 4 in 1995, had examined questions raised. According to a BBC report, it emerged at the time that about 21 women were involved in the experiment after seeking medical help from a city GP for minor ailments. The study

from several European coun-

tries and backed by a fleet of

water-dropping planes and

helicopters, were battling three

major wildfires in Greece

Sunday, two of which have

country's northeastern regions

of Evros and Alexandroupolis,

believed to have caused 20 of

the 21 wildfire-related deaths in

the past week in Greece, was

fires combined to form one of

the largest single wildfires ever

to have struck a European

Union country, has decimated

vast tracts of forest and burned

homes in outlying areas of the

ers, seven planes and five heli-

copters were tackling it, the fire

department said. Evacuation

orders were issued for two vil-

On Sunday, 295 firefight-

city of Alexandroupolis.

The blaze, where smaller

burning for a ninth day.

A massive blaze in the

been raging for days.

was carried out due to concerns of widespread anaemia among South Asian women and researchers suspected traditional South Asian diets were to blame. Chapatis containing Iron-59, an iron isotope with a gamma-beta emitter, were delivered to participants' homes. They would later be invited to a research facility in Oxfordshire to have their radiation levels assessed. It was reported that the MRC said the study proved that "Asian women should take extra iron because the iron in the flour was insoluble". The MRC said in a statement it remained committed to the highest standards, including "commitment to engagement, openness and transparency".

The issues were considered following the broadcast of the documentary in 1995 and an independent inquiry was established at that time to examine the questions raised," the state-

to control wildfires in Greece

square miles) of land and had

120 active hotspots, the

European Union's Copernicus

Emergency Management

programme's Earth observation

component and uses satellite

imagery to provide mapping

data. Pope Francis, addressing

the public in St Peter's Square

in the Vatican on Sunday, said

he wanted to express assur-

ances that he is remembering

"in prayer the victims of the

fires that have burned in these

days in northeast Greece." He

also expressed "supportive

closeness" to the Greek people.

On the northwestern fringes of the Greek capital,

another major wildfire has

been blazing for days, scorch-

ing homes and burning into the

national park on Mount

Parnitha, one of the last green

areas near Athens. The fire

Copernicus is the EU space

Service said Sunday.

More than 600 firefighters struggle

More than 600 firefighters, region. The wildfire has roopers were trying to tame the Bulgarian, Albanian, Slovak

Zimbabwe President

AP HARARE

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa was re-elected for a second and final term Saturday as results were announced much earlier than expected following a troubled vote in the southern African country. An opposition party spokesperson said within minutes of the results being announced that they would reject them as "hastily assembled without proper verification. Mnangagwa won 52.6 per

cent of the vote, the Zimbabwe Election Commission said at a late-night announcement in the capital, Harare. Main opposition leader Nelson Chamisa won 44 per cent of the vote, the commission said. The result will likely be scrutinized after election observers from the European Union and African Union raised questions over the environment in the buildup to

lages, one in the Evros region department said 260 firefight- have sent aircraft, while dozens

and another in the Rodopi ers, one plane and three heli- of Romanian, French, Czech,

started on Saturday on the

Cycladic island of Andros and

was still burning out of control

Sunday, with 73 firefighters,

two planes and two helicopters

dousing the blaze. Lightning

strikes are suspected of having

by daily outbreaks of dozens of

fires over the past week as gale-

force winds and hot, dry sum-

mer conditions combined to

whip up flames and hamper

firefighting efforts. On Saturday, firefighters tackled

122 blazes, including 75 that broke out in the 24 hours

between Friday evening and

Saturday evening, the fire

stretched to the limit, Greece

has called for help from other

European countries. Germany,

Sweden, Croatia and Cyprus

With firefighting forces

department said.

Greece has been plagued

sparked that wildfire.

A third major wildfire

the vote and pointed to an atmosphere of intimidation against Chamisa's supporters.

The election was due to be

held on just one day, last Wednesday, but voting was extended to Thursday after delays and problems with the printing of ballot papers. Results of the presidential election had been set down for Monday but came just two days after the ballots closed, much sooner than expected. We reject any results hasti-

ly assembled without proper verification," said Promise Mkwananzi, a spokesperson for Chamisa's Citizens Coalition for Change Party. "We will advise citizens on the next steps as the situation develops." The result keeps the ruling

Serb firefighter

With their hot, dry sum-

mers, southern European

countries are particularly prone

to wildfires. European Union

officials have blamed climate

change for the increasing fre-

quency and intensity of wild-

fires in Europe, noting that

2022 was the second-worst

year for wildfire damage on

largest fires have not yet been

determined. For some of the

smaller blazes, officials have

said arson or negligence is

suspected, and several people

On Saturday, fire department officials arrested two

men, one on the island of Evia

and one in the central Greek

region of Larissa, for allegedly

deliberately setting fire to dried

grass and vegetation to spark

The causes of Greece's two

ing on the ground.

record after 2017.

have been arrested.

ZANU-PF party in the presidency. ZANU-PF has been in Khan as saying. government for 43 years since Zimbabwe won independence from white minority rule in

1 killed, 4 injured in shooting in Copenhagen neighbourhood

Copenhagen (AP): A shooting Saturday in a Copenhagen counterculture vibe and flourishing hashish trade left a 30year-old man dead and four other people inured, Danish police said. Two masked gunmen opened fire inside a building in the Christiania neighbourhood, Copenhagen police spokesman Poul Kjeldsen told Danish media.

Kjeldsen said the shooting was believed to be linked to criminal gangs, Denmark's TV2 reported. He said one of those injured was in critical but stable condition; the others had minor injuries. Police were still searching for the gunmen late Saturday. Christiania has been a freewheeling anarchist commune since the 1970s when hippies started squatting in a former naval base. Hashish sales were tolerated there by authorities until 2004 when police started to crack down on the drug trade.

N Korea to allow citizens abroad to return home

North Korea said Sunday it will allow its citizens stayuations worldwide, as the country slowly eases its draconian coronavirus restrictions.

In a brief statement carried by state media, the State Emergency Prevention Headquarters said those returning to North Korea will be put in quarantine for a week for "proper medical observation."

The statement didn't elaborate. But analysts predicted the announcement would lead to the return of North Korean students, workers and others who have had to stay abroad, mostly in China and Russia, because of the pandemic. The workers are a key source of foreign income for the country.

North Korea banned tourists, jetted out diplomats and severely curtailed border traffic and trade after the pandemic began. The lockdown has further worsened the

North's chronic economic difficulties and food insecurity.

Earlier this month, South Korea's spy agency said North ing abroad to return home in Korea was preparing to further a bid to revive its economy.

On Tuesday, a North Korean commercial jet landed in Beijing in what was the North's first such commercial international flight known to leave the country in about 31/2 years. The plane returned from Beijing later in the day, but it wasn't known who was aboard it. Earlier in August, a group of North Korean taekwondo athletes and officials traveled by land to Beijing and then took a flight to Kazakhstan to participate in an international

competition. The group of around 80 men and women wearing white track suits with the North Korean flag on the front were seen in the departure hall of Beijing's international airport. It was the first time such a big delegation from North Korea made an international trip since the pandemic began.

Beloved pets in Canada rescued from wildfires by volunteers who stayed behind

AP ■ TORONTO

after the first one

Wildfires forced Amanda Dengler to flee her home in Canada's Northwest Territories three times in the past 18 months, and each time her cats have evaded her attempts to bring them along.

The latest time, Dengler had to stay away longer than expected, and joined the many residents who have turned to networks of volunteers who are rescuing animals from communities threatened by Canada's record year of wildfires.

Dengler said she tried to catch her three cats on Aug. 13, when she left her home in the town of Hay River because of a nearby wildfire.

"I think they picked up on my fear and it kind of drove their fear a little bit, and they

were not cooperative," she said. So, she took her two dogs, a suitcase of clothes and her

electronics with her. She filled

a bathtub with water and left an open bag of dry food on the floor for the cats, thinking she'd be gone for a few days. Once it became longer than that, she looked for help.

That's when she saw a message on Facebook from Dr. Michelle Tuma, a veterinarian in the Northwest Territories capital of Yellowknife and a member of Veterinarians Without Borders. Tuma has spent the past month trying to help families flee with their pets, reunite with them or keep tabs on animals left "It's hard because we don't

really know how long this is going to go on for," Tuma said. Her first involvement was

helping residents of the small town of Behchoko, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Yellowknife, when they evacuated to the territorial capital on July 24 because of a

Many who took buses or planes could not bring their pets with them and were forced to leave the animals behind, Tuma said.

"So we had an amazing group of people who went into the community, helped rescue a bunch of animals out of the community at the owners' consent and brought them to Yellowknife," she said.

Ultimately more than 100 animals were rescued and brought to the city where they were kept at boarding facilities, shelters or with the more than 80 foster families who came forward to help In the following weeks,

there were evacuations in more communities and more pets to help. Then, on Aug. 16, an evacuation order was issued for Yellowknife. In several days, about 20,000 of the city's roughly 23,000 residents left.

Tuma, however, decided to remain, as an essential work-



er. "I've been working these wildfires for every other community for the last month and it was just a no-brainer for me to stay back and help with my community, my hometown,

city," she said.

Working with staff around Canada at Veterinarians Without Borders, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and local officials, and give back to this amazing Tuma and others have been

and care for pets as firefighters battle to keep the flames at bay.

They've brought food and water to homebound pets, fielded calls from worried pet owners, and helped arrange for the delivery of much-needed animal transport crates to remote areas. "At first, the flights weren't

allowing pets on unless they had carriers and the city immediately sold out of those," said Charly Jarrett, director of communications for Veterinarians Without Borders. Eventually, military flights

as well as commercial flights allowed evacuees to bring their pets aboard without a crate.

Tuma — sometimes with the help of a locksmith — has been busy rescuing animals in their homes, including a scared kitty who was hiding behind a washing machine before giving Tuma a couple of bites. She also helped staff at a local vet clin-

ic pack up an angry snake for transport. It was spitting, hissing and lunging at its rescuers as they tried to remove it from a glass enclosure.

Tuma also has treated sick animals, prescribed sedatives for anxious ones who needed to be transported, and helped keep track of the approximately 70 to 80 animals still in Yellowknife.

Maggie McGuane daughter of the late Canadian actor Margot Kidder, a native of Yellowknife who was known for playing Lois Lane in the Superman movies — contacted Veterinarians Without Borders to offer help. McGuane is involved with Wings of Rescue, a California-based charity that transports at-risk

overcrowded shelters. On Aug. 20, a husband and wife team of volunteer pilots from Wings of Rescue flew out 17 animals, including two

pets from disaster areas and

snakes. The cost of the flight was partly covered by a \$10,000 donation from the Americanbased Tito's Handmade Vodka and the company's Vodka for Dog People Charity.

Two of Dengler's cats, which had to be picked up in Hay River — a five-hour drive from Yellowknife — were on that flight. Her third cat, a 7vear-old indoor-outdoor cat named Stitch, was still at large but was recently spotted by a neighbor.

Dengler, who is staying with friends in Calgary, said it was a relief to know at least her other four pets were safe. "I think right now people

are looking for comfort, right? You leave your whole life behind and ... sometimes pets can be family members for some people," she said. "Even if I lost my house. Even if I lost all my belongings, I still have the life of my animals. Everything else is replaceable."

Stock exchanges slap fines on IOC, ONGC, GAIL

Firms fined for failure to meet listing regulations

Stock exchanges have slapped fines on stateowned oil and gas firms including IOC, ONGC and GAIL for their failure to meet listing requirements of having a requisite number of independent directors and women

In separate filings, the companies detailed the fines imposed by the BSE and NSE but were quick to point out that appointment of directors was done by the government and they had no role in it.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was slapped a Rs 3.36 lakh fine, while Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) was asked to pay Rs

Gas utility GAIL was slapped Rs 2.71 lakh fine, Petroleum Hindustan Corporation Ltd (HPCL) Rs 3.59 lakh, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) Rs 3.6 lakh, Oil India Ltd Rs 5.37 lakh and a fine of Rs 5.37 lakh was imposed on Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MŔPL).

Except for IOC which was slapped with the fine for not having the required one woman director on the board, all the companies were fined for violating the norm of having the required number of independent directors.

IOC said the power to

independent and women directors) vests with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of

"And hence the nonappointment of women independent directors on the Board during the quarter ended June 30, 2023 was not due to any negligence / fault by the company," it said. "Accordingly, Indian Oil should not be held liable to pay the fines and the same should be waived-off".

IOC said it regularly takes up the issue with the ministry, for appointment of requisite number of independent directors (including



Woman independent director), to ensure compliance with corporate governance

"We would also like to inform that the company had received similar notices from

The four public sector general insurance companies

are unlikely to get capital fund-

ing from the government in the current fiscal, a senior official

non-life insurance companies

is likely to give a dividend to the government in the current

fiscal and they will be able to meet their solvency margins.

tal to three insurers -- National

Insurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company and United India Insurance

not provided for the capital

infusion for insurance compa-

a need for capital infusion as of

now. In fact, one of the gener-

al insurance companies may

give a dividend this year," the

general insurance companies in

India -- New India Assurance,

United India Insurance,

Oriental Insurance and

official said.

The government last year provided Rs 5,000 crore capi-

The Budget 2023-24 has

"We do not think there is

Currently, there are four

He said one of the PSU

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

the BSE and NSE in the past imposing fines and waiver requests from the company was considered favorably by the exchanges," it said.

HPCL made a similar filing and cited past record of

stock exchanges waiving such

ONGC said it has requested the government for nomination of the requisite number of independent directors on the board of the com-

"Since the appointment of directors is beyond control of the company, request letters have been submitted to stock exchanges for waiving off the fine levied," ONGC said.

BPCL said it had complied with the requirements for the financial year 2022-23 and till April 30, 2023. But the appointment of a

full-time directors with effect from May 1, 2023 led to BPCL having five whole-time Directors, two nominee directors of the government and six independent directors.

should have had seven independent directors - equal to the executive directors (five whole-time directors and two government nominee direc-

BPCL said it has "requested the Government of India from time to time for the nomination of one independent director. As the directors are appointed after receipt of nomination from Government of India. BPCL has no control over the

appointment of Directors." The firm said it will be approaching BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited for waiver of the fines. "Similar letters were received earlier from the stock exchanges for which waiver request was made by BPCL

favorably by the stock exchanges," the filing said.

Oil India Ltd (OIL) said the non-compliance was beyond the control of the company as it is a government enterprise and directors are appointed by the administrative ministry, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

MRPL said it is following up with the government from time to time for appointing the required number of directors on its board.
GAIL said, "all the direc-

tors on the board of GAIL (including independent directors) are nominated/appointed by the Government of India. As such, appointments are outside the purview/control of the GAIL's manage-

Markets to focus on macro data, global trends, foreign investors activity: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $M_{
m announcements,\ global}^{
m acroeconomic\ data}$ trends and trading activity of foreign investors would dictate the equity markets this week, analysts said.

Marketmen will also focus

on the Annual General Meeting of Reliance Industries Ltd which will be held on Monday

"This week's focal point is the eagerly awaited Reliance Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday, August 28 This event is poised to have some impact on the market's trajectory. Shifting to the macroeconomic landscape, India is set to reveal its Q2 GDP figures on Thursday, shedding light on the nation's economic

Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data will be disclosed on Friday," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

He further added that Friday will feature the disclo-



rate and nonfarm payroll sta-

Cues from China, foreign investor activities, and fluctuations in the dollar index and US bond yields will play a pivotal role in shaping market dynamics throughout the week, Meena said.

Auto companies would remain in focus on Friday amid monthly sales data announcement.

"Global and domestic macroeconomic data, trends in global stock markets, crude oil prices, global cues, movement of the rupee against the dipped 44.35 points or 0.22 per dollar, and investment by FIIs

sure of the US unemployment and DIIs will be in focus.

"Some macroeconomic key events that will drive the market in the coming week are US GDP data, US unemployment rate, US manufacturing PMI, initial jobless claims, India's GDP, RIL AGM," said Arvinder Singh Nanda, Senior Vice President, of Master Capital Services Ltd.

Equity benchmark indices may face volatile trends amid the monthly derivatives expiry on Thursday.

Last week, the BSE benchmark declined 62.15 points or 0.09 per cent and the Nifty

Govt unlikely to infuse capital in PSU general insurers in FY24

National Insurance Company. Of this, only New India Assurance is better placed than

Insurance companies are mandated by regulator IRDAI to maintain extra capital over and above the claim amounts they are likely to incur. It acts as a financial backup in extreme situations, enabling the company to settle all claims.

According to rating agency ICRA, most PSU insurers are expected to witness a high combined ratio resulting in net losses, though it will be lower compared to the last

The capital requirement of three PSU general insurers (excluding New India) is estimated at a sizeable Rs 17,200-17,500 crore to meet solvency of 1.50x as of March 2024, assuming 100 per cent forbearance on FVCA (fair value change account), ICRA said in a report in May.

During 2020-21, Rs 9,950 crore was infused in three public sector general insurers by the government, out of which Rs 3,605 crore was infused in United India Insurance, Rs 3,175 crore in National

FINANCE Insurance and Rs 3,170 crore in

Oriental Insurance.

With regard to a committee report on stalled real estate projects, the official said the SWAMIH fund corpus is yet to be utilised fully and banks can put in money in the stalled projects to make them viable after taking permission from the

A 14-member committee chaired by former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, which was constituted to examine stalled real estate projects and recommend ways to complete them, submitted its report on

'We will take only those projects which could be made viable through the SWAMIH fund. The report has two parts

and time delays.

August 21 to the government. The committee concluded

that the main reason for the

stress in these projects was the

"lack of financial viability",

which had led to cost overruns

--developers will be given money, if there is a stalled project, through the SWAMIH fund and banks can also put in money after taking permission from RBI. Secondly, individuals

whose loan is stuck and can't repay money, for them also we have made provision to classify it as standard asset," the official added.

The fund corpus has not been utilised fully, he added. As on March 17, 2023, the government has released Rs 2,646.57 crore to the SWAMIH fund, which provides funding to stressed/ stalled mid income and affordable housing projects across India, subject to certain conditions. The fund is sponsored by Ministry of Finance and is managed by SBICAP

Saint Gobain investing ₹8K cr in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saint Gobain India, a leading glass maker and a player in housing solutions business, is investing Rs 8,000 crore in 4-5 years to fund captions to fuel growth, its chief B Santhanam said The company, which

recently acquired stone wool manufacturer Rockwool India and glass wool maker Twiga still has an appetite for inorganic growth here.

Saint Gobain India, a subsidiary of the French glassmaker, expects around 10 per cent volume and mix-led growth from the Indian market, where it is witnessing a demand surge.

"Saint-Ğobain India is performing very well in India in terms of growth, profitability, expansion, sustainability, digital and people talent. All our businesses be it in building and construction or industrial solutions are performing well," Saint Gobain CEO of Asia Pacific and India region and Chairman, Saint-



"We are close to the annualised rate of Rs 13,200 crore... Comparing FY24 to FY23 we will be 8-10 per cent more in terms of growth," he said. He added that India is the

third most profitable country in the Saint-Gobain global

Over the investments, Santhanam said most of its

"What we believe is that in a 4-5-year cycle, we will invest about Rs 8,000 crores with over 90 per cent focused on capex.

"As our scale goes up, we will re-evaluate our Capex needs," he said.

Saint Gobain India is financing the investments through its internal accruals, said Santhanam adding "We businesses are undertaking are debt-free and have ade-

quate internal funds to fuel our growth appetite."
When asked about out-

look for the Saint Gobain's business here, Santhanam said it is "favourable" in the long term as people are investing that combine aesthetics, functionality, comfort, and sus-

Saint Gobain India offers solutions for facades, partitions, ceilings, and bathrooms; ceramics for infrastructure industries like steel, cement, and aluminium and glazing solutions for mobili-

"Our long-term growth can be two times the GDP growth rate," he said adding there is a "strong appetite" for Saint Gobain's solution for facades, windows, ceilings, partitions, shower enclosures, office, home interiors and construction chemicals.

Even in the industrial space, there is a strong demand from auto, auto components, steel, aluminium, glass, and infrastructure industries, he added.

"In most categories, premiumization is the order of the day, be it residential homes, commercial premises, appliances, or cars. Today, the shift to SUVs has doubled the average price realisation of idential homes," he said.

Moreover, a strong push on infrastructure by the Modi government has led to rapid growth driving demands for construction chemicals that offer sustainable solutions and reduce carbon footprints. Besides, Saint Gobain

India also exports advanced products to the markets of ASEAN, North Asia, Middle East, and Australia, New Zealand from India.

"Even if there has been a slowdown of the exports of goods from India, our exports (good and services) have remained steady at 15 per cent," he said.

However, if the asymmetry in duties on glass with select ASEAN countries is removed, Saint Gobain India do even better, Santhanam added

'Interest in generative AI ventures high'

I meeting assistant Al meeting assistant Ramineni said the company is building on top of its transcription offering with generative technology and may consider raising funds early next year to support expansion plans

Ramineni, during his India visit spoke to PTI about the rapid growth in AI and startups in India and the Silicon Valley. He said at present there is a lot of interest and appetite for generative AI startups.

Fireflies. Ai helps your to transcribe, summarize, search, and analyze voice conversations.

On its fundraising plans, Ramineni said, "We have potential plans to look into it at the start of next year. There's definitely a lot of interest and appetite for generative AI startups right now, but we're operating well and we're pretty capital efficient, so we have plenty of runway," he added.



Launched just before the pandemic in January 2020, the San Francisco-based company has raised USD 19 million until now. Fireflies.Ai operates in 20 nations and has offices in Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru in

"The perfect catalyst was Covid and the remote work push that happened in 2020. So we raised our seed round in 2019, and then in 2020 January we launched the company. A few weeks later COVID started, everyone was on Zoom or some sort of video conferencing platform. That was a huge accelerator for us then," he said.

Ramineni said the company is building on top of its transcription offering with generative

'With the generative AI hype and all that's happening

with Chat GPT, we're seeing how transcription is just the foundational layer and you can do so much more on top of it. People can get meeting notes, sumon what was said in the conver-

sation," he said.

Everyone now has a digital assistant, and Fireflies is trying to create not just meeting assistants but work assistants for people, he added.

Ramineni noted that unlike other technologies, AI "is showing change in a span of six

Even though customers have taken well to generative technologies, Ramineni admitted that enterprises are concerned if their data is being used to train

their algorithm. On the aspect of data privacy, he said, "That might work well for individuals and they might not care as much, but enterprises, it's a no go. So we took a very strong stance from our early days that if we're going to bring AI, it has to be ethical-

ly implemented."

Govt decides not to allow basmati rice exports below \$ 1,200/tonne

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has decid-I ed not to allow exports of basmati rice below USD 1,200 per tonne to restrict possible "illegal" shipment of white non-basmati rice in the garb of premium basmati rice.

In a statement on Sunday, the commerce ministry said it has directed trade promotion body APEDA not to register contracts below USD 1,200

Existing contracts below USD 1,200 per tonne have been kept in abeyance.

A committee under the chairman of APEDA will be set up to evaluate future course of action. Seeking to control retail prices of rice, the central government has been taking several steps to boost domes-



In September last year, it banned exports of broken rice, while last month it imposed restrictions on non-basmati white rice. Last week, a 20 per cent export duty was slapped on par-boiled non-basmati rice.

on all varieties of non-basmati According to the statement of the commerce ministry, the government has

has now imposed restrictions

With these curbs, India

(Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) to introduce additional safeguards to prevent the possible illegal exports of white non-basmati rice in the garb of basmati rice. As per the instructions,

"contracts for basmati exports with the value of USD 1,200 per MT (tonne) only and above should be registered for issue of Registration - cum - Allocation Certificate (RCAC)".

Digital Public Infrastructure can help in climate adaptation, mitigation: Nilekani

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The approach of Digital Public Infrastructure, which has gained global prominence, can also help in the area of climate adaptation and mitigation going forward, Chairman and Co-Founder of Infosys and the founding Chairman of UIDAI, Nandan Nilekani said on Sunday.

Nilekani, speaking at the B20 Summit India organised by CII, further said India has found a "balance" between responsible regulation and innovation due to its participatory model, as he showcased the country's success story on digital public infrastructure (DPI), which has accelerated inclusion in the

India's DPI is gaining global recognition, Nilekani said, noting there is a major



to 50 countries in five years. Many multilateral agencies

and global groups are coming forward and showing interest, and the next fe years will see proliferation and prevalence of digital infrastructure at population-scale around the world. Going forward, the

approach of digital public infrastructure can also help in climate adaptation and mitigation, Nilekani said. "For example, one of the things which will happen in cli-

mate adaptation is you want to

give anticipatory financing for

building more resilient homes, in anticipation of higher sea levels etc. And you can do that using DPI or using ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce), another great innovation to create an open network for commerce, we can create a circular economy where things get recycled," he

Hence, not only has DPI has helped so far, it will also be useful in the future. The digital public infra-

structure issues a challenge for societies, he said, adding that other countries today are fighting the question of how to balance regulation and innovation, something that India has suc cessfully manoeuvred.

While the US, a hotbed for innovation, is now looking at approaching regulation, Europe has plenty of regulations, but not enough innovators.

'Tata Steel plans to scale up usage of hydrogen in steel making process'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ata Steel plans to scale up ■ the usage of hydrogen in the steel making process after the successful completion of the pilot project at its Jamshedpur plant, in Jharkhand, the company's CEO and MD T V Narendran said. In April 2023, Tata Steel commenced the first of its kind experiment injecting hydrogen gas using 40 per cent of the injection systems in Eblast furnace at its steel plant in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.

"It was very successful, we will scale it up, But eventually we need to have green hydrogen available in Eastern India that will determine how it can be used," Narendran told PTI in reply to a question on the results of the trials. However, he did not tell the quantum in which the company plans to increase the usage of hydrogen.



blast furnaces helps reduce consumption of coal leading to reduction in carbon footprint. "This is the first time in the

world that such a large quantity of hydrogen gas is being continuously injected in a blast furnace," he said. Speaking on the company's

operations in the Netherlands, Narendran said the business there is moving from coal to gas to hydrogen and the transition is important for that nation because Tata Steel Netherlands will become one of the biggest consumers of hydrogen there.

MBAPPE DOMINATES ON HOME RETURN



AFP PARIS

ylian Mbappe dominated his first home start of the season, scoring twice as Ligue 1 champions Paris-Saint Germain defeated last season's runners up Lens, 3-1, on Saturday.

In a meeting of two teams winless in their first two league matches, PSG emphatically put their season back on track.

The victory lifted them to fourth, two points behind leaders Monaco, who drew on Friday, and Marseille who won earlier Saturday.

"I'd always like things to go the way they did tonight, but in football there are always surprises," said PSG coach Luis Énrique.

"There was a Champions League rhythm," the Spaniard said. "My players were very brave and against a team that defends well. We created a lot of chances."

Mbappe, making his first home start since being reinstated to the team following a contract dispute, posed a threat from the

In the first half, he had one shot saved by goalkeeper Brice Samba and another cleared off the line by Kevin Danso before Marco Asensio scored his first goal for the club in the 44th minute.

PSG's Portuguese midfielder Vitinha surged up the field before moving the ball on to Warren Zaire-Emery who passed to Asensio just outside the box. The Spaniard curled a left foot shot in off the base

return pass from Lucas Hernandez

save from Samba as PSG dominated possession.

On a rare Lens counter-

record signing, who came on after 57 minutes, outpaced the home defence and forced a sprawling save from Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Ousmane Dembele, making his first PSG start since moving from Barcelona, lashed an opportunity for a first goal for the club

Mbappe added a second in the 90th minute with a shot from near the penalty spot that took two deflections on its way into the net.

As PSG's defence relaxed, Wahi forced another flying save from Donnarumma before Morgan Guilavogui scored with the last kick

of the match, his shot deflecting in off Milan Skriniar.

"In the second half, we opened up and if you open up against this team, things happen too quickly. We didn't give up but there was too much difference between the two teams," said Lens coach Franck

Earlier, Marseille jumped to second place after ending visiting Brest's winning start to season with a lacklustre 2-0 victory.

Knocked out of the Champions League in the third qualifying round by Panathinaikos at the start of the month, Marseille's rebuilt squad had a week to prepare.

The hosts started brightly when Chancel Mbemba opened the scoring with a header from Jordan Veretout's impeccable free kick after three minutes.

Brest, who had opened the season with two wins, dominated the rest of the half and squandered a string of chances.

"In the first half we weren't organised properly, we lost too many balls and Brest were better," said Marseille coach Marcelino, who took over in the summer.

The introduction of Vitinha from the bench lifted Marseille who stretched their lead after 65 minutes. Ismaila Sarr met a cross from

Renan Lodi to score for the first time since arriving from Watford in the summer. Vitinha created two golden

chances for Veretout and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who was wasteful throughout. "It got better in the second half and after the second goal, we were

the Marseille we want to be," said Marcelino. "If we'd been bad throughout, I'd be worried."



Pulisic on target again for Milan

ristian Pulisic continued his bright Ustart at Serie A leaders AC Milan with another goal in Saturday's 4-1 win over Torino, while Roma slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Verona.

A second strike in as many games by Pulisic since signing from Chelsea in the 33rd minute got Milan on their way to their second straight win, this time in front of a packed San Siro watching a new-look team for the first time this season.

Olivier Giroud was also on target with a penalty in each half while Theo Hernandez struck with a brilliant finish as Milan put on an entertaining dis-

play.
"You can see on the pitch how much we have fun," said Giroud to

"We can compete in both competitions, in Serie A and the Champions League. We have a lot of quality, we have a lot of weapons and attacking solutions.

USA forward Pulisic rolled in the opener after a brilliant exchange of passes with fellow former Chelsea star Ruben Loftus-Cheek, before Peer Schuurs stunned the home supporters by diverting Samuele Ricci's wayward shot past Milan goalkeeper Mike

However Giroud then put Milan back in the lead from the penalty spot after Alessandro Buongiorno was penalised for handball -- while pushing the France striker in the back -- following a VAR check.

Theo Hernandez then extended Milan's lead in first half stoppage-time by dinking over Vanja Milinkovic-Savic from a tight angle following brilliant combination play with Rafael Leao.

Torino already had little chance of victory by that point and coach Ivan Juric shook his head on the touchline when another VAR check ended with another debateable spot-kick for Milan for a foul on Leao.

Giroud stroked in his third goal in Milan's opening two matches to put the hosts three ahead midway through the second half and put to bed a largely one-sided contest.

VERONA SINK ROMA

Ondrej Duda and Cyril Ngonge struck in the first half to keep Verona level on a perfect six points with Milan with a surprise win over Roma, who are waiting to see if Romelu Lukaku will sign on loan from Chelsea. Lukaku's potential arrival has

Roma fans excited but their team looked in need of more than just a goalscorer after conceding two sloppy strikes to lose at the Stadio Bentegodi. Jose Mourinho's side have collect-

ed one point from their first two games in the absence of their suspended coach and have only won one of their last 10 Serie A matches. Injury-prone talisman Paulo

Dybala was forced to leave the field with a thigh problem in the second half, more bad news for a team which seems



Messi comes off bench to score as Miami win

AFP ■ NEW YORK

ionel Messi came off the Lionel Messi came of bench and scored as Inter Miami began their push for the Major League Soccer playoffs with a 2-0 win at New York Red Bulls on Saturday.

After a week in which Miami won the Leagues Cup and reached the final of the US Open Cup, Messi was left on the bench by coach Gerard "Tata" Martino but came into the game on the hour mark.

The Argentine World Cup winner had limited involvement after entering with former Barcelona team-mate Sergio Busquets but made his mark on his regular season debut with an

89th minute goal.

Jordi Alba acrobatically hooked the ball into the box to Messi who twisted and turned then slipped a sublime pass with the outside of his foot to Benjamin Cremaschi whose low first-time cross was tapped in by the seven-times Ballon d'Or

Messi has now scored 11 goals in nine appearances in all competitions since joining Inter

"He's unbelievable, every day it's something new, on and off the field," said Miami's 19year-old defender Noah Allen.

"He's an amazing person to play with and I am so blessed to play with him." Martino had indicated that

several of his players were in need of a break after an intense run of eight games inside a month and stuck to his word with his team selection, to the disappointment of the capacity crowd at Red Bull Arena.

A makeshift Miami had taken the lead in the 37th minute when Noah Allen played in a cross from the left and Paraguayan Diego Gomez was given time to turn and then slot home a left-foot effort.

Miami keeper Drake Callender had to make a series of saves to keep his side in the lead but with Red Bull pressure mounting, Martino opted to bring on his star man and the momentum of the game inevitably shifted.

The win lifts Miami off the bottom of the Eastern Conference and reduces the gap to the last playoff sport to 11 points with 11 games remaining.

Eastern Conference leaders Cincinnati bounced back from their US Open Cup last four loss to Miami on Wednesday.

of the post. Mbappe added a ferocious second after 51 minutes, meeting a

> with a first-time side-foot shot from the edge of the box that rocketed past Samba. Mbappe forced another good

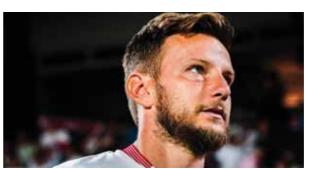
attack, Elye Wahi, the club's

Sevilla players pay 'It's Over' tribute to Hermoso World Cup final medal cere-

mony on Sunday.

World football governing $S^{\text{evilla players paid tribute to}}_{\text{Spanish women's team star}}$ body FIFA suspended Rubiales on Saturday, while on Friday 81 Jenni Hermoso and the country's other top female foot-ballers ahead of their 2-1 Spain players including Hermoso said they would not defeat by Girona on Saturday play for the women's national team while the current "leader-Hermoso, 33, was forcibly ship" continued.

Sevilla players wore warm-up t-shirts with the phrase "It's Over" written on football federation chief Luis



the front in Spanish, which several Spain women's players and Hermoso herself had used on Friday on social media and in statements, apparently referring to Rubiales' reign in

La Roja's World Cup final goalscoring hero Olga Carmona watched the match from the presidential box at Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium, less than a week after she netted the winning goal against England in Sydney, only to find out after the game her father had died.

Jose Luis Mendilibar's Europa League winners have now lost their opening three matches in a dismal start to La Liga, in which they are bottom.

Earlier Cadiz players came out for their 1-1 draw against Almeria with a banner reading "We are all Jenni".

Baez downs Lehecka to win Andreescu **ATP Winston-Salem Open**

AFP WASHINGTON

AFP BARCELONA

in La Liga.

rgentina's Sebastian Baez Awon his first ATP hard court title with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Czech Jiri Lehecka in the final of the Winston-Salem Open on Saturday.

kissed on the lips by Spanish

Rubiales at the Women's

The tournament victory was the third this year for the 22-year-old following his wins on clay at the Austrian Open earlier this month and the Cordoba Open in his home-

land in February.
Baez was 3-1 down in the first set but won three straight games to take control.

Lehecka, playing in his first ATP final, broke Baez's first service game of the second set, but the Argentine immediately broke back and never looked in danger from that

It was an impressive performance from Baez who had played late on Friday in a gruelling 3 hours, 20 minute threeset battle against top-seed

world stage with a brilliant run

opens his campaign on the Arthur Ashe main arena against

France's Alexandre Muller on

Second seed Djokovic, who

to his first US Open crown.



Croatian Borna Coric, while Lehecka had a walkover after Sebastian Korda withdrew with

Baez struck 28 winners and saved five of seven break points and the win means he moves up 10 places in the world rankings to 32nd ahead

of next week's US Open. Baez also becomes the first Argentine since Juan Martin del Potro to win three titles in

the same season. The victory was the perfect reparation for Baez's UŜ Open first-round match, which will pit him against Coric again.

withdraws from US Open

AFP NEW YORK

← anada's Bianca Andreescu withdrew from the US Open on Saturday, the 2019 singles champion missing the event for the second time since winning in her debut at 19, organizers announced.

She will be replaced in the draw of the year's final Grand Slam tennis tournament by a qualifier or lucky loser when the tournament begins on Monday. Andreescu revealed earlier

this month that she had been diagnosed with a "small stress fracture" in her back. She also withdrew from last week's final major US Open tuneup at Cincinnati,

Andreescu said she began to feel pain at the Washington Open and worked to play at Montreal the following week, but struggled in a first-round loss to Italy's Camila Giorgi.

In the US Open draw, Andreescu had been slated to open against 2018 US Open quarter-finalist Lesia Tsurenko

World champs gold rush for Lyles, Richardson and Kipyegon

AFP BUDAPEST

Noah Lyles and Sha'Carri Richardson, the two faces of World Athletics Championships, won their third and second golds respectively by anchoring the United States to 4x100m relay triumphs in Budapest on Saturday.

On an enthralling night's action Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis and Faith Kipyegon rubberstamped their authority in their events.

Charismatic Swede Duplantis retained his pole vault title, although he fell short of bettering his own world record, whilst Kenyan Kipyegon became the first woman to achieve the 1500 and 5,000m double, when she won the latter.

It was a night of firsts for Canada, who had earlier in the championships swept both the men's and women's hammer

Marco Arop and Pierce LePage became the first Canadians to win the men's 800m title and decathlon



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oker, Alcaraz poised for U

Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz are on a US Open collision course as the final Grand Slam tournament of season gets under way on Monday with American teenager Coco Gauff chasing a breakthrough first major

A little more than six weeks after world number one Alcaraz defeated Djokovic in an enthralling finale to the Wimbledon championships, the two men could meet again at Flushing Meadows if the

seedings go to play over the next fortnight.

announced his arrival on the world stage with a brilliant run

Djokovic and Alcaraz whetted the tennis world's appetite for another blockbuster showdown at the Cincinnati Open last ing the 20-year-old Spaniard in a four-hour classic.

Djokovic, 36, is making a long-awaited return to the US Open this year after his refusal to be vaccinated against Covid-19 meant he was unable to gain entry to the United States.

last year's tournament, Alcaraz

week, with 23-time Grand Slam singles winner Djokovic down-

Monday, says Alcaraz's relent-less, swashbuckling style is rem-iniscent of Rafael Nadal, the 22-time Grand Slam singles champion who misses this year's US Open due to injury. "Each point is a hustle. Each point is a battle. You feel like you're not going to get maybe in In Djokovic's absence at total five free points in the entire

match," Djokovic said of Alcaraz



"You've got to basically earn every single point, every single shot, regardless of the condi-

Alcaraz, who faces Germany's Dominik Koepfer in the first round on Tuesday, said he is flattered by the Nadal comparison.

Ît's great that he knows that every time he's going to play against me, it reminds him playing against Rafa or against the best ones because that means we are in a good path," he said. Djokovic will reclaim the

world number one ranking with

victory over Muller on

Monday, regardless of how Alcaraz performs in the tourna-

The Spaniard, meanwhile, must navigate a tricky route to the final that could include 2021 US Open champion Daniil Medvedev and Italy's Jannik

GAUFF CHASING BREAKTHROUGH

In the women's tournament meanwhile, all eyes will be on the in-form 19-year-old Gauff, who is chasing a first Grand Slam title that would make her only the fifth Black woman in

the open era to win the US Open After struggling in the early part of the season, Gauff felt she

had hit rock bottom after exiting in the first round at Wimbledon. But the addition of veteran guru Brad Gilbert to her coach-

ing team has sparked a transformation in her form and fortunes. She won the Washington

Open in early August, reached the quarter-finals of the Canadian Open in Montreal and then scored a superb victory in the Cincinnati Open -- her first WTA 1000 title.

I wasn't even able to express myself: lyer

Pain, often excruciating, was Shreyas Iyer's constant com-panion as he dealt with a back injury, and when it refused to subside even after undergoing surgery, he "panicked" thinking that his career could be on the line.

Prior to the surgery, Iyer was suffering, so much so that he "wasn't even able to express myself properly" about what he was going

However, the 28-year-old stylish batter eventually recovered and returned to the Indian team for the upcoming Asia Cup. Now that he is back, he is taking it one step at a

Recalling the days of his strug-gles because of the injury, Iyer told the BCCI: "To be precise, I had this nerve compression, basically a slip disc, which was compressing the nerve, and the pain was going all the way down to the bottom of my tiny toe. And, it was horrendous then.

"I was in excruciating pain. I wasn't able to express myself properly about what I'm going through.
"But yeah, this was the feeling

that I was having then and it was hard to communicate with everyone. I had this issue for a while, but I was taking injections, and I was going through various routes to see to it that I am steady and playing many more matches.'

The batter then realised that surgery was the only answer to his problems.

"It reached a saturation point where I realised that 'okay, now I have to get surgery'. And, the physios and the experts told me that it is important that you go under the knife and get this done with.



"Straight after the injury, I went back home after being hospitalised for two days. I gave myself rest for almost 10 days.

The middle-order batter has thanked all his teammates for showing compassion during his most difficult phase and also after his comeback to the fold.

"Feeling ecstatic, to be honest, to join the team and see happy faces all around. The compassion shown by all the players was fantastic, and am thrilled to be back."

Iyer's last outing was in March during the final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which India won 2-1 before his injury kicked in.

It also forced him to miss out on leading Kolkata Knight Riders in

"At that period, one of the doctors had come to check my toe strength. He said that you can

ll-rounder Karim Janat on

All-rounder Kailli James As Sunday returned to

Afghanistan's ODI squad after a

gap of six years and the selectors

also included seasoned left-

handed batter Najibullah Zadran

in the 17-member squad for the

upcoming Asia Cup. Hashmatullah Shahidi, a

solid left-handed batter and

who is known for anchoring the

manage, but at the same time, the surgery will also be required.

"So, I thought the best decision" it as his toughest period.

"The testing phase toughest period to go throw."

would be to get the surgery done because I have long years ahead to play. And yeah, I am truly happy with my decision. After the surgery, the surgeon also said that it was a great decision that you decided to go for the surgery.

"Post surgery, I was there for three weeks in London because the doctor had to check the progress over some time. So, after three weeks, he was happy, and he asked me to come back (return to India. And then, the physios took over at

Iyer further said that recovery post surgery was not easy either as it took time for the pain to subside, and he had also panicked at one

"It was a roller-coaster ride. The pain was there until three months, and then after that, it started subsid-

"But, at the same time, the physios were focused on getting the range back of my hamstring and glutes and everything. When you are going through a rehab, especially as a professional athlete, it is tough when the pain is not subsiding.

"Thankfully, I had a great set of friends around me and support staff and also my family. They were the ones who calmed me down in this situation, and I was panicking as

"But, patience is the key at this point, especially. So yeah, I'm truly happy to be where I am right now because I never imagined that I would recover so fast.

Speaking about the "testing phase" at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) here, Iyer termed

innings, will lead the team in the

tournament will be played from

August 30 to September 17 in

and Abdul Rahman, two fast

bowlers, who were part of

Afghanistan's recent home ODI

series against Pakistan, have

retained their spots in the squad,

but Fareed Ahmad and Wafadar

Azmatullah Omarzai, a

Momand have been left out.

Mohammad Saleem Safi

Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"The testing phase was the toughest period to go through, and the physios and the trainers were pretty confident about me coming back strong. But, in my mind, I could feel the pain.

"So, I was pretty oblivious at that point of time whether I would pass the test or not. But, over some time, I realised that the pain is subsiding and my strength is improving in my leg," he said.

"So gradually, as we started doing some running sessions, the first session was extremely tough. I was a bit perplexed then.

"Second session, I was progressing. I did some trial yo-yo tests, and gradually, after some time, I played a match, and then, I was gainyo-yo test, I surprised myself as well." ing that momentum. Then, in the

Iyer will be looking to bounce back in style during the upcoming Asia Cup, keeping in mind the ICC World Cup, to be played in India in October-November.

However, he is not thinking too far ahead and prefers staying in the

"For me, it is important right now to be in the present and do my routines right. I don't want to think what is going to happen beyond and what has happened in the past.

"I am ticking all the boxes day by day. In terms of preparation, I had a fantastic two days of practice with the boys, and also, it was competitive. So happy to be embracing every moment," concluded Iyer. India's Asia Cup contingent is

undergoing a week-long conditioning camp in Bengaluru from August 23-29 and will open their campaign on September 2 against Pakistan.

Janat returns after six years for Afghanistan



Pak whitewash Afghanistan 3-0

 $P^{akistan\;rose\;to\;the\;top\;of\;the\;oneday\;international\;rankings\;with\;a}$ 59-run win against Afghanistan in the third and final match in Colombo on Saturday, claiming a 3-0 series whitewash.

Pakistan were helped to 268-8 in 50 overs by a solid 79-ball 67 from Mohammad Rizwan and an 86-ball innings of 60 from skipper Babar

They then dismissed their opponents for 209 in 48.4 overs with number nine Mujeeb Ur Rahman topscoring for Afghanistan with a 37ball 64 for his maiden half century.

Rahman smashed five sixes and as many boundaries, racing to a new Afghan record for the fastest ODI fifty off just 26 balls before he stepped on to his stump and was out hit wicket off Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Rashid Khan was the previous record holder for Afghanistan with a 27-ball fifty against Ireland in Abu Dhabi last year.

Rahman and Shahidullah Kamal (37 off 65 balls) shared a valiant stand of 57 for the eighth wicket to give some respectability to the total after their team were reeling at 97-7. Rahman also added 45 for the ninth wicket with Fareed Ahmad Malik who scored 17. Pakistan won the first match by

142 runs and by one wicket in the second -- both games played in

Pakistan had been at number two in the International Cricket Council ODI rankings before the series but the 3-0 triumph lifted them above Australia.

Pakistan were briefly number one earlier this year.

Pakistan medium pacer Faheem Ashraf removed Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who made a century in the last game, for five and Ibrahim Zadran for an 11-ball duck to finish Pakistan rested frontline bowlers

Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah in four changes but they were still good enough with the ball as spinners Shadab Khan (3-42) and Mohammad Nawaz (2-45) shared five wickets. "Yes, we are number one," said

Azam, who is also the number one batsman in the ODI rankings.

"All credit to boys. We have

months and it has taken us to this point, so I am really happy."

A fohanistan skipper worked hard for the last of couple of Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi admitted his

team was not up to the mark.
"We didn't apply ourselves," said

Shahidi. "We are disappointed with the performance but there is a lot of learning.' It was Rizwan and Azam who

anchored Pakistan's innings after they won the toss and batted. The two teams will now feature

in the six-nation Asia Cup starting in Multan from August 30.

AFGHANISTAN TEAM:

HashmatullahShahidi (captain),

Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk),

Ikram Alikhil (wk), Ibrahim

Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Rahmat

Shah, NajibullahZadran,

Mohammad Nabi, Karim Janat,

Gulbadin Naib, Rashid Khan,

Abdul Rahman, Sharafuddin

Ashraf, Mujeeb Ur Rehman,

Noor Ahmad, Mohd Saleem

Safi, Fazal Haq Farooqi.



Clean sweep over Afghans will inspire us, provide us momentum: Babar

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam believes the recent thumping 3-0 ODI series win over Afghanistan will "inspire" his side and provide much-needed momentum heading into the Asia Cup, starting Wednesday.

The Asia Cup is set to be hosted in a hybrid model by Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 30 till September 17.

Pakistan came up with a terrific performance against Afghanistan, clean sweeping the latter 3-0 in the just-concluded ODI series just before the continental showpiece.

On Saturday, Pakistan triumphed over Afghanistan by 59 runs in the third and final ODI at the R Premadasa Stadium

here.
"We are thrilled heading
"How we have into the Asia Cup. How we have won the (ODI) series against Afghanistan will be an inspira-

Afghanistan as most people would have thought. Everyone knows how terrific they are on spin-friendly conditions. "The momentum from this

series will give us confidence during the Asia Cup. We hope to produce good cricket for our fans," he added. The series sweep has

allowed Pakistan to leapfrog Australia and reach the summit of the ICC ODI team rankings. Azam credited the achievement to team effort. "When you attain the No. 1

spot, you get a lot of satisfaction. It is all due to the efforts of the entire squad along with the support staff," he said. "We had been at the top of the ODI rankings earlier. But, we

came back down to No. 2 after

losing a fixture," he signed off.

tion for us in the tournament," Azam was quoted as saying by

 $F_{\rm women's\ cricket\ team}^{\rm ormer\ captain\ of\ Indian}$ Mithali Raj on Sunday said 'Men in Blue' have a big oppor-"It was never easy against tunity to lift the ICC World Cup in home conditions later this The global showpiece event

PTI SRINAGAR

PTI KABUL

will be played in India across October and November, and the hosts are aiming to bag another World Cup after winning it in 1983 and 2011. "As an Indian cricket fan, I

would want India to play in the final. It is a big opportunity. We are the host nation and the conditions are in our favour. "If they (team) do well, we

will get another opportunity to lift the World Cup," Mithali, who was here to witness the Women's Premier League final, told

Mithali, the highest runscorer in WODIs with 7805 runs, said women's cricket has a lot of potential to grow in the



valley. "For past two to three years, the BCCI has been making lot of efforts to promote the women's game and women play-

"The WIPL this year has also gone well and it is good for the sports profile. We hope that many players will come up from the state in the next two to three years," she said.

Sinha rated the tournament a very good initiative. I watched the match. I

have said time and again that there is no dearth of talent (in the state). The Jammu and Kashmir Administration is making efforts to help girls progress in every field. "I am sure that the next

phase of development in Jammu Lieutenant Governor of and Kashmir will be led by

against Pakistan, has been left out of the Asia Cup squad. 'Big opportunity for India to India announce U-16 SAFF sour **U-16 SAFF squad**

for championship

seam-bowling all-rounder, has

been ruled out of the competi-

recently-concluded Pakistan

series due to a knee injury, has

been included in the team and

is expected to recover from the

injury prior to the start of the

event. Shahidullah Kamal, who

had replaced him in the series

Zadran, who missed the

tion due to a side strain.

AFP NEW YORK

The AIFF on Sunday ■ announced India's U-16 squad comprising 23 members for the upcoming SAFF Championship to be played next month.

India's men's U-16 head coach Ishfaq Ahmed has named Rohit, Aheibam Suraj Singh and Arush Hari as goalkeepers for the tournament to be held in Thimpu from September 1-10.

Ngariyambam Abhijit, Mohammed Kaif, Yaipharemba Chingakham, Usham Thoungamba, Vumlenlal Hangshing, Chingtham Renin Singh and Karish Soram will be India's defenders.

In the midfield, Newton Singh, Kangujam Yoihenba Meitei, Levis Zangminlun, Bobby Singh, Abdul Salha, Ngamgouhou Mate, Vishal Yadav, Manbhakupar Malngiang and Md Arbash have been

India have been clubbed alongside Nepal and Bangladesh

Indian women beat Thailand 5-4 in Asian Hockey 5s WC Qualifier

India continued their unbeat-Len run in the Women's Asian Hockey 5s World Cup Qualifier after registering a hard-fought 5-4 win over Thailand in their third match of the tournament here on Sunday.

For India, skipper Navjot

The 25-year-old Janat, who

has been a part of the national

T20I team, made his ODI debut

in February 2017 against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports.

But since then, Janat has not

played a single ODI, although he

has represented Afghanistan in

scored 1664 runs at an economy

rate of 5.47 with a five-wicket

In 42 List A match, Janat has

one Test and 49 T20Is.

haul to his name.

Kaur (1st minute), Monika Dipi Toppo (1st, 7th), Mahima Choudhary (20th) and Ajmina Kujur (30th) were on target. Thailand's goals were scored

by Piresram Anongnat (3rd), Aunjai Natthakarn (10th, 14th) and Suwapat Konthong (19th).

On Sunday, India got off the blocks at a rampaging pace, putting pressure on the the Thailand defenders from the

Navjot opened the scoring in the first minute of the game through a field goal.

India doubled their lead in no time when Monika found the back of the net from a field effort. Thailand pulled one back through captain Anongnat two

Monika soon scored her second goal of the day to make

the score-line 3-1 in favour of

With five minutes remaining in the first half, Natthakarn's strike got Thailand back in the With a minute remaining in

the first half, Natthakarn found the back of the net again for Thailand to level the scores. India came out attacking in the second half and held most of

the ball possession. India continued to make dangerous runs inside Thailand's striking circle, particularly from the left flank.

However, it was Thailand who took the lead through

Konthong four minutes after the change of ends. India immediately equalised

through in-form Mahima as she flawlessly converted a challenge goal. With five minutes left on the

clock, India started showcasing urgency to get back their lead. Monika created an opportunity from the left flank, but the ball just went wide.

With just a minute left in the game, Kujur scored the winner

Asia Cup will test bowlers' readiness for 50-overs cricket'

PTI DUBAI

 $P_{\text{Akram on Sunday said the}}^{\text{akistan bowling great Wasim}}$ upcoming Asia Cup will test readiness of subcontinental bowlers for 50-overs cricket ahead of the ODI World Cup, but refused to pick any favourites for the tournament.

The Asia Cup begins on Wednesday with Pakistan taking on Nepal in the tournament-opener in Multan, but all eyes are fixed on the mega clash between archrivals India and Pakistan in Kandy

"Be it India or Pakistan or Sri Lanka, we will find out if the fitness and game plans

bowlers are able to deliver 10 overs or not, now-a-days they are all used to bowling four-overs (per game)," Akram told reporters here during a tournament sponsor's event. The competition will revert to

50-overs format in this edition after being organised in T20 version last year, and Akram welcomed the change. "This is a good idea by ACC to have a 50-over Asia Cup because right after it we have the World

Cup," he said. Akram said all teams will be challenged on the parameters of



"It is a long tournament -- not said. a one-off that you can enter the semifinals after winning one game," he said. "You have to win games to get

on top. You have to take it game by game. Also, it is a 50-over competition (this time) not T20, which means different mindset and fitness will be required."

The legendary pacer refused to predict any favourites but said the road will be tough for all sides.

"Last time we had predicted an India versus Pakistan final but Sri Lanka won the competition. All three teams are dangerous -- anyone can win on their day," Akram "There are other teams com-

peting too. Last time Sri Lanka won the title, India even failed to make it to the final. "India versus Pakistan is very

important, we know about so much support (teams get), so many eyeballs, so many people (following). But other teams are also here to play so you cannot minus Sri Lanka or Bangladesh," he

Akram said India have a balanced squad for the Asia Cup.

"I think they are trying different things, new players especially in the T20 format, also a new capBut it will not be easy for India or any team," he said.
Asked if Pakistan could have

tain. They have a balanced squad.

taken a strong stand against India for not travelling to the neighbouring nation for the Asia Cup, Akram played it safe. The Pakistan government has

given permission that Pakistan (team) can travel to India," he said.

"I have always maintained and said that politics and sports should be apart from each other. People to people contact is very important and the average Indian and Pakistani, they do respect each other. I hope eventually sanity prevails.' The second highest ODI wick-

et taker with 502 dismissals, Akram termed the Asia Cup as the "second biggest tournament" in the world. "It is the second biggest tournament in the calendar of the cricketing world. (The) World Cups and then the Asia Cup, two giants, clash of the titang. India and Political Company of the cricketing and political Company of the c titans, India and Pakistan then Sri Lanka, the previous Asia Cup champions last year in Dubai what a success that was," he said. "All six countries are looking

forward to seeing their players. This is a prep tournament before the big one, the World Cup."