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DON'T DISTURB THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

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BELARUS LEADER CLAIMS WAGNER CHIEF IN RUSSIA

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GST COUNCIL TO TIGHTEN REGISTRATION RULES

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JULY 7, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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GOAL IS TO WIN WORLD CUP: BABAR
12 SPORT

CAPSULE

INDIAN NURSING STUDENT BURIED ALIVE IN AUS

Melbourne: In a horrific act of vengeance, a 21-year-old Indian nursing student in Australia was abducted by her jilted ex-boyfriend from India, driven nearly 650 km and buried alive in South Australia state's remote Flinders Ranges, a court has heard. Jasmeen Kaur from Adelaide City was killed by Tarikjot Singh in March 2021, a month after reporting him to the police for stalking. **P8**

DELHI'S AURANGZEB LANE RENAMED AFTER KALAM

New Delhi: The Aurangzeb Lane in the Lutyens' Delhi has been renamed as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Lane. The rechristened lane connects the Abdul Kalam Road with Prithvi Raj Road in central Delhi. The NDMC workers unveiled a signboard bearing the name of India's 11th president here on Thursday.

ADMK MP's 2019 LS poll win declared null and void

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Thursday declared as "null and void", the 2019 election of expelled AIADMK member O P Ravindhranath from Tamil Nadu's Theni parliamentary constituency while allowing an election petition filed against him. Ravindhranath is the son of deposed AIADMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Panneerselvam. Justice SS Sundar gave the ruling on a petition filed by a one P Milany from Theni constituency. According to advocate V Arun, counsel for Milany, the petitioner contended that Ravindhranath while filing his nomination for the election had suppressed various materials.

82 or 92, I'm NCP boss: Sharad on Ajit age jibe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the midst of the NCP's internal turmoil, veteran Sharad Pawar on Thursday asserted he was the president of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and will continue to work effectively, regardless of whether he was 82 or 92 years old. Pawar presided over a meeting of the NCP Working Committee, which endorsed his decision to expel Praful Patel, Ajit Pawar, Sunil Tatkare, and eight other MLAs who joined the NDA ranks.

Senior NCP leader PC Chacko announced that the eight-point resolution passed by the Working Committee had been endorsed by 27 State units of the party.

In a display of solidarity, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited Pawar at his residence and expressed unwavering support to the NCP during this challenging period.

"This meeting marks the first encounter between a national leader and Pawar since the NCP rebellion on Sunday. Prominent Opposition leaders such as Sonia Gandhi, MK Stalin, Mamata Banerjee, and others have reached out to Pawar, expressing their solidarity," said a statement issued on behalf of Rahul Gandhi.

Addressing questions about age-based criticism from Ajit Pawar, Sharad Pawar responded, "There is no question of stopping. Regardless of whether I am 82 or 92, I will work more effectively."

He emphatically affirmed his position as the president of the NCP and said the truth regarding Ajit's claim of having the majority would come to light in due course.

During the media briefing, Chacko highlighted that the meeting resulted in the passage



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar addresses the media

Ranjan Dimri

of eight resolutions. Chacko reiterated the party's unwavering support for Pawar, stating, "The organisation stands united behind Sharad Pawar. The NCP Working Committee has approved the decision to expel Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare, and nine others who aligned themselves with the NDA. We do not take the claims of anyone else being the national president seriously. Our organisation remains intact, and our loyalty lies with Sharad Pawar."

Pawar expressed concern over the Central Government's alleged use of investigative agencies such as the ED and CBI to weaken the Opposition. However, he remained optimistic, stating, "Approximately 11 months remain for this government's tenure. We will face elections, and the situation will change. Our top priority will then be to implement the necessary changes."

When questioned about the Election Commission's role in the ongoing dispute over the NCP's leadership and party symbol, Pawar conveyed his confidence in the institution. "We have complete faith in the Election Commission. We will approach them with our concerns, as we are clear about the legal position. If any adverse circumstances arise, we will seek recourse through the appropriate authorities. However, I do not anticipate the situation escalating to that extent," Pawar said.

After the meeting, Pawar expressed his appreciation for the unwavering resolve and high morale displayed by his

colleagues, as they work towards rebuilding the party with renewed determination.

Dismissing notions that the NCP's strength has diminished following the rebellion, Sharad firmly stated, "Diminished? What do you mean by that? Party members leaving is not uncommon in other political parties. We will rebuild our party."

Responding to questions raised by the Ajit faction regarding the legality of the Working Committee meeting, Sharad said, "This meeting has been conducted in accordance with the Constitution. Any claims made to the contrary hold no truth or significance."

Sharad's NCP meet has no legal sanctity, claims Ajit's faction

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Ajit Pawar-led faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Thursday claimed that the NCP working committee meeting called by Sharad Pawar in Delhi on Thursday has no legal validity.

"It is learnt from various media reports that Sharad Pawar has called a meeting of the national executive/national working committee/national office bearers/State party presidents of the NCP today in New Delhi," a statement on behalf of Ajit Pawar said.

"Ajit Pawar has been elected as the national president of NCP on June 30 with the overwhelming support of the majority of elected representatives of NCP as well as the members working on different organisational post," it said.

The statement said Ajit Pawar has filed a petition before the Election Commission stating he represents the real NCP and there-

fore, the name of the party along with the symbol be granted to him.

"The dispute on the question of who represents the real NCP is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the ECI and therefore no person within the party has any authority to call for any meeting of the national executive/national working committee/ national office bearers/ State party presidents till such time the dispute is finally decided by the ECI," it said.

"Therefore, the meeting of the national executive/national working committee/national office bearers/State party presidents of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) today has no legal sanctity whatsoever," it said.

4 get life behind bars for Lajpat terror blast

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday handed down life sentences without remission to four convicts involved in the 1996 Lajpat Nagar bomb blast case, which resulted in the death of 13 people and left 38 injured. The court deemed their actions as part of an "international conspiracy" to "destabilise" India. While acknowledging the severity of the offense, the court decided against awarding the death penalty due to the substantial delay in the case.

The bench, comprising Justices BR Gavai, Vikram Nath, and Sanjay Karol, emphasised the mitigating circumstances of the 27-year delay in the case, including a 14-year delay in the trial court.

The court said, "The incident took place on May 21, 1996, approximately 27 years ago, and the trial court awarded the sentence of death on April 22, 2010, more than 13 years ago. These are all mitigating circumstances for not awarding the sentence of death, even though the offense falls within the category of rarest of rare cases."

"In view of the severity of the offence resulting in deaths



of innocent persons and the role played by each accused person, all these accused persons are sentenced to imprisonment for life, without remission, extending to natural life. Accused, if on bail, are directed to immediately surrender before the Court concerned and their bail bonds stand cancelled."

The convicts — Mohd Naushad, Mirza Nissar Hussain alias Naza, Mohd Ali Bhatt alias Killey, and Javed Ahmed Khan — were sentenced to imprisonment for life without remission, extending to natural life. The court expressed strong criticism of the delay in the trial, stating that it compromised "national interest." It emphasised the need for expe-

ditious trials, particularly in cases concerning national security and the well-being of the common man.

The court expressed disappointment that the prominent market attack had not received the required degree of promptitude and attention, suggesting the involvement of "influential persons" as only a few accused were put on trial.

"The record reveals it is only on the prodding on the part of the judiciary that the trial could be completed after more than a decade. The delay, be it for whatever reason, attributable to the judge in-charge or the prosecution, has certainly compromised national interest," it said.

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Chandrayaan-3 mission launch set for July 14



PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation announced on Thursday that the Chandrayaan-3 mission is scheduled to be launched at 2.35 pm on July 14, with the lander expected to soft-land on the surface of the Moon on August 23 or 24.

Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

The Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft, which will be launched by LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-III) (earlier referred as GSLV Mk III), is a composite of three modules — propulsion, lander, and rover (which is housed inside the lander). "LVM3-M4/Chandrayaan-3 Mission.

Congress brokers Gehlot-Pilot peace



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

After a high-level meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday, the Congress expressed confidence in resolving the protracted political battle between its top leaders in Rajasthan, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, and his former deputy Sachin Pilot.

Besides Kharge, in attendance at the meeting held at the party headquarters were former party chief Rahul Gandhi, AICC in-charge of Rajasthan Sukhjinder Randhawa, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee President Govind Singh Dotasra, Sachin Pilot, and other senior leaders from Rajasthan. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who is currently recovering from toe fractures, participated in the meeting via video conferencing.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal briefed the media,

stating that all leaders in Rajasthan agreed that the Congress could secure victory in the upcoming Assembly polls if complete unity is maintained. However, the party refrained from naming a Chief Ministerial candidate amid the ongoing tussle between Gehlot and Pilot.

"We never announce the Chief Ministerial candidate, but we will fight the election together and unitedly," Venugopal responded when asked about the party's leadership for the upcoming polls. He also highlighted the positive impact of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra in the State, citing successful outcomes in Karnataka as evidence.

Recalling the Congress' triumph in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh during the 2018 polls, Venugopal expressed confidence that the positive atmosphere created by the party

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Shinde's MLAs in touch, says Uddhav Sena MP; Min denies

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Vinayak Sraut asserted on Thursday that some MLAs belonging to the rival faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde have been communicating with his party following the inclusion of NCP leader Ajit Pawar in the State Government.

Raut informed reporters that the MLAs from the Shinde faction have initiated a form of "revolt" subsequent to the appointment of dissident NCP MLAs as ministers.

However, Sena Minister Uday Samant countered Raut's claim by stating that six out of the 13 MLAs from the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction were in contact with him.

Some MLAs from the



Shinde-led Sena have been sending messages that they want to "seek forgiveness from 'Matoshree' (Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray's residence)," Vinayak Raut said.

Many MLAs have also said that if "Matoshree" approaches them, they will reply positively, he said. "Those who wanted to become ministers but could not, or those who can lose the ministerial berth in the next cabinet expansion are in touch with us," Raut claimed, without disclosing any names. "The day Ajit Pawar joined

the government, MLAs from the Shinde group began revolting. Many (Shinde bloc) MLAs from western Maharashtra, north Maharashtra and Marathwada are sending messages that they want to seek forgiveness from 'Matoshree' and go (back) there," he said.

Shiv Sena deputy leader and State Industries Minister Uday Samant dismissed these claims and said that six of the 13 MLAs from the Uddhav Thackeray faction were, in fact, in touch with him. "Three-four MLAs spoke to me yesterday," he told reporters.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut said elsewhere that the government had majority and still a big group from the Nationalist Congress Party joined it.

India slams Khalistani posters as 'unacceptable'; Canada says it takes terror 'extremely seriously'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/TORONTO

Taking exception to posters inciting violence against Indian diplomats in Canada and a few other countries, India on Thursday said such activities are not at all acceptable. Moreover, space must not be given to extremist and terrorist elements in the name of freedom of expression, New Delhi asserted.

This strong message came on a day when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tried to dispel the notion that his country was soft on the alleged Khalistan supporters due to vote bank and said Canada has taken threats of violence



"extremely seriously". The Canadian Prime Minister's assurance came a day after India issued demarche to the former's envoy to New Delhi expressing concern over threat to Indian diplomats and a planned rally to the Indian embassy there on July 8.

Making India's stand clear, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said space must not be given to extremist and ter-

rorist elements in the name of freedom of expression.

At a media briefing in New Delhi, he also asserted that the safety of Indian diplomats and the country's missions is of utmost importance for the Government.

Facing India's questions on pro-Khalistan gatherings, Trudeau said his country has always taken threats of violence "extremely seriously".

During a media interaction, the Canadian Prime Minister was asked about a parade float depicting former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination at a rally in Brampton and "Kill India" posters put up by Khalistan supporters.

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Attack on IHC totally unacceptable: Cleverly



New Delhi: Amidst reports of alleged Khalistan supporters issuing threats to Indian diplomats in the United Kingdom, British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has said any direct attacks on the Indian High Commission in London was "totally unacceptable."

Cleverly expressed the United Kingdom's commitment to prioritize the security of the High Commission's personnel.

P4

Woman shot dead outside school as violence continues in Manipur

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Violence continues to ravage Manipur as unidentified gunmen shot dead a woman outside a school in the Imphal West district.

The killing took place at Kwakeithel Mayai Koibi under Lamphel police station a day after Classes 1 to 8 began in the State after two months because of the violence.

Officials said she had gone near the school on some work but was not connected with any educational institute.

Intermittent gunfire was heard in a village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district early Thursday, hours after security



forces thwarted clashes when men armed with automatic weapons began to attack villagers, sources said.

The incident took place around 3.40 pm on Wednesday near Phaileng village, they said.

Armed groups from nearby areas gathered in the area, escalating tensions, the sources said.

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Opp walks out of House panel meet over 'no' Manipur talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition members staged a walkout during the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs meeting on Thursday after their request to discuss the situation in Manipur was rejected by the committee chairman.

The meeting primarily focused on prison reforms in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.

However, TMC's Derek O'Brien, Congress' Digvijaya Singh, and Pradip Bhattacharya

jointly submitted a letter to panel chairman Brijlal, emphasising that as committee members, they cannot ignore the critical situation in Manipur.

They emphasised their moral and constitutional responsibility to urgently and sincerely address the matter.

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CM Shinde rubbishes resignation buzz, says Govt stronger than ever

■ TN RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

Rubbishing the speculation in the media about his resignation from his post, Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde said here on Thursday that his government was getting stronger by the day, it had more than 200 MLAs with it after the entry of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction and that it enjoyed the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Amid political speculation that his position had weakened after the NCP breakaway leader Ajit Pawar's statement that his party intended to contest 90 seats in the State Assembly polls, Shinde said: "Right from the day I was sworn into the office, people have been saying that our government will collapse soon and will longer be the chief minister. The fact remains that our government is getting stronger by the day. The num-

ber of MLAs belonging to the three parties in our government has crossed 200 MLAs' mark."

"We enjoy the full support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Amitbhai takes constant interest in our government. Whenever we approach a him with problem or demand, he immediately addresses it. The double-engine government is working effectively. That's why the Opposition cannot stomach our success."

Shinde's assertion comes in the backdrop of news reports that several of the MLAs from the Shiv Sena led by him were not happy with the Ajit Pawar-led NCP joining the government. So much so that a few of the Shiv Sena MLAs have gone on record expressing their displeasure over Ajit Pawar and eight senior NCP MLAs being sworn in as ministers in the state government.

In his effort to keep his flock together, Shinde held a



meeting of his party's MLAs and MPs at his official residence 'Varsha' on Wednesday evening, at which he sought smoothen the ruffled feathers of the party MLAs many of whom are aspiring for ministerial berths in his government. He also indirectly advised against going back to the parent Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray.

Shinde and others present at the meeting took stock of the situation arising from the inclusion of the Ajit Pawar-led

NCP in his government and the measures to be taken to strengthen the party grassroots level ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha and State Assembly polls.

The chief minister is under tremendous pressure from his party MLAs for induction of some of them in the Shinde-Fadnavis government.

The clamour by the Shiv Sena MLAs for induction in the State Cabinet should be seen in the light of the fact that after the swearing-in of Ajit

Pawar and eight other NCP MLAs, the strength of the Shinde-Fadnavis cabinet has gone up to 29 in the 42-member Cabinet. Currently, as many as 14 ministerial berths are vacant.

Given that there is a demand from the ruling BJP MLAs for inclusion in his Cabinet, Shinde will have to tread cautiously. While he has kept his MLAs in good humour by giving ministerial and other posts, Shinde will have to accommodate the BJP in a big way.

Meanwhile, State Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar is preparing himself to deliver his ruling on Sena (UBT)'s plea for disqualification of 16 Sena MLAs who had rebelled against the leadership of Sena president Uddhav Thackeray in June last year. If the Speaker's ruling goes against his faction, Shinde will have to step down from the chief minister's post — a prospect that has been haunting him for some time now.

Raj: Haven't made proposal to Uddhav Sena for election tie-up

■ TN RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

Amid talks about the possibility of his party forging an alliance with the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) says that his party has not submitted any proposal to the Sena (UBT) for a tie-up for the forthcoming municipal corporation, Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections.

Alluding to reports in a section of the media that the MNS had submitted proposals seeking a tie-up to Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on two occasions in the recent past, MNS president Raj Thackeray dismissed the speculation and said: "We have not given any proposal to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena."



The ongoing speculation in the state political circles should be seen in the light of the fact that at a party meeting held last week, some of his party men urged Raj to initiate talks with his elder cousin brother Uddhav for an electoral alliance with the Sena (UBT). However, sources said that Raj did not express any opinion on the issue.

Later on a banner was seen in front of the Shiv Sena Bhavan at Dadar in north-

central Mumbai urging Uddhav and Raj to come together, as such a unity would benefit both the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the MNS. Later on similar hoardings were put up in the Municipal Corporation poll-bound cities like Thane, Pune, Nagpur and Nashik.

One more incident that has added fuel to the ongoing speculation about the possible tie-up between the Shiv Sena and MNS is that Abhijeet Panse, a confidant of the MNS chief, had gone to meet Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut at the office of Sena mouth-piece "Saamana" where the latter is an executive editor. Later, while heading towards Uddhav Thackeray's Bandra residence "Matoshtri", Raut travelled with Panse and dropped the latter enroute.

Maha Congress accuses PM of double standards

■ TN RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of practising "double standards" on the issue of corruption, the Maharashtra Congress said here on Thursday that while on one hand Modi had targeted the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) for its alleged involvement in the 70,000 crore corruption scam, on the other the ruling BJP had "honourably" inducted the NCP led by the breakaway group leader scam-tainted Ajit Pawar into its government in the state.

Talking to media persons after the meeting with party's senior leaders including former chief ministers Sushilkumar Shinde, Prithviraj Chavan and Ashok Chavan, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole charged that Modi did not practise what he preached on matters relating to corruption.

"Modi publicly accused NCP leaders of being involved in a Rs 70,000 crore scam. Days later, his party honourably inducts Ajit Pawar and other NCP men as ministers in its government in Maharashtra. That only goes to prove that the Modi government is protecting corrupt leaders. Modi practises double standards. His assertions on corruption are hollow," Patole said.

"Corruption is in BJP's



blood. In Karnataka where its government was called 40 per cent commission sarkara, Prime Minister Modi campaigned for the corrupt leaders in the recent Assembly elections where the BJP lost badly. The BJP is desperately trying to increase its strength by inducting corrupt people from other parties. The means adopted by the BJP to acquire power is detrimental to the interests of democracy in the country," Patole said.

Apart from Patole, Shinde, Prithviraj and Ashok Chavan. The other leaders who attended the crucial Congress Core Committee meeting were Congress Legislature Party Leader Balasaheb Thorat, party leaders Manikrao Thakre, Arif Naseem Khan, Basavaraj Patil, Praniti Shinde and Satej Patil.

"Whenever the BJP senses electoral defeat, it starts playing dirty politics by splitting other parties, scaring the Opposition leaders with the fear of unleashing central agencies like ED, CBI, ITD and blatantly crushing democracy in the country," Patole said.

Bengal Gov slams SEC as 3 die in 24 hrs ahead of polls

■ SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Political bloodbath continued abated in Bengal with three persons falling prey to the ongoing electoral violence in last 24 hours taking the toll of poll-related deaths to 17 in the past four weeks and leading Governor CV Ananda Bose to reprimand newly appointed State Election Commissioner — allegedly a Mamata Banerjee confidant — Rajjiva Sinha calling him an utter failure.

The panchayat elections will be held on July 8 with the counting likely to take place on July 11.

One Sk Kamal was killed allegedly while making bombs at Maheshpur village of Beldanga block in volatile Murshidabad district, sources said his body was found amid scattered bombs one of which reportedly went off killing him on the spot. While the ruling Trinamool Congress said he was a Congress goon Pradesh Congress president and local MP Adhir Chowdhury said "everyone knows which party deals in bombs."

The second incident occurred at Muhammad Bazar in Birbhum district where the body of a BJP booth vice president Dilip Mahera was found in mysterious circumstances. A spent bullet was found nearby him, villagers claimed adding he could have been murdered by the TMC men.

The victim's wife is contesting as an Independent candidate from the area and the



TMC had asked her to withdraw from electoral fray.

In the third incident a local Congress leader Alfaz from Kulpi in South 24 Parganas succumbed to his injuries on Thursday morning. He was injured during a Congress-TMC clash on Monday and was undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Meanwhile, amid total confusion regarding deployment of central forces as directed by both Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court the Bengal Governor slammed the State Election Commissioner for failing to stop the "political holi with blood."

Reminding Sinha of his Raj Dharma, Bose said that he had "appointed him but he disappointed the people," of Bengal adding "you (Sinha) have failed in my opinion to discharge your duty."

Referring to the ongoing political deaths and clashes the Governor said "I have seen tears in the eyes of mothers ... this political holi with blood must stop," before asking, "who is the killer ... will the State Election Commissioner, the SEC raise his hands..."

Didi has knee surgery

■ PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In a co-incidence of sorts Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who had injured her ankle ahead of 2021 Assembly elections and had campaigned the entire election on a wheel chair on Thursday had her knee operated.

Banerjee who earlier claimed to have sustained some injury while alighting from her helicopter that made an emergency landing at an airbase off Jalpaiguri in North Bengal a fortnight ago after had some fluid accumulated in the left knee area.

"There was swelling in her left knee-joint due to excess fluid collection in or around that area," one of the doctors said, adding she was released after the operation and was advised rest.

Court issues notice to present case documents against Tytler in '84 case



■ STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Thursday issued a fresh notice to the person in-charge of the record room of a trial court to produce the documents of a case against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler related to alleged Pul Bangash killings during 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Vidhi Gupta Anand issued the notice to the record room in-charge at a Karkardooma court, where the case was earlier being heard, directing him/her to produce the case record by Friday, when the court will hear the matter.

"Fresh notice has been issued to in-charge of record room of Karkardooma court. Record is to be produced by 11 am on Friday," the court directed, noting that the record has been located.

During the proceedings, the CBI also informed the court that a reminder has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) to expedite

the process of forensic examination of voice sample of Tytler. The court had on June 30 summoned the records of the trial court connected with the case. The CBI had on May 20 filed a charge sheet against Tytler in the case.

Three people were killed and a gurdwara was torched in the Pul Bangash area on November 1, 1984, a day after then prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated.

In its charge sheet filed before a special court, the CBI said Tytler "incited, instigated and provoked the mob assembled at Pul Bangash Gurdwara Azad Market" on November 1, 1984 that resulted in burning down of the gurdwara and killing of three Sikhs -- Thakur Singh, Badal Singh and Guru Charan Singh.

The agency has invoked charges under sections 147 (rioting), 109 (abetment) read with 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), among others, against Tytler, the CBI said.

Woman...

From Page 1
About 1,000-1,500 women blocked roads to prevent additional forces from reaching the area, they said. However, the situation was brought under control because of the deployment of Assam Rifles personnel in the area.

In Churachandpur, about 100 km away, a large number of Kukis in a separate development staged a protest on Wednesday. The rally started at the Public Ground and continued till the Tuibong Peace Ground.

Nearly 4,000 people participated in the rally, most in "combat" dress with camouflage on their faces, sources said.

No untoward incident was reported during the rally, which went on till 7 pm.

Meanwhile, following the killing of the woman in Imphal West district, a tribal organization demanded imposition of President's rule in the north-eastern State.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) identified the woman as Donngaihching, a mentally ill person who lived on alms provided by locals.

"We again urge the Central Government to relieve the incapable State Government and impose President's rule immediately," the ITLF said in a statement.

More than 100 people have lost their lives and over 3,000 injured since ethnic violence broke out in the State on May 3, when a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organized in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KARAN PAL SINGH father of Ms. STUTI SINGH R/O Flat No 1584, 1st Avenue Gaur City-1, Sector-4, Greater Noida West, Chhipyana Khurd urf Tigr, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh 201009 want to change the name of my daughter Stuti Singh Mann mentioned in the school Transfer Certificate to STUTI SINGH, date of Birth 24/11/2008. I declare that STUTI SINGH alias STUTI SINGH MANN is one and the same person. I will be Known as STUTI SINGH for all future purposes.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Amit Aggarwal S/o Pradeep Aggarwal R/o E-79, Gali No-3, East Vinod Nagar, Delhi-110091 declare that Amit Aggarwal and Amit Kumar Aggarwal both are same and one person. my correct name is Amit Aggarwal.

PD(095)A

I, Md. Aftab Ahmad S/o. Md. Moquimuddin, R/o. C-144, Tayyab Lane, Shaheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Aftab Ahmad for all future purposes.

PD(096)A

India slams Khalistani...

From Page 1

Responding to allegations that his Government is soft on Khalistan supporters for electoral goals, Trudeau said, "They are wrong. Canada has always taken extremely seriously violence and threats of violence. We have always taken serious action against terrorism and we always will."

"We have an extremely diverse country and freedom of expression is something that we have but we will always make sure that we are pushing back against violence and extremism in all its forms," he added.

This comes days after New Delhi summoned the Canadian envoy and issued a demarche over the increasing activities by pro-Khalistani elements in Canada. Some groups of Khalistan supporters have planned protests outside Indian missions in Canada this Saturday.

Hitting out strongly at the Canadian Government, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar last week said Ottawa seems to be driven by "vote-bank politics" and this has also impacted the ties between the two countries.

"How Canada has dealt with the Khalistani issue is a longstanding issue for us, because very frankly, they

seem to be driven by vote bank politics. Their responses have been constrained by what they regard as vote bank compulsions," he said.

"We made it very clear that if there are activities which are permitted from Canada that impinge on our sovereignty, territorial integrity and our security, then we will have to respond," the Minister said, adding that this has impacted bilateral ties over the past few years.

Canada has assured India of the safety of diplomats in view of the rally planned by Khalistani supporters and posters threatening Indian officials.

Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly highlighted the country's adherence to the Vienna Conventions. "Canada takes its obligations under the Vienna Conventions regarding the safety of diplomats very seriously," she said in a statement.

"Canada remains in close contact with Indian officials in light of some of the promotional material circulating online regarding a protest planned for July 8, which are unacceptable," she said, adding that the actions of a few individuals "do not speak for an entire community or Canada."

Opp walks...

From Page 1

The Opposition MPs pointed out that they had previously written to Brijlal last month, requesting an urgent meeting of the committee to discuss the Manipur issue, but their demand was not accepted.

They expressed their disappointment with Brijlal's decision to exclude the topic from the agenda for any meeting in July and criticised the evasion of responsibility to discuss a matter of national importance. Consequently, they chose to walk out of the

meeting.

Sources indicate that the three MPs are unlikely to attend the two other committee meetings scheduled for this month. Before leaving, they also urged BJP MP Biplab Deb, who hails from the Northeast, to join them in the walkout.

Out of the 30-member panel, seven members, including the chairman, were present at the meeting. The ethnic violence in Manipur since May 3 has resulted in the loss of over 100 lives and left hundreds injured.

Congress brokers Gehlot-Pilot peace

From Page 1

The party announced the launch of its Assembly election campaign in the desert State from Friday, as Rajasthan gears up for elections later this year alongside Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram. The party affirmed its commitment to fighting together and reversing the trend of incumbent Governments being voted out of power in Rajasthan. The party's top leadership also

held deliberations on poll preparedness with leaders from the State.

The Congress will finalise its candidates for the elections by the first week of September, with the sole criterion for selection being their winnability. Congress leaders will commence a door-to-door campaign from Friday to connect with the people and highlight the schemes of the state government.

Over the past two weeks,

4 get life behind bars for Lajpat...

From Page 1

It said expeditious trial of such cases is the need of the hour, especially when it concerns national security and the common man.

"Regrettably, enough vigilance was not displayed by the investigating as well as the judicial authorities. A prominent market in the heart of the capital city is attacked and we may point out that it has not been dealt with the required degree of promptitude and attention," it said. The judgment extensively analysed the circumstantial evidence, facts related to the recovery and

arrests of the convicts, and their participation in a larger conspiracy planned by other accused persons who remained elusive and were declared proclaimed offenders.

"Having considered the circumstances alleged by the prosecution against the accused persons... it is clear that the prosecution has proved the guilt of the accused in the commission of the crime. The last question which arises before us is - whether all these accused persons were part of a conspiracy under Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC? We find this question to

be answered in the affirmative," the bench said.

It held that the blast was planned at the behest of other accused persons who remained elusive and were declared proclaimed offenders.

"It is evident that all these accused were known to each other and were participating with the common objective to carry out the blast in Delhi in furtherance of an international conspiracy to cause disruptive activities in India. All the proven circumstances taken together form a chain of events that implicates the accused persons," it said.

Commission (RPSC) to enhance transparency and accountability.

I am pleased that the AICC has taken note of these issues and outlined a plan for action."

The power struggle between Gehlot and Pilot has persisted since the Congress formed the Government in Rajasthan in 2018. Previous attempts by the Congress high command to reconcile the warring leaders have been unsuccessful.

Axing of private staffers will strangle Govt, says Kejriwal

I hope LG's move will be quashed by SC, says CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Taking a u-turn, Delhi Assembly Secretariat on Thursday issued an order on Thursday discontinuing the engagement of 116 fellows under the Delhi Assembly Research Centre (DARC) only to state later that the decision has been kept in abeyance till further directions, following the intervention of Speaker Ram Niwas Goel.

This comes hours after the Assembly secretariat issued an order directing all such appointees to clear all dues and submit no due certificate without fail. In a related development, the Delhi government's finance department has ordered all the Pay and Accounts Officers to ensure not to release salary of these persons by whatever name, where the approval of Lt. Governor, Delhi have, not been obtained till date.

"The order endorsement no F. 21 (2) 2020/LAS/DARC/1276-1288 dated 06.07.2023 regarding discontinuation of engagement of fellow/associate fellow and associate fellow



(media) is hereby kept in abeyance till further orders. This issued with prior approval of secretary (LA)," Deputy Secretary Sadanand Sah said in an order on Thursday.

Hours before this order, the Assembly Secretariat initially issued an order saying "the engagement of following fellows, associate fellows and associate fellows (media) under Delhi Assembly Research Centre in Delhi Legislative Assembly is hereby discontinued with immediate effect."

The move was likely to affect 45 fellows, nine associate fellows (media) and 62 associate fellows. Goel said his intervention led to the order being stayed as he was consulted on

the matter in the first place. "The official concerned was pressured to issue the order but I intervened following which it was kept in abeyance. I will write to the LG about this issue. The engagement of these fellows is not a Services matter. They were engaged following approval from the House and the proposal was sent to the finance department, which had also approved it," he added.

Earlier in the day, breaking his silence over the termination of 437 specialists, fellows, assistant fellows, and advisors among others hired by the Delhi government, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said stopping the engagement of

specialists and advisers will "completely strangle" the Delhi government and its services, and hoped the LG's move will be quashed by the Supreme Court. "This will completely strangle Delhi government and its services. I don't know what does LG achieve by doing all this? I hope the SC immediately quashes it," Kejriwal tweeted on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Controller of Accounts (Finance) LD Joshi in an order said all the Pay and Accounts Officers are directed to comply with the above instructions failing which action, as may deem fit, may be initiated against the concerned Pay and Accounts Officer for violation of the Constitutional Provisions on Reservation.

In a follow-up to the mass removal, the Services Department on Wednesday wrote to different departments and agencies of government to stop the engagement of persons as fellows and advisors without the approval of the LG.

The LG had recently terminated services of around 400 "specialists" appointed by the Kejriwal government.

GST collection in first quarter goes up by ₹8,028.91 cr, says FM Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Delhi's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection of the current fiscal year 2023-24 increased to Rs 8,028.91 crores in the first quarter as compared to the last year of Rs 6985.05 crore, an increase of 15 per cent.

According to figures shared by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Twitter, the first quarter collections of goods and services tax (GST) in the past five years almost doubled from Rs 4,419.71 crore in 2018-19 to Rs 8,028.91 crore in 2023-24. Lauding this achievement, Kejriwal said the growth meant his government will have more money to spend on building schools, hospitals and infrastructure.

"Governments often say they don't have money for making good schools and hospitals. But our government in Delhi has shown that honest governance leads to increased revenue. Delhi's first quarter GST collection has increased at an impressive 15 per cent from last year. This is how we will have money to build more schools, more hospitals, more infrastructure for the people of Delhi," he tweeted. Interestingly, earlier this week,

the Supreme Court has pulled up the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government after it claimed to have no money to pay for the construction of two Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridors, with the court referring to the ambitious venture as a "development project of considerable importance".

Sharing this information through a Press conference on Thursday, Finance Minister Atishi said with the record growth in GST collection, the Arvind Kejriwal government have proven that if the intentions are right, the governments will never face any shortage of funds.

She mentioned that Delhi is a state where GST collection has consistently increased. Looking at the figures of GST, in the first quarter when GST was introduced in 2018-19, the GST collection was Rs 4,419.71 crores. It increased to 4,668.23 crores in 2019-20. Due to the lockdown in the first quarter of 2020-21, businesses were closed, and the collection dropped to Rs 2,474.78 crores. However, as soon as the lockdown was lifted, the GST collection increased, and in the first quarter of 2021-22, it reached Rs 4,014.98 crores.

Claim misleading, says Sachdeva

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday dubbed the claim made by Delhi Finance Minister Atishi of increasing GST collection and giving new hospitals and schools to the national Capital as hilarious and misleading.

"Delhi Government has no role in raising the GST collection as its collection is monitored and ensured by the GST Council of India. From time to time, it is the GST Council of India which increases or decreases rates of tax to motivate manufacturers and traders, and checks the theft of tax," Sachdeva said in a statement.

Like all other States, the Delhi Government simply gets half of the GST collected by

the Council, Sachdeva said. "The crux of the matter is that since the AAP came to power

in Delhi many wholesale trader bodies have been contemplating shifting to NCR and its Delhi BJP office-bearers who have time and again persuaded them to stay in Delhi," the BJP leader said.

Atishi's claim of giving new hospitals and schools to Delhi is also misleading as none has been constructed in the last eight years.

"In fact, Delhi Government has failed in even adding new beds in existing hospitals. As far as schools are concerned, no new school has been added in Delhi since 2013 and it is on record that 5 schools have been shut down by mergers. The Kejriwal government has only renovated some existing school buildings or added rooms in existing schools, he added.



Rain causes traffic jams, waterlogging in Delhi-NCR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The incessant heavy rainfall over several hours on Thursday morning caused waterlogging and traffic congestion in several parts of Delhi, leading to the PWD's (Public Works Department) control room receiving a string of complaints from various parts of the national Capital.

Commuters from Delhi's adjoining areas like Noida and Ghaziabad spent hours in traffic as heavy rainfall led to severe waterlogging.

The Hindon Elevated Road connecting Ghaziabad to Delhi was submerged at junction point, while vehicular movement was also hit in Noida-Delhi roads.

Several people took to Twitter over the traffic snarls in Delhi and adjoining areas. According to the officials, the PWD's control room received 15 complaints of waterlogging. Among the areas from



where frequent complaints were received include Kaushik Enclave in Burari, the stretch from Wazirabad towards Timarpur and Mandoli Road.

On its official Twitter handle, the BJP's Delhi unit shared a video from Burari that purports to show children in school uniform wading through knee-deep water. In the caption accompanying the clip, the BJP asked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to pay attention to the waterlogging issue.

Delhi BJP accused the

AAP led MCD for failing to prevent waterlogging during rains. The BJP leaders alleged that water logging caused as the AAP in MCD has failed to clean the drains.

According to data shared by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, waterlogging was reported in nine locations, including areas of Jai Vihar in Baprola, Azad Market, Sadh Nagar in Palam, Shahpur Jat, Nimri Colony in Ashok Vihar, New Rajinder Nagar and Kanti Nagar East in Seelampur between 9 am and 1 pm.

'PWD has installed 128 pump houses to prevent waterlogging'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: In order to prevent waterlogging issues during the monsoon, Delhi Revenue Minister Atishi on Thursday released the "Flood Control Order 2023" for the Flood and Irrigation Control Department and the Public Works Department (PWD).

Announcing the flood control order 2023, Atishi said PWD has installed 128 pump houses which have over 700 pumps. As many as 11 pump houses are fully automatic and start operating automatically as the water level rises, using sensors, the Delhi Government said in a statement.

During the monsoon season, PWD will also deploy its mobile pump units if necessary. "The desilting work by the PWD is almost complete and will be repeated after the mon-

soon season. During the monsoon, PWD's central control room will monitor the serious waterlogging areas through 24-hour CCTV surveillance," it said. In addition, the PWD will establish control rooms at 10 other locations. People can register waterlogging-related complaints, for which PWD will issue a helpline number during the monsoon season.

The PWD has marked 165 areas with water logging problems, and preparations are underway to address their needs and tackle waterlogging issues. The Irrigation and Flood Control Department said there are a total of 57 drains with a combined length of approximately 382 km. "To clean these drains, 53 departmental machines have been deployed. Staff Reporter

3 killed after van collides with DTC bus in Loni

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three people died and eight were injured after a van collided with a DTC bus on the flyover near Loni Gol Chakkar in northeast Delhi's Jyoti Nagar on Thursday. Impact of the accident was such that both the vehicles were mangled and damaged, police said.

One of the deceased was identified as Savita (55) while two others — both male — are yet to be identified, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) Joy Tirkey said, "On Wednesday, at about 12.30 pm, a Maruti Eco van jumped the road divider and collided head-on with a DTC bus coming from the other side."

The DTC bus was going from Bhajanpura to Nandnagri, while the Eco van was going in the opposite direction. There



A car collides with a bus at flyover in Loni Gol Chakkar on Thursday
Ranjani Dimri Pioneer

were 11 persons travelling in the Eco van which was running as a taxi. "The injured were rushed to GTB hospital where three people were declared dead while eight others are being treated," he said.

According to police, the injured have been identified as — Nitesh (25), his two sisters aged 14 and 9, Nand Kishore Chowdhary (45), his wife Reena (42), his 14-year-old son, driver of the Eco van Moti Singh (35) and Manzoor Ansari (35).

Aurangzeb Lane renamed as APJ Kalam Lane

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aurangzeb Lane in the Lutyens' Delhi has been renamed as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Lane. The rechristened lane connects the Abdul Kalam Road with Prithvi Raj Road in central Delhi. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) workers unveiled a signboard bearing the name of India's 11th president here on Thursday.

According to an official, the NDMC approved the renaming of the lane in a meeting of its members in June, this year. The council changed the erstwhile Aurangzeb Road named after the 17th-century Mughal ruler to Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road in August 2015.

NDMC vice chairman Satish Upadhyay last week announced that the council approved the renaming.

IN BRIEF

DON'T CROWD COURTROOM: SISODIA'S AIDES TOLD

New Delhi: A city court on Thursday barred AAP activists and supporters of party leader Manish Sisodia from entering the gallery, the passage or the courtroom during his production in matters related to the alleged excise policy scam in which he has been arrested by the CBI and the ED. While allowing journalists to cover the proceedings, Special Judge M K Nagpal directed them to maintain a safe distance from Sisodia and to not interview him.

DDA ALLOTS 1,078 EWS FLATS

New Delhi: The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has allotted 1078 EWS flats to the eligible families of JJ Cluster, JailorwalaBagh, Ashok Vihar under In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation Project. Demand-cum-allotment letters have been issued on 27.06.2023. Under the directions of Lt Governor, a facilitation centre has been set up by DDA, which is adjacent to the JJ cluster to avoid inconvenience to the JJ dwellers.

MEGA HOUSING CAMP ON JULY 8-9

New Delhi: To provide affordable housing options to the citizens of Delhi and to ensure ease of participation for the general public in the First-Come-First-Serve (FCFS) Scheme Phase IV, the DDA has decided to organise mega camp on July 8 and 9, 2023, from 10 am to 6 pm at the Community Hall in Pocket 1C, Sector A1-A4, Narela.

AVOID VISITING REGIONAL OFFICES: CBSE TO STUDENTS

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has advised schools to avoid visiting its regional office in view of the traffic curbs imposed due to the ongoing 'Hanuman Katha' by Dhirendra Krishna Shastri in IP Extension. "In order to avoid any inconvenience due to an estimated gathering of over one lakh people, the schools are advised to avoid visiting office, Delhi (East), from July 5-8, if possible.

'Productivity of 93% commuters hit in traffic woes, waterlogging in G'gram'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

A survey conducted by LocalCircles found that up to 93 per cent commuters in Gurugram, 71 per cent in Delhi and 49 per cent in Noida feel they "end up losing working hours or productivity" due to waterlogging and traffic woes during the monsoon season.

Additionally, 96 per cent commuters in Gurugram, 88 per cent in Delhi and 66 per cent in Noida say they "end up spending much more time in traffic" due to waterlogging, according to the findings. Conducted via the LocalCircles platform, the survey claims to have had 3,186 responses from Delhi, 2,965 from Gurugram and 2,839 from Noida.

Residents of Gurugram experienced the worst waterlogging and related troubles

when compared to their counterparts in Delhi and Noida, the survey findings suggest.

Asked about the experience of the past couple of years vis-à-vis waterlogging during the monsoon in Gurugram, 86 per cent respondents said "Yes, quite badly" and 11 per cent said "Yes, somewhat".

In Delhi, 63 per cent respondents said "Yes, quite badly" while 34 per cent said "Yes, somewhat".

In Noida, 37 per cent said "Yes, quite badly" while 51 per cent said "Yes, somewhat", according to the findings. In Gurugram, 96 per cent respondents said they "end up spending much more time in traffic" followed by 88 per cent in Delhi and 66 per cent in Noida. In Gurugram, 93 per cent respondents said they "end up losing working hours or productivity"

followed by 71 per cent in Delhi and 49 per cent in Noida, according to the survey. The survey also tried to find if people faced increased wear and tear in their vehicles or were at a higher risk of accidents during the monsoon season due to waterlogging.

In Gurugram, 82 per cent respondents said they faced "vehicle wear and tear and related costs" while the figures for Delhi and Noida stood at 70 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively.

On "increased risk of accidents", 69 per cent respondents in Gurugram, 65 per cent in Delhi and 39 per cent in Noida believed the chances were higher than usual, according to the survey. At the all-India level, 58 per cent of those surveyed said their districts get badly waterlogged.

'Robo Kancha' aims to enhance students' skills

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said Class 10 and Class 11 students being taught to use technology to solve day-to-day problems now is a "good thing" and added that it is something that did not happen earlier. He was speaking after inaugurating the Delhi Robotics League and HE21 Exhibition at the Thyagaraj Stadium.

According to a government statement, the Delhi Robotics League is India's first statewide robotics competition, conceived to enhance skills and competence among school students. The theme of the 2023 edition is "Robo Kancha". "Kancha" is a tradi-



tional game, mostly played by children. The aim is to enable students to learn problem-solving by conceptualising game solutions, designing and building robots, testing, debugging and ultimately creating a

winning strategy. "A high-end competition like this has not been held anywhere in India before. Today, there are government as well as private schools that are participating in this competition. But the max-

imum number of students participating in it are from the School of Specialised Excellence. We can say that the level of education in the government schools of Delhi is much above that in other states," he said.

Praising the students for their innovations, he said they have tried to find solutions to real-world problems and called it the best aspect of such an initiative. To drive home his point, Kejriwal recalled how he could not fix his grandfather's ceiling fan despite studying at an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). "I went to IIT-Kharagpur to study mechanical engineering. After my second year of college, I had my vacation and went to my village. One day, my

grandfather called me and said his fan was not working and asked me to fix it. "I told him I didn't know how to fix the fan. He was surprised that I was a mechanical engineer in IIT-Kharagpur and could not even fix a fan.

That is when I realised the disconnect between what we study in college and the real-world problems," he said. The chief minister also expressed his happiness that high school students are now researching and trying to find solutions to real-world problems.

"I believe that this DRL (Delhi Robotics League) is a great initiative and will go a long way in finding solutions to problems that our country faces.

DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE

Attention Home Buyers!!!
Holding of Mega Camp at Narela for FCFS Housing Scheme of DDA

Date: July 8 and July 9, 2023
Time: 10 AM to 6 PM
Venue: Community Hall, Pocket 1C sector A1-A4 Narela

- DDA officials to facilitate on the spot registration in the FCFS scheme
- Bank/NBFC representatives present to help public for loan arrangement & related queries
- Public can view the site & flats. Location wise details of Nodal officers available at DDA's website http://eservices.dda.org.in/public/uploads/Contact_Us_List.pdf
- On the spot query redressal
- Transportation from Jahangirpuri Metro station to Mega Camp site made available by DDA

Other Facilities provided by DDA

- Officials and computer systems are stationed in Narela from July 5, 2023, for registration assistance
- DDA Housing Department officials to assist public in registration process in Nagrik Suvidha Kendra, Vikas Sadan, INA

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Please visit our website www.dda.gov.in or Dial Toll free No. 1800110332

Attacks on Indian mission 'totally unacceptable': UK

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/LONDON

Amidst reports of alleged Khalistan supporters issuing threats to Indian diplomats in the United Kingdom, British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has said any direct attacks on the Indian High Commission in London was "totally unacceptable."



Vikram Doraiswami. British High Commissioner to New Delhi, Alex Ellis, retweeted Cleverly's message and added, "To amplify the importance which @FCDOgovUK attaches to the safety and security of friends and colleagues, and their premises, at @HCLondon."

In response to the planned 'Kill India' rally scheduled to take place outside the Indian High Commission on July 8, Cleverly expressed the United Kingdom's commitment to prioritize the security of the High Commission's personnel.

Cleverly tweeted, "We have made clear to @VDoraiswami and the Government of India that the safety of staff at the High Commission is paramount." Cleverly was referring to India's High Commissioner to London,

designated as a terrorist, in Canada last month.

This development follows recent incidents of Khalistani backers vandalizing the Indian consulate in San Francisco and attempting to set fire to the premises. Threats have also been issued against Indian diplomats in Canada, Australia, and the United States by alleged Khalistani supporters who have circulated posters naming them.

India has raised concerns and taken strong action against Khalistani activists with authorities in Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, urging appropriate measures to be taken against them.

The attack on the Indian mission in San Francisco comes just over three months after Khalistani activists planted flags, breached barricades, and smashed windows at the consulate.

India to set up IIT in Tanzania

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

MOU INKED FOR LAUNCH OF 1ST IIT ABROAD



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi and others after witnessing signing of agreement on setting up of IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar, Tanzania on Wednesday

The Centre on Thursday announced plans to set up its first campus of the prestigious IIT outside India in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The foreign campus will be set by the IIT Madras and programmes for the campus will be launched in October this year keeping in mind the parameters of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which focuses on internationalisation and recommends high-performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries.

A MoU was signed on Wednesday in Zanzibar, between India's Ministry of Education, IIT Madras and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Zanzibar. External Affairs Minister, Dr S Jaishankar, and the President of Zanzibar were present on the occasion.

"Witnessed the signing of the agreement on setting up of IIT Madras Zanzibar campus.

We appreciate the President (Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi) gracing the occasion, as also the presence of his ministers. This historic step reflects India's commitment to the Global South," said External Affairs Minister, Dr S Jaishankar. Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan said that MoU signing for setting up IIT Madras- Zanzibar campus marks a historic beginning

towards internationalization of higher education. He further said that the initiative is an embodiment of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to strengthen South-South cooperation as well as forge stronger people-to-people ties with Africa. "NEP 2020 is paving the way for making knowledge a key component of bilateral relations as well as for advancing global good," Pradhan said in a statement.

ing global good," Pradhan said in a statement.

This partnership will bring the top-ranked educational expertise of IITM to a prime destination in Africa and serve the imperative current needs of the region. "The academic programs, curricula, student selection aspects and pedagogical details will be by IIT Madras, whereas the capital and operating expenditure will be met by the government of Zanzibar-Tanzania.

IIT Madras degrees will be awarded to the students enrolled in this campus. The state-of-the-art interdisciplinary degrees are expected to attract a diverse cohort and will include students from Africa and other countries as well. Indian students are also eligible to apply to these programs," according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The setting up of the IIT Campus is expected to enhance India's reputation globally and its diplomatic relationships and expand the international footprint of IIT Madras.

BRIEF

KANHAIYA MADE AICC IN-CHARGE OF NSUI

New Delhi: Ahead of the upcoming university students' union elections, the Congress has appointed former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar as the AICC India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of its students' wing. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge appointed Kanhaiya Kumar as the AICC in-charge of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) with immediate effect. The NSUI is led by Neeraj Kundan Kumar had participated in the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra and walked the entire distance from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. The party is aiming to make a comeback in popular universities like JNU, Delhi University riding high on the popularity of Kanhaiya who was also the party's candidate in Lok Sabha polls 2019.



Congress also approved the formation of the political affairs committee for Punjab which includes Harish Chaudhary, the in-charge of the party's state affairs and state unit chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring. Congress Legislative Party leader Pratap Singh Bajwa and senior party leader Ambika Soni are part of the all-important panel which also includes former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, former deputy chief minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Navjot Singh Sidhu. Party MPs Manish Tewari, Ravi Singh Bittu, Gurjit Singh Auja, Dr Amar Singh and Mohd. Saqqie is also part of the panel. AICC in-charge for Rajasthan and former Punjab deputy chief ministers Sukhinder Singh Randhawa and O P Soni, as well as Vijay Inder Singla, Gurkirat Singh, Tajinder Singh Bittu, Sukhpal Singh Khaira, Rana Kanwarpal Singh, Pargat Singh, Kuljit Singh Nagra, Rana Gurjit Singh and Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa are also part of the panel. Kharge also approved the proposal for the appointments in the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect. Those made general secretaries of Madhya Pradesh Congress are Marjot Bharatkar, Atvind Bagdi, Vishal Agnihotri and Kailash Mishra. Some new presidents of District Congress Committees have also been appointed, the party said.

Process of adopting UCC underway: BJP

New Delhi: Without giving a time-line for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), the BJP on Thursday said a process on the issue of adopting the UCC is underway and people should wait for its outcome.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP leader and former Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad also accused the Congress-led Government at Chattisgarh of causing a revenue loss of RS 2,061 crore to the state treasury by "blessing" the liquor mafia in the state. He said those involved in the liquor scam are close to the state Chief

Minister. Answering a question on the UCC the former minister said the commitment to the implementation of UCC has been a part of the ruling party's manifesto. "A process is on. You should wait for its outcome," he said while replying to a question at conference.

The BJP-ruled Uttarakhand government has been 'hurrying' with its expert committee report on the UCC in the state. A day before Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that his government would not delay the implementation of the UCC.

Dhami also had a long meeting with union minister Amit Shah. Uttarakhand UCC is seen by many observers as a 'pilot project' to the UCC at the national level.

At the central level the Law Commission has sought people's views on the contentious issue through a public notice on June 13. Some groups, including those representing sections of Muslims and tribals, have opposed the UCC while most opposition parties have linked the BJP's push for it to the upcoming polls, including the Lok Sabha elections in 2024.

At the Conference, Prasad advised RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav to be concerned about the pending corruption cases against him and keep good health instead of worrying about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's victory in Lok Sabha polls, next year. Prasad claimed that BJP would win all 40 Lok Sabha seats from Bihar in 2024.

FIR filed against 7 persons in alleged forced religious conversion in Bengal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered an FIR against seven persons for alleged forced religious conversion in Malda district of West Bengal. The CBI move came following a directive from the Calcutta High Court.

The high court ordered the investigation following a writ petition by two sisters, who claimed their husbands Buddh Mandal and Gauranga Mandal were forcibly converted from Hinduism to Islam as punishment for working for a political party which lost the last Assembly elections.

The petitioners also submitted that their husbands were missing since November 24, 2021, but the police did not take any action in the matter even after being informed. However, the West Bengal government submitted that the two brothers had converted to Islam vol-

untarily and had left home because of a family dispute. Following the high court order, the CBI registered a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) on February 20. A report was submitted to the court in May, following which it ordered the registration of an FIR on June 6.

With the PE revealing prima facie commission of the alleged offences and in compliance of the order, the CBI registered a case on Tuesday against Khurshed Sekh, Nazu Sekh, Barkatti Sekh, Habib Sekh, Rabiul Sekh, Mukhtadul Sekh, and Timu Sekh, all residents of Malda, and other unidentified individuals, officials said.

They said Buddh Mandal, husband of Parbati Mandal, was illiterate and Gauranga Mandal, who was married to Kalabati Mandal, had studied till Class 5. "Enquiry revealed that on 24.11.2021 at around

07:00 hours, both the brothers went out to earn a livelihood. Gauranga Mandal went to the residence of Rabiul Sk and his brother Buddh Mandal went to the residence of Habib Sk. At that time, Gauranga Mandal was working under Mukhtadul Sk, head mason.

They came back home for lunch at about 14:00 hours and after having lunch, returned to work. However, they did not return home in the evening," according to the findings of the PE. After this, the two sisters informed the local police that their husbands had been converted to Islam and taken to offer namaz, the CBI report alleged.

The brothers were later found in a Muslim household and police informed their wives that they would be produced before a court on November 28, 2021, four days after their disappearance, it said.

CBI registers FIR against Pune-based infra builder



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered an FIR against Pune-based builder K J Infrastructure Projects India Pvt Ltd and its directors in an alleged bank fraud case involving swindling of over Rs 91 crore.

The action was initiated on a complaint from the Union Bank of India against the company. The CBI has named directors Kalyan J Jadhav, Kalyan Eknath Kakade, Santosh Sambhaji Dhumal and Amol Maruti Paigunde, Wing Infrastructure Engineering Pvt Ltd, and Vinod Kalyan Jadhav as accused in the case.

The bank has alleged that the company and its promoters availed credit facilities on the basis of manipulated stocks-book, debts statements and financial statements with inflated figures or overstating sales, income and profit, in order to draw higher volume of amounts from the bank, the agency said in a statement.

The CBI alleged that the accused diverted the proceeds into accounts of related and associated companies without its end utilisation, resulting in an alleged loss to the tune of Rs.91.92 crore to the bank.

"Searches were conducted at various places in and around Pune District which led to the recovery of incriminating voluminous documents, hard disks, electronic gadgets etc.," the CBI said.

SALVEX CONDUCTED FROM JUNE 26-JULY 6

New Delhi: Giving a boost to bilateral defence ties between the two countries, the seventh edition of Indian Navy - US Navy (IN - USN) Salvage and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) exercise, SALVEX was conducted from June 26 to July six at Kochi. The IN and USN have been participating in joint Salvage and EOD exercises since 2005. The exercise saw participation from both navies which included ships - INS Nireekshak and USNS Salvor, navy officials said here on Thursday. Spanning over 10 days, the diving teams of both countries shared experiences on maritime salvage and trained together in various facets of EOD Operations on land as well as sea.

NAVY BEGINS OUTREACH PROGRAMME IN LADAKH

New Delhi: In an effort to reach out to remote areas of the country to develop them, the Indian Navy has embarked on a multidimensional outreach programme in union territory of Ladakh with Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar paying a visit there for two days ending Thursday. This program was aimed to enhance greater participation of the youth from Ladakh in the Defence Services, strengthen nation-building and promote maritime consciousness in the region, navy officials said here while giving details of the Navy's chief schedule. The events undertaken by the Navy included a public band performance by the Naval Band, a friendly football match between the Indian Navy and the Ladakh UT Team, flagging Off the Bike and Car Expedition, and visits to various schools. During his visit in Leh, the Navy chief called on Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Leh and Ladakh, Brig (Dr) BD Mishra, (Retired) and pay respect on behalf of the Indian Navy by laying a wreath at the War Memorial.

FORM NO. 3
[See Regulation-15(1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/1459/2022
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
Exh. No.: 18805
ICICI BANK LIMITED VS RUHI GULATI

To,
(3) RAMPRASHTHA SARE REALTY PRIVATE LIMITED HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT C-10, C BLOCK MARKET, VASANT VIHAR, NEW DELHI-110057.
Also At,
RAMPRASHTHA SARE REALTY PRIVATE LIMITED AT CRESCENT PARC, SECTOR-92, PATAUDI ROAD, GURUGRAM-122503
HARYANA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122503
SUMMONS
Whereas, **OA/1459/2022** was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer on **16/03/2023**.
Whereas, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under Section 19 (4) of the Act (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of **RS. 4438719/-** (application alongwith copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the Defendants are directed as under-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business, any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
(vi) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business, any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
(vii) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business, any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 26/06/2023.
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons.

Form No.3
[See Regulation-15(1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/1471/2022
[Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
Exh. No. 18806
ICICI BANK LIMITED VS GAURAV SETHI

To,
(3) VARDHMAN BUILDTECH PRIVATE LIMITED HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT 801-804, 8TH FLOOR, C-58, SHAHPUR TIRATH SINGH TOWER, DDA COMMUNITY CENTRE JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-110058.
SUMMONS
WHEREAS, **OA/1471/2022** was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on **16/03/2023**.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act. (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of **RS. 4716813/-** (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business, any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 26/06/2023.
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that my client Jatinder Singh Chadha S/o Bhupinder Singh Chadha and his wife Gurvinder Kaur both R/o WZ-3, Old 23 B Ram Nagar Extension, Tilak Nagar, Delhi 110018 have severed all their relations with their son Amandeep Singh Chadha along with his wife Harbany Kaur Saini. Both of my above named clients have disowned and departed his said Son and his wife from all their moveable and immovable properties. Anyone dealing with their son Amandeep Singh Chadha and his wife will do so at his/her/ their own risk and responsibilities and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Amandeep Singh Chadha and his wife.
Place: New Delhi
Date: 05-07-2023
Hemant Kishor (Advocate)
Delhi High Court & District Courts
Mobile: 9999892423

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is known to all that the allottee of Residential Flat No. 471 (SF/F), Arun Vihar, Sector-29, Noida, District Ghatam Budh Nagar, U.P., Cap: Bharatinder Singh (Retd.) S/o Col. Dildar Singh (Retd.) R/o D-7, Lalpat Nagar-III, New Delhi-110024, has sold the above flat on CPA basis as under:
1. A.G.P.A. was executed on dt. 10.03.1993, in favour of Mr. Livinder Singh S/o Mr. Dharam Pal Singh R/o House No. 1-6, Maharani Bagh, South Delhi, Delhi-110065, which is regd. in the office of S.R. Noida, and the Agreement to Sell was not executed in favour of any person.
Because the Agreement to Sell was not executed/regd., so with the help of this notice, it is informed that the transfer of the above flat on the basis of CPAs goes in favour of Mr. Vikram Singh S/o Mr. Livinder Singh R/o House No. 1-6, Maharani Bagh, South Delhi, Delhi-110065. If anyone has any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection in the G.S.D. (GHP) Section of Noida Authority within 30 days of the publication of this notice.
LIVINDER SINGH

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the Public at large that Sh. Atul Kumar Agarwal S/o. Sh. Sudhir Agarwal and Smt. Anjali Agarwal W/o. Sh. Atul Agarwal are the 'Title Holders' in possession of 'Entire First Floor of Residential etc.' in 'Residential Property Bearing Plot No. 40/57, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019' measuring 132.10 sq. mtrs., hereinafter referred to as 'Schedule Property' vide Sale Deed dated 08.12.2021, registered as Registration No. 6725, Book No. 1, Vol. No. 16311, pp. 22-28 on 08.12.2021 in the Office of the Sub Registrar, New Delhi. The Original Documents w.r.t. the chain of the Schedule Property being the documents for the Schedule Property, i.e. (i) Periodical Lease Deed dated 04.04.91, (ii) General Power of Attorney and Agreement to Sell dated 20.11.1991, (iii) Sanction for Construction Letter dated 10.01.1992, (iv) General Power of Attorney, Special Power of Attorney, Agreement to Sell, Will, Receipt & Possession Letter all dated 08.10.1993 and (v) Conveyance Deed dated 14.01.1997, have been lost, misplaced and are untraceable as on date, in lieu of which Information Report dated 05.07.2022 bearing LR No. 626432023 has been filed with Delhi Police. This notice is thus issued to Public at Large, i.e. any Person(s), Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Organisation(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUFs etc. having any knowledge, custody or possession of the above mentioned lost/misplaced original documents or otherwise having any claims, rights, title, interests, possession etc. in the Schedule Property, by way of Ownership, Succession, Inheritance, Sale, Mortgage, Exchange, Charge, Lien, Gift, Trust, Encumbrance etc. or as 'Schedule Property' of the Schedule Property presently intended by the Title Holders, may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of this notice, on pain of expiration of which, any claim(s) or objection(s), if raised or received, shall be treated as null & void and as waived, and the Title Holders intend to sell the Schedule Property as presently intended.
Parvish Kumar (Advocate)
Office Address: 27, Basement, Preeti Vihar, Delhi-26 Chamber Address: 363, Saket Condo, New Delhi Cont. No.: 999222185

Enhancing def indigenisation discussed in MoD Chintan Shivir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday chaired a "Chintan Shivir" of Ministry of Defence where several innovative proposals emerged to enhance indigenisation content in domestic defence manufacturing and provide better health and pension services besides re-settlement to the ex-servicemen.

Giving details of the brainstorming session, Defence Ministry officials said here, the other issues included more collaboration of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with other research bodies, performance audit, bringing more efficiency in the functioning of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and future roadmap of different organisations.

Rajnath sat through the day-long deliberations, which were spread over six sessions, covering important issues pertaining to Department of Defence (DoD), Department of



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during the 'Chintan Shivir' of Ministry of Defence, in New Delhi on Thursday

Defence Production (DDP), MoD (Finance), Department of Military Affairs (DMA), Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) and DRDO.

Minister of state for defence Ajay Bhatt, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Vijoy Kumar Singh, Secretary,

DRDO chief Samir V Kamat and other civil and military officials of the defence ministry attended the meeting. Presentations were made by each department which were followed by frank and free exchange of ideas.

The defence minister directed that a detailed action taken report on various issues be submitted to him within a fortnight to take forward these discussions, officials said.

India, France review strategic, defence ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and France on Thursday reviewed the entire spectrum of their strategic and defence ties during talks here between National Security Advisor(NSA) Ajit Doval and Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic advisor to the French President. The visiting dignitary also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi before returning to Paris.

Doval and Bonne also reportedly prepared the groundwork for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Paris on July 13-14. He is the guest of honour for national day of France this year. Both the countries this year are celebrating 25 years of their strategic partnership. Besides focussing on their bilateral ties, Doval and Bonne also reportedly discussed the after-effect of the ongoing Ukraine conflict and situation in the Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China adopting an aggressive



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during the 'Chintan Shivir' of Ministry of Defence, in New Delhi on Thursday

Moreover, France is in the race for a contract for aircraft carrier-based fighter jets. The naval version of Rafale jet is pitching for the deal. The Indian Navy needs more than 30 jets for its two aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant.

France has reportedly also offered to build Scorpene submarines for other countries at Mazagon Dockyards Limited (MDL) to ensure that the current facility, which has completed the Kalvari class submarines under Project 75, does not go to seed for want of orders. France has also offered to manufacture top end missiles and loiter ammunition in India under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" route.

Maurya reviews preparations as stage set for PM's visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Stage is all set for the two-day visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his parliamentary constituency here on Friday. As Modi will address a public meeting at Wajidpur on Harhua-Sarnath Ring Road, it is all expected that he will also kick off the campaigning for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as during the two days, the PM will visit four states including UP, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan and Telangana where he will launch project worth over ₹ 50,000 crore. In UP, as he will visit two major cities Gorakhpur and Varanasi, he will send his messages to the entire Purvanchal (eastern UP), covering more than one thirds seats of the state.



By CM KP Maurya inspecting arrangements at Wajidpur in Varanasi on Thursday

In Varanasi, Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of multiple development projects worth more than Rs 12,100 crore. All these projects will be launched at a public meeting to be held at Wajidpur. Apart from dedication to the nation the four-lane widening of Varanasi-Jaunpur section of NH-56, which has been completed at a cost of more than Rs 2,750 crore, making travel from Varanasi to Lucknow easier and faster. He will also inaugurate Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET), an vocational training centre at Karsara village and many other projects.

Meanwhile, all the preparations have been completed despite heavy weather conditions. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya inspect-

ed the public meeting site and also reviewed the preparations at a meeting with senior administrative and police officers apart from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders. Besides, UP Tourism and Culture Minister and Minister In-charge of the district Jaiveer Singh also arrived on two-day visit to ensure the completion of all the arrangements. Apart from this, the top police officers held a meeting to give instructions to the officers in connection with the security arrangements and rehearsal and other formalities were also completed.

The Deputy Chief Minister Maurya reviewed the preparations made so far and gave necessary guidelines to the officers after meeting at Circuit House regarding the proposed visit of the PM. District Magistrate

(DM) S Rajalingam gave minute-to-minute details of the PM's proposed programme and the preparations made by the administration so far. He also gave other details to Maurya. In reply, the Deputy Chief Minister instructed to do complete profiling of the schemes received by the beneficiaries of PM SVANidhi, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Ayushman Bharat schemes so that it can be clear that how the deprived people are being given a way to live with self-respect by the government.

Maurya said that this Banaras tour of the PM is taking place on the completion of nine years of the central government, so we have to make complete preparations. He asked to pay special attention to cleanliness campaign and

also asked to run awareness campaign regarding plastic continuously. He also instructed to make proper arrangements regarding drinking water, toilets etc for the people coming to the meeting place. Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, MLA T Ram and others were present in the meeting. Earlier, Maurya also visited Wajidpur after landing at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Babatpur and saw all the arrangements especially in view the rainy weather conditions.

He was accompanied by the DM, CDO and other top police officers apart from senior BJP leaders and inquired about all the sitting and other arrangements.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi meets Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence, in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

IIIT-A to implement NEP from current session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Indian Institute of Information Technology Allahabad (IIIT-A), one of India's premier institutes for higher education and research is all set to implement New Education Policy (NEP) from the current session 2023-2024 as per government guidelines for NEP curriculum.

This was announced by Director IIIT-A Prof Mukul Sharad Sutaone while addressing the IIIT-A teaching fraternity in the administrative building auditorium here on Wednesday.

Addressing all IIIT-A teachers at an Upgrade Session on NEP, the director said the institute aimed to align the curriculum offered at IIIT-A with the holistic goals outlined in the NEP.

"The NEP, a landmark policy introduced by the

Government of India, advocates a comprehensive and transformative approach to education. Emphasising competency-based learning, multidisciplinary education and skill development, NEP aims to nurture well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society," he added.

"With the indispensable support of faculty members and domain experts, IIIT Allahabad has worked diligently to revise its curriculum to align with the NEP guidelines. The new curriculum brings forth an innovative learning framework, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education encompassing various disciplines," he added.

In his presentation he mentioned that NEP recommendations on Flexible and Empowering Education System i.e. Multi-Entry-

Multi-Exit (ME-ME) Model with Multi/Inter/Trans-Disciplinary Approach in Curriculum Design, with novel pedagogy. The IIIT-A has initiated development of NEP-Inspired and Learning-Outcome based Curriculum (LOBC).

Director apprised the teachers that the Visitor and President of India Draupdi Murmu will address all directors and vice-chancellors during a two-day national conference on NEP implementations by higher education institutions at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi on July 10 and 11. Thereafter, the prime minister of India will also address all heads of central

institutions on NEP at Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagm at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on July 29 and 30.

The IIIT-A had recently organised workshops and witnessed the participation of esteemed educationists, subject matter experts and faculty members from diverse academic backgrounds.

Their collective expertise and collaborative efforts played a vital role in shaping an NEP compliant curriculum for IIIT-A. The workshop fostered insightful discussions, encouraging participants to share best practices, pedagogical advancements, and cutting-edge teaching methodologies.

BJP to make Modi's visit memorable: Dilip Patel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has made extensive preparations to make the public meeting of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Wajidpur on Harhua-Sarnath Ring Road around 3 pm on Friday a memorable one, said the party's regional president (Kashi Region) Dilip Singh Patel while addressing a press conference at BJP's Gulab Bagh office here on Thursday.

Terming Modi as world's most popular leader, he said that on the arrival of the PM, the party flags will be hoisted along all the routes of the PM's visit as well as other roads related to the programmes. He said that during the two-day stay, the PM will participate in various programmes. "About 1,600 small and big hoardings are being put up on the yatra routes from the district and city areas to welcome Modi and the work of installing hoardings is in the final stage," said Patel, appealing to the people to welcome the PM by showering rose petals at various places from where Modi's motorcade will pass through.

There is a possibility of 50,000 people attending the public meeting. With this goal, the party has made a whole plan. Looking at the enthusiasm of the workers, we can say with confidence that we will



Regional BJP chief DS Patel addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Thursday

exceed our target. The party workers and people of eight assembly constituencies of Varanasi district including City South, City North, Varanasi Cantt, Rohania, Sewapuri, Ajgara, Shivpur and Pindra will participate in the public meeting," Patel said, adding that to make the programme a success, the party office-bearers, front organisations and workers have been given special responsibility for the participation of all classes in the public meeting.

According to him, the meetings of Mandal and Shakti Kendra have been completed and the booth committees, the primary units of the organisation, have been given important responsibility. "Mahila Morcha has been given the responsibility for effective par-

icipation of women in the public meeting. Similarly, all other frontal units of the party including Yuva Morcha have been entrusted with their responsibility," said Patel. He said that to participate in the public meeting, the workers will come out on bikes from the booths, Shakti Kendras, Mandal and assembly areas, which will go in the form of a procession to the venue at Wajidpur.

"Along with this, people from remote rural areas will participate in large numbers by reaching the site of meeting by buses, four and three wheelers while the workers from the nearby areas will reach there on foot in the form of a procession carrying musical instruments," said that regional BJP chief, adding that the PM will also

attend the 'tiffin' meeting organised at BLW Guest House on Friday at 7 pm. "A total of 118 to 120 party office-bearers, corporators and MLCs of Varanasi city areas will participate in this tiffin meeting," he informed, adding that the PM will spend the night at BLW and on the second day, Modi will reach Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport Babatpur by helicopter from BLW in the morning and then leave for Delhi.

He said that the PM will give a gift of projects worth ₹ 12,110 crore to the district. The PM will inaugurate 19 projects worth ₹ 10,720.58 crore and lay the foundation stones of 10 projects worth ₹ 1,389.66 crore. He will also interact with the beneficiaries of various schemes from different districts at Wajidpur venue.

Sisodia moves SC seeking bail in excise policy scam case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia on Thursday moved the Supreme Court seeking bail in the CBI and ED cases related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. He has moved the apex court challenging the two orders of the Delhi High Court dismissing his bail petitions in these cases. Sisodia, who also held the excise portfolio among many that he handled as the deputy chief minister of Delhi, was first arrested by the CBI on February 26 for his alleged role in the "scam", and has been in custody since then.

He resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28. The high court had on May 30 denied bail to him in the excise policy scam case being probed by the CBI, saying having been the deputy chief minister and excise minister, he is a "high-profile" person who has the potential to influence the wit-

nesses. On July 3, the high court had declined him bail in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the city government's excise policy, holding the charges against him were "very serious in nature". In its May 30 order, the high court had said since Sisodia was at the "helm of affairs" when the alleged scam took place, he cannot say he had no role to play.

The high court had said, with his party still in power in the national capital, Sisodia, who once held 18 portfolios, continues to wield influence, and since the witnesses are mostly public servants, the possibility of their getting influenced cannot be ruled out. Citing the allegations against the senior AAP leader, it had said the excise policy was formed at the instance of the "South Group" with malafide intention to give undue advantages to them.

SC agrees to hear Delhi Gov's plea against services ordinance

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear on July 10 a plea filed by the Delhi government challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance on control of services.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and Manoj Misra posted the matter for consideration after senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi mentioned the matter seeking urgent hearing. "This is a plea challenging the ordinance in whole," Singhvi said. The bench then said, "List on July 10, Monday."

In its plea, the AAP government has said it is an "unconstitutional exercise of executive fiat" that attempts to "override" the top court and the basic structure of the Constitution. Besides quashing the ordinance, the Delhi government has also sought an interim stay on it.

PM to gift ₹8,700 cr worth Railway projects for UP

VARANASI (PNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give a gift worth more than ₹ 8,700 crore of Indian Railways for Uttar Pradesh apart from flagging off two Vande Bharat Express trains including Gorakhpur-Lucknow via Ayodhya Vande Bharat Express and Jodhpur-Ahmedabad (Sabarmati) Vande Bharat Express at a function to be held at Gorakhpur Railway Station on Friday at 2 pm, according to a release of North Eastern Railway (NER). With the running of these Vande Bharat Express trains, the people of UP, Rajasthan and Gujarat will get comfortable and better connectivity. Along with this,

Gorakhpur railway station is being redeveloped at a cost of ₹ 498 crore keeping in view the requirement of the next 50 years. The PM will also flag off some other trains apart from inaugurating many projects and laying foundations of several others worth more than ₹ 8,700 crore. After this, the PM will inaugurate/lay foundation stones of railway projects worth more than ₹ 8,200 crore in a function organised in Varanasi. Under this, doubling of Ghazipur City-Aunrihar and Aunrihar-Jaunpur rail section, electrification of Bhatni-Aunrihar rail section, 100 per cent electrification in the state of UP and dedication of dedi-

cated freight corridor Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Jn- Sonnagar new line and will lay foundation stone of the rail flyover on Vyasnagar-DDU Jn. Doubling and electrification of railway sections is being done to reduce the pressure of increasing traffic on railway sections. Doubling of Ghazipur City-Aunrihar (40 km) and Aunrihar-Jaunpur (60 km) railway sections has been completed with electrification. Electrification of Bhatni-Aunrihar rail section (125 km.) has been completed, as a result of which electric locomotive driven trains are running directly from Gorakhpur to other metropolitan cities via

Aunrihar-Varanasi. About 100 percent electrification, all major rail line networks in the state of UP have been completely electrified, due to which there has been a huge reduction in the consumption of imported diesel, which will help in making the environment pollution free. Besides, the construction of a 137 km long Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor between DDU Jn- Sonnagar has been completed. This rail section will connect the major coalfields of Jharkhand and West Bengal with the power centres of North India. Transportation of other essential commodities including iron and steel will speed up.

CORRIGENDUM

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

Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBNOD00002082389, Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower **SUNITA AGRAWAL/ SHAILENDRA KUMAR AGRAWAL/ GAURAV AGRAWAL**, Symbolic Possession done under section 13(4) & published on **September 25, 2021 in News Paper The Pioneer (Eng.) & Pioneer (Hindi)**. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said notices and **date of Demand notice** was mentioned as **June 23, 2021** instead of **June 25, 2021**. We therefore, request you to please read the same as **June 25, 2021**. All other details mentioned in the said Notice dated will remain same. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard.

Date: July 07, 2023 **Authorised Officer**
Place: Delhi/ NCR **ICICI Bank Limited**

NOIDA **New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

A) Tender Work:-

S.No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Tender Amount (In Lacs.)
1.	02/DGM(NTC)/Sr. M./DGM (E&M)/2023-24	A M C Electrical Maintenance work for Command Control Centre Building Near Mahamaya Flyover Sector-94 Noida.	47.45

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 20.07.2023 up to 5:00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/ downloaded on dated 21.07.2023 at 11:00 AM.

Office Sector - 39 **Dy. General Manager (NTC) NOIDA**

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

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

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

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding (D)	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit (E)	Date and Time of Property Inspection (F)	Date & Time of E-Auction (G)
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Gaurav Madan (Borrower) Ms. Pallavi Madan (Co-Borrower) OZDEL00005017511	Property No. 24 A, First Floor, Rear Side (Without roof right), Block B1, Gali No.5, Khasra No.104/13, VII-Palam, Rajapuri, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059. Area: 50 Sq. Yds.	Rs. 21,98,978/- (As on June 30, 2023)	Rs. 13,00,000/- Rs. 1,30,000/-	July 20, 2023 From 11:00 am to 12:00 noon onwards	August 03, 2023 from 12:00 Noon onwards

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency **M/S NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>)**. The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **August 02, 2023 before 05:00 PM** failing which, this secured asset will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) to **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005** on or before **August 02, 2023 before 05:00 PM** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **August 02, 2023 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005** on or before **August 02, 2023 before 05:00 PM** Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the E-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8928935040/8584874809**

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. **M/S NexXen Solutions Private Limited**, 2. **Augeo Assets Management Private Limited**, 3. **Hecta Proptech Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: July 07, 2023 **Authorized Officer**
Place: Delhi/ NCR **ICICI Bank Limited**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

U-turn on UCC

CPI(M) which was earlier rooting for Uniform Civil Code has made a volte-face by opposing it now

The Muslim League has got a much-needed morale-boosting certificate from the CPI(M), the world's biggest revolutionary outfit. The Marxists who had shunned the Muslim League in the recent past labelling it as a communal party have issued an "A" Grade to the party by describing it as a secular party. M V Govindan, the Kerala State Secretary, who wields big influence all over India declared the other day at Thiruvananthapuram that the CPI(M) would oppose tooth and nail all moves by the "communal" BJP to bring in the Uniform Civil Code in the country. Those who remember the antecedents of the CPI(M) were not at all surprised by Govindan's volte-face on the issue. Way back in 1980, the CPI(M) had allied with a faction of the Muslim League and that facilitated the coronation of E K Nayanar as chief minister of Kerala for the first time. Though the then government led by Nayanar fell by the wayside in 1982 as the Congress led by A K Antony pulled out from the Marxist front, the latter's liaison with the Muslim League faction continued till 1986. But the Supreme Court verdict in the Shah Bano case and the subsequent Constitution amendment by the Rajiv Gandhi Government at the Centre made EMS Namboodiripadu, the then national secretary of the CPI(M) to declare "Uniform Civil Code at any cost".



"There is an urgent need to rectify the Sharia," Namboodiripadu said in his speeches and writings. But this scared away the Muslim League faction from the CPI(M)-led front. The 1987 assembly election in Kerala was fought on two lines by the CPI(M); Uniform Civil Code and pension against Mulla and Mukris. The League faction with the CPI(M) called off the marriage

of convenience immediately after the declaration by Namboodiripadu. The Kerala Congress owing allegiance to the Church also dissociated themselves from the CPI(M) led front and this helped the LDF to consolidate the Hindu votes. It was not the proletarian ideology of the Marxists but the Hindu votes that helped them to form a Government in Thiruvananthapuram sans the Muslim and Christian political parties. K Karunakaran, the monarch of the Congress in Kerala saw an opportunity and mobilized the Muslim community by promising them that his party would not do anything that offend their religious sentiments. What has happened now is that the Marxists have understood the truth that the Hindus would not vote for them en masse as there are new challengers in the form of the BJP clamouring for the Hindu votes. The issue right now is not whether we need UCC or not. The CPI(M) making a sudden U-turn from their previous stance seems to appease the Muslim community who are turning to the party in large numbers following the ban on the Popular Front of India and the arrest of their leaders by the NIA. The former PFI activists masquerade as Marxists during day time and discharge their responsibilities to the mother organization during night hours. Nothing abnormal in it as it too is part of guerrilla strategy. May India stay united and strong!

PICTALK



A farmer on a bullock-cart during monsoon rain, in Nadia, PI

Sri Lanka: Times, they sure are changing

There was a time when Mahinda Rajapaksa was hailed as a national hero, today he has been edged out of the political landscape

It was in 2015 that I made my first visit to Sri Lanka and that too as a journalist. I was the lone media representative from India to be invited to the Defense Seminar organized by the island nation's Ministry of Defense. It was an event held by the Sri Lankan defence forces to share with the world that country's experience in waging a three-decade-long war against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Tamil militant outfit, that demanded a separate Tamil country bifurcating (or even trifurcating) Sri Lanka. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives or maimed in the civil war fought between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army.

What started as a small protest by Tamils over the Sri Lankan Government's decision to switch over to the Sinhala language the registration number of vehicles in the island nation turned out to be an all-out civil war. The entire moderate political leaders on both sides of the spectrum were wiped out by the LTTE itself. An analysis by the Sri Lankan Government reveals that LTTE murdered most of



the Tamil leaders to pave the way for the rise of Prabhakaran.

The civil war on the island of Emerald turned into a teardrop in the Indian Ocean. In the 1960s, the situation in Northern Sri Lanka was so peaceful that Colombo did not feel it necessary to post hard taskmasters as police chiefs in the region. The secessionists made use of this opportunity and amassed weapons and made a grand plan to liberate northern and the northeast from mainland Sri Lanka.

The civil war in Sri Lanka had its repercussions in India too. Chennai's international airport came under attack by the LTTE and this claimed the lives of 33 persons. The internecine fight between various Tamil groups extended to

Chennai and in one of such shootouts, a prominent Tamil leader Padmanabha was shot down by the Tigers in 1990 and the assassins escaped back to Jaffna with the support of the then rulers of Tamil Nadu. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 was the culmination of this warfare. By 2009, the Sri Lankan forces had finished off Prabhakaran, the despot and the LTTE was given an official burial.

By 2015, Sri Lanka was back to the "happy days are here again syndrome". The road leading to the capital city from the Bandaranaike International Airport was dotted with posters of Mahinda Rajapaksa, the then President who did not leave any stone unturned in the fight against LTTE. Throughout the two-day-long seminar, civil and military officers were vying with each other in showering encomiums on Mahinda Rajapaksa. "Mahinda Chintana", the philosophy of President Rajapaksa, was being spoken about all over the country. It was Rajapaksa's chosen path to make the island nation the "green emer-

ald" and "El Dorado" in the Indian Ocean. He had the status of an iconic figure all over the country and this made Mahinda Rajapaksa order for an early poll. Pollsters had forecast a clean sweep by Rajapaksa but the result turned out to be a shocker. Mythripala Sirisena, the challenger, walked away with the cup as the Rajapaksa were left shocked.

During my second trip to Sri Lanka in 2016, I did not see any pictures of Mahinda Rajapaksa anywhere. The persons who had waxed eloquently on "Mahinda Chintana" were not to be seen. There was no Mahinda or Chintana. Rulers who go by the words of court jesters and palace advisors get vanished within days, according to Jnanappana, a poetic work by Poonthanam, the great Kerala poet of yore years. Poonthanam, a devotee of Lord Krishna, wrote in Jnanappana (The song of divine wisdom) that if Lord wishes, a King can become a beggar!

(Writer is Special Correspondent, The Pioneer. Views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

There was a time when Mahinda Rajapaksa was hailed as a national hero, today he has been edged out of the political landscape

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(Writer is Special Correspondent, The Pioneer. Views expressed are personal)

Don't disturb the regimental system

The regimental system lays great emphasis on regimental affiliations. It is a colonial hangover but has paid immense dividends over the years

Winston Churchill, at the turn of the 20th Century, wrote "Regiments are not like houses. They cannot be pulled down and altered structurally to suit the convenience of the occupier or the caprice of the owner. They are more like plants; they grow slowly if they are to grow strong...and if they are blighted or transplanted, they are apt to wither."

The Regimental System presently in vogue in our army is of colonial origin, from the days of the British Indian Army. It is for this very reason there are those, obviously lacking in any military background, who wish it to be discarded. This is despite the Indian Army, having, on Independence, made a conscious decision to retain it, given its inherent strengths and advantages for a vast and diverse country, such as ours. It is a policy that has paid immense dividends over the years and there can be no two opinions that our combat arms, the Infantry and the Mechanised Forces, continue to lay the greatest emphasis on regimental affiliations, dress, customs and traditions.

This is because it helps instil a sense of belonging, brotherhood and continuity amongst the officers, JCOs and men in their battalions and regiments. It also helps to inculcate pride in a shared history and achievements of those who have fought before them in past campaigns. This, in turn, helps nurture the two most essential battle-winning factors, esprit-de-corps and morale, because bereft of them there can be no victory.

Unfortunately, unlike our combat elements, combat support elements do not give this factor the same kind of importance, probably because of the technical nature of their job profile. General Manoj Pande, the Army Chief, belongs to one of the combat support arms, the Corps of Engineers, being the first Chief since Independence from that corps. What is even more unfortunate, is that there are those within this Government, close to the Prime Minister, on record disparaging



the regimental system and wanting it changed, which is what the Agnipath scheme does. While they may be forgiven for their views, given their lack of military knowledge and having never seen conventional combat, the same cannot be said of the military hierarchy that has quietly caved into this short-sighted initiative, whatever their justification.

What however is extremely difficult to fathom is why the military top brass, specifically Gen Pande, has felt it necessary to issue a diktat on uniformity of dresses for the ranks of Brigadiers and above, that allows for no display of their Regimental/Corps accoutrements which reflect regimental affiliations. These orders are an admission that regimental affiliations, more than reflecting pride and belonging in one's regiment or corps are instead influencing promotions. While that would certainly be true in some cases, human nature being what it is, his hypothesis does a great disservice to the selection process in place that has stood the test of time. Would it not have been better to take corrective action to make the selection system more responsive, rather than indulging in changing the

WHY THE MILITARY TOP BRASS HAS FELT IT NECESSARY TO ISSUE A DIKTAT ON UNIFORMITY OF DRESSES FOR THE RANKS OF BRIGADIERS AND ABOVE, THAT ALLOWS FOR NO DISPLAY OF THEIR REGIMENTAL/CORPS ACCOUTREMENTS THAT REFLECT REGIMENTAL AFFILIATIONS?

dress code put in place in the early Seventies to enhance bonds between senior officers and the rank and file that is increasingly under strain? In any case not displaying Regimental affiliations does not make an individual anonymous. For that matter, does this not cast a shadow on the credibility of their promotions?

However, even if we were to give them the benefit of the doubt and accept their contention, orders denying officers who have served with the elite airborne forces the right to wear the maroon beret is illogical, poorly thought out and utterly condemnable. Maroon berets are the accepted headgear of all airborne forces universally. Our forces have been wearing this since 1941 when the Parachute Brigade was first raised. Incidentally, the 50th Independent Parachute Brigade has the record of being the oldest formation worldwide that has continuously remained in the airborne role to date. This is a source of great pride for all its members and is reflected in the high standards of professionalism, elan and esprit de corps that is on display. More importantly, the maroon beret does not reflect any particular arm or service, as vol-

unteers from any arm, corps or service are eligible to serve in one of our Special Operations Forces units, provided he or she has successfully undergone the extremely tough selection process that is in place.

In effect, the earning of the maroon beret is a hard-earned qualification and a clear reflection of an individual's abilities and a source of immense pride. Thus, to be deprived of the right to wear the maroon beret after having earned it is unjust, unreasonable and smacks of bias and even jealousy. After all, what impression does the Commander of the Parachute Brigade convey to his troops, if only he among them, is barred from wearing the maroon beret which he has also earned and worn till he was promoted? Indeed, it seems a bigoted and bizarre order, and its adverse impact on morale and esprit-de-corps can be easily appreciated, and the military hierarchy would do well to reconsider this flawed order.

(The columnist, a military veteran and former paratrooper is presently a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE DECLINE OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Sir — Delivery of News content seems to have been hijacked by journalists by Tik Tok influencers and celebrities if a recent report published by the British-based Reuters Institute is to be believed. It is based on interviews with 94000 people across 46 countries conducted by Britain's University of Oxford.

Are we in for a decline of serious and authentic news as mainstream TV and journalism markets are shrinking away and Digital media is not making up for the widening gap?? Can Tik Tok, and Youtube influencers be criticised for taking the role of T.V. reporters and Mainstream journalists when the latter has turned over a new leaf of entertaining audiences. ? The shift to Tik Too, Youtube etc presents a formidable challenge for both digital and social media when fake news and misinformation videos are spread at a rapid pace according to a News Guard investigation about 20% of videos covering pressing world news contained misinformation from covid vaccines, gun violence to Ukraine U.S.war and U.S elections. According to Digital News Report, it presents a much more fundamental change for the prospects of a vibrant news industry than even the shift from newspaper to digital mode a generation ago. When Tik Tok, Youtube etc are dishing out misinformation in the guise of entertainment, mainstream TV journalism makes a bee-line for the high-pitched drama to entertain audiences the line is getting blurred between news and entertainment.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

POLICEMEN CHARGED WITH CONTEMPT OF COURT

Sir — The Gujarat High Court charged five policemen with contempt of court in a 2016 case of thrashing and public humiliation of an accused in custody in Rajkot. The court made its decision after rejecting the apology offered by the policemen on Wednesday. Their actions were deemed a clear violation of the guidelines

Khalistanis attack Indian missions



The recent attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco by individuals suspected to be Khalistani separatists elements who tried to set fire to the diplomatic facility is a brazen act of violence that demands serious attention from the international community and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms as the host country must provide adequate security for foreign missions on their soil.

This attack in San Francisco on an Indian mission is a deeply disturbing trend and should be a wake-up call for the host countries as they must enhance the security measures and ensure the safety of staff working in diplomatic missions. Actually, in recent times, these countries USA, Canada and the UK are keen on improving the bilateral ties with India as India is a rising economic power and can be their trading partner but when it comes to taking action against these separatist groups they are indifferent regarding India's concern.

India's able Foreign minister S Jaishanker has rightly pointed out that these radical elements aren't good for us, for host countries or bilateral ties. Hence these countries particularly US Government should take stern action against the men who tried to set the Indian consulate on fire so much brazen act of violence are not repeated

Ramesh G Jethwan | Bangalore

set forth by the Supreme Court in the D.K. Basu and Arnesh Kumar judgments, which specifically outline the treatment of individuals in custody. The accused, Ajay Kumbharwadiya, endured vicious beatings within the confines of the Pradyumanagar police station before being paraded and further assaulted in full view of the public in 2016. Additionally, it was alleged that the officers involved extended his custody beyond the permissible 24-hour limit, further exacerbating their misconduct. The five officers implicated in this case are B.T. Gohil, M.J. Dhandhal, V.S. Lamba, Jaybha Parmar, and Pradumansinh Zala.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

SPLIT OF THE NCP

Sir — The political importance of the split in NCP in Maharashtra and the CBI chargesheet against Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, may not have a

direct impact on the opposition unity but it is an aberration to the plans. The Opposition unity drive would reap electoral benefits only if it came up with a narrative and did not rely solely on simple arithmetic. It is a matter of conjecture that Party A is better off than Party B. The equation for unity is drawn and there is one winner. One who just grabs the available opportunity will win in Karnataka politics recently. There is not much political importance to the split in NCP in Maharashtra and the CBI chargesheet against Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav. Somehow the present position raises speculations and the opposition unity shows inherent weakness and faces high stakes under the latest circumstances.

CK Jayanthi Maniam | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

SCO FOR MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is growing in stature and size



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India hosted the leaders from Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in a virtual summit, this week, amidst rising mutual tensions in the group. This summit was to be held in person; however, geopolitical concerns forced India to host this virtually. India currently holds rotating SCO chairmanship, besides the prestigious G 20 presidency, which will see a high-octane grand finale, with the leaders' summit being hosted in Delhi in September.

India wants to make full use of these leadership opportunities in multilateral and regional platforms to drive its newfound strategic agenda at a global scale while deepening bilateral ties with its key allies and partners.

All of this has been on full display in the past month or so with PM Modi's first state visit to the US last month, topped with several key technology and defence-related announcements, all of which signal, what US President Biden has indicated, as the most significant partnership for the 21st century. India would like to showcase some of this leadership when leaders from all G20 countries, international organisations and special invitee countries descend in New Delhi for a two-day summit. However, the language on the war in Ukraine, which could be included in the leader's declaration statement, might not be agreeable to Russia and China, which could be a dampener.

This is where the SCO chairmanship for India comes into play as both Russia and China are also part of the SCO grouping. However, as the summit was held in a virtual format, it lost the opportunities available to leaders to step into bilateral conversations on contentious issues. It may be recalled that the Indian PM had a telephonic conversation with Putin last week, which according to a PMO press release reviewed "progress in bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest." While discussing the situation in Ukraine, PM reiterated his call for dialogue.

Meanwhile, the Russian president showered India with praises a day earlier, when he called India to be a big friend. The India-Russia strate-



gic partnership, going back decades hasn't been hobbled, due to the newfound upgraded India, US strategic partnership.

It is against this background that the India-hosted SCO summit assumed importance. The Russia-India partnership, which is a careful dance by both partners to not trip close allies on either side is now seen as a sign of India's mature diplomacy. Initially criticised by the US and the Western alliance, for not taking a hard stance on Russia, regarding the lengthy war in Ukraine, things started moving towards mature conversations during the latter part of last year. In September at the last SCO meeting in Samarkand, the Indian Prime minister told the Russian President "this is not an era of war", which later was adopted in the leader's joint declaration of the G20 Bali summit. This statement was an acceptable format in global diplomatic circles to agree on tossed current geopolitical positions. The current SCO summit happened in the backdrop of Russia being increasingly seen as weakened by the long-drawn war, not to mention the short-lived revolt by the Wagner private military group. It certainly places Putin in a weak position, especially vis a vis its friend without limits, China. India hasn't been on one of its best relations with China since the first clashes in India's northeast borders. Any bilateral conversation, at the leader's level wasn't expected at the SCO summit. However, to India's credit by expanding the scope of SCO to include deradicalisation, millets, environment and digitisation besides having two work groups related to start-ups and traditional medicine, it did carve out a roadmap towards new regional cooperation.

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

Tomato tears can only be wiped with R&D

National Research Foundation must propel R&D to make climate-smart techniques to address crop failures which lead to price rise of agri produce



AS MITTAL



Nowadays tomatoes are trending at Rs 100 to Rs 160 per kg, ginger and garlic touching Rs 150-200 / kg, steep rise in prices punched in the pocket of an average household and tell a bigger story of climate shocks. Even though, India is the world's second-largest producer of tomatoes and other vegetables but wholesome agriculture is facing a wide spectrum of challenges, such as stagnation in crop yields, declining soil organic matter, multi-nutrient deficiencies, shrinking arable land, water availability, cold supply chain and overall climate change is one of the biggest challenges. Farm output is vulnerable to changes in the climate as higher temperatures tend to reduce crop yields and increase pest infestations. Rainfed agriculture is primarily impacted due to variability in the number of rainy days.

To address climate change, recently the union cabinet gave the nod to set up a National Research Foundation (NRF), an apex body to promote, fund and mentor research to match up to global standards. The fine print of the NRF Bill is likely to be introduced in Parliament's monsoon session starting on 20th July. To be enriched with Rs 50,000 crore funds the NRF could be a game-changer in underlining the need for sensitive research to make climate-smart agriculture (CSA).

To minimise the greenhouse gas emission effects mainly caused by the imbalance usage of chemical fertilisers and to promote alternative fertilisers the union government recently caps the fertilisers subsidy up to Rs 3.69 lakh crore over three years till 2024-25. The savings from a reduction in fertiliser subsidies can also be ploughed into agricultural research in the face of climate change, a threat to food, livelihood and nutritional security for the ever-growing population.

As per a study by the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), climate change is expected to affect yields of crops such as rice, wheat, and

maize by 7-8 per cent, fruits and vegetables by less than 15-20 per cent by 2025. Punjab wheat production had declined 16 per cent in five years. The production fell from 178 lakh metric tonnes in the year 2017-18 to 149 lakh metric tonnes in 2021-22. Studies on rice and wheat suggest that wheat is sensitive to rising maximum temperatures and heat waves, while rice is vulnerable to increased minimum temperatures in the region.

It is hoped that The National Research Foundation will give impetus to research institutions, and R&D laboratories. This requires addressing a dissonance in research institutes wage a grim struggle for expertise, funds and infrastructure. By becoming a bridge between the two and enabling the top research institutes to hand-hold the less well-heeled institutions.

In India, there is little scope for bringing in more area under cultivation; therefore, growth in food grain production has to come largely through productivity enhancement. To enable farmers to improve crop yield and their income, they must have access to the latest research and development (R&D), which is the bedrock of sustainable agriculture.

MINUSCULE R&D BUDGET

The minuscule investments in R&D in India impede the ability of science and technology research to tackle multiple challenges faced by agriculture. The central Budget allocation for agricultural R&D is a meagre Rs 8,368 crore in FY 2021-22, Rs 8,513 crore in 2022-23 and the largest share of this amount is to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). A provision of Rs 5,877.06 crore had

been made for ICAR including salary, pension, administrative and logistical expenses accounting for around 80 per cent, with little left for research. For central agricultural universities budget allocation was Rs 599.45 crore only.

The total R&D expenditure in India as a percentage of agricultural GDP has been stagnant at 0.3 to 0.7 per cent in the last two decades. It is much lower than in the US (2.8 per cent), China (2.5 per cent), South Korea (4.3 per cent) and Israel (4.2 per cent).

Interestingly, India has the largest agricultural R&D manpower that includes 27,500 scientists and more than one lakh support staff, not to mention several agencies in the sector and the expenditure involved in running them. ICAR directly oversees 118 research institutes, including three central agricultural and four deemed universities, 64 research institutes, 17 national research centres, six national bureaus and 25 project directorates. Besides the nationwide R&D set up under the ICAR, there are 63 state agricultural universities. Despite such a large agricultural research network, the Indian system has failed to respond to the problems faced by its agriculture sector -- be it cost-effectiveness of crop production, productivity, water scarcity, weatherproofing etc.

Agricultural R&D, however, still has a long way to go to move away from the 'business-as-usual' activities. It needs to develop an end-to-end package of interventions and strategic policy support, tailored to the needs of particular crops and agro-ecologies in specific areas. The slogan 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan' reiterates the need to bolster the support for

agricultural science and technology.

To counter the adverse environmental effects of the second-generation problems of the Green Revolution such as land degradation and consequently reduced soil fertility, receding groundwater, factor productivity decline and biodiversity loss, a paradigm shift is needed towards the promotion of sustainable agriculture through conservation agriculture, organic farming, micro-irrigation, and nutrient-use efficiency.

Resource-conserving and climate-smart technologies such as zero-tillage, drip biofertilizers and biopesticides now occupy the centre stage. Innovations have to be scaled up urgently around hybrid technology, biotechnology, protected cultivation, precision farming, bioenergy, crop biofortification, remote sensing, information and communication technology, etc. Drones, sensors, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things hold the potential to improve efficiencies in agri-food production, post-production management and agro-processing.

THE WAY FORWARD

To incarnate India into a \$5-trillion economy by 2024-25, the agriculture sector should aim to contribute at least \$1 trillion to this national effort. And to this end, technologies arising from enhanced investment in agricultural research hold the potential to provide the required momentum. The bottom line is clear, National Research Foundation could propel R&D at large to make climate-smart agriculture key to India's ambition to grow as an economic superpower.



THE SLOGAN 'JAI JAWAN, JAI KISAN, JAI VIGYAN, JAI ANUSANDHAN' REITERATES THE NEED TO BOLSTER THE SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(The author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika group, Vice Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board. Views expressed are personal)

Proper sanitation is still a dream for Musahar community

Poverty, disease, starvation, and a severe lack of cleanliness have made life miserable for the Musahar community

During floods, snakes and scorpions are more feared than the miscreants here," said a woman while sharing the fears of defecating outside due to the lack of toilets from Musahari block in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar. The Musahar community, also known as Maha Dalits, is considered one of the most underprivileged communities in Bihar. Unfortunately, they have been excluded from various cleanliness schemes in the country, leaving them with no choice but to continue relying on open defecation. Struggling with annual flooding and being the lowest rung of the social ladder, the marginalized community of Musahars consistently finds itself at the bottom of the list when it comes to accessing government



VANDANA KUMARI

(Vandana writes stories from rural India)

schemes and benefits.

In 2020, the central government launched Phase 2 of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) with a focus on achieving Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus) status by 2024-2025. This phase aims to ensure the sustainability of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and improve Solid and Liquid Waste Management in rural areas.

Under Phase 1, all villages, Gram Panchayats, Districts, and States and Union Territories declared themselves as 'open defecation free' on October 2, 2019. However, despite this achievement, there are still a few communities that continue to practice open defecation. This is mainly due to their lack of access to the Swachh Bharat Mission

scheme or because they have been affected by natural disasters, which have disrupted the progress made.

Despite the construction of approximately 10.9 crore Individual Household Latrines (IHL) across India and over 1 crore toilets in Bihar alone as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission, the issue of open defecation persists in the Musahari block. The villagers in this region are compelled to go out for defecation due to the lack of toilets. Building toilets themselves is not a feasible option for them as their meagre income primarily goes towards their survival. Moreover, many men from these villages migrate to other areas in search of better opportunities, leaving the women behind to deal with this chal-

lenging situation. The women in particular face the humiliation of encountering derogatory comments from miscreants.

"Despite these challenges, we continue to endure this hardship, often returning home with our heads held low," a woman from this block shared. The poverty and helplessness caused by the flood in this area have further exacerbated the lives of the people living here. Due to their impoverished conditions, they lack both permanent housing and adequate toilet facilities. The recurrent floods have forced many to endure the hardships repeatedly, leading to homelessness and the necessity to defecate in the open. In numerous villages within the Musahari block, where hunger

and poverty prevail, the inhabitants live in squalor. A significant portion of the population suffers from diseases such as Malaria, Typhoid, Tuberculosis, Asthma, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

In this part of the district, poverty, disease, starvation, and a severe lack of cleanliness have made life miserable. This condition is not limited to just this block; the situation in dozens of Musahar societies across 16 different blocks of the district is also extremely serious in terms of poverty, illiteracy, and cleanliness. Despite the existence of many welfare schemes and government programs aimed at benefiting Maha Dalits, the reality of hundreds of Maha Dalit settlements in different districts of

Bihar is eye-opening, particularly when it comes to matters of cleanliness.

Rakesh Kumar, a resident, lamented the perpetual misery faced by the people in this area. "For half the year, they suffer from flood displacement, and the remaining months are dedicated to recovery. Some endure the anguish of river erosion, while others face the pain of migration. With only ten working days per month, they are left with twenty idle days. Consequently, education and cleanliness are neglected," said Rakesh.

On a positive note, Jayanti Devi, the head of the Panchayat in Rajwara Bhagwan village, has expressed her intention to construct toilets as part of a cleanliness initiative. "Many people in this

area are not fully aware of the drawbacks associated with open defecation. A few individuals in the village who have some awareness have taken the initiative to build their own toilets. These makeshift toilets are constructed using bamboo planks and pillars. Unfortunately, women in the village feel ashamed to use these toilets during the day," highlighted Jayanti.

The Musahar community will continue to face challenges unless schemes are developed that address their specific issues. In this case, improving access to sanitation facilities in flood-prone areas by constructing and promoting the use of household toilets and community toilets that are resilient to flooding can be the starting point.

Turkish, Swedish officials address NATO membership concerns

PTI ■ BRUSSELS

Senior officials from Sweden and Türkiye arrived at NATO headquarters on Thursday to examine Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's objections to the Nordic country joining the military alliance and to see what more, if anything, could be done to break the deadlock.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg is leading the talks, which will involve the countries' foreign ministers, intelligence chiefs and national security advisers.

Top officials from Finland, which joined NATO in April after addressing Türkiye's concerns, planned to take part.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan will be joined at the meetings by Erdogan's chief adviser Akif Cagatay Kilic, Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akcapar and the intelligence chief, Ibrahim Kalin, according

to a foreign ministry statement.

As the officials entered NATO headquarters in Brussels, workers busied themselves inside a roped-off area where the national flags of the alliance's 31 member countries fly and Sweden hopes its flag will be hoisted once Türkiye and Hungary ratify the Nordic nation's membership.

Fearing for their security, Sweden and neighbouring Finland ended their longstanding policy of military non-alignment after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and applied to join NATO.

US President Joe Biden welcomed Sweden's prime minister to the White House on Wednesday in a show of solidarity ahead of the alliance's two-day summit starting Tuesday in Lithuania.

Only Türkiye and Hungary have delayed Sweden's membership. The other 29 allies, Stoltenberg and Sweden have

all said the country has done enough to satisfy Türkiye's demands.

Sweden has changed its anti-terror laws and lifted an arms embargo on Türkiye, among other concessions.

But Türkiye accuses Sweden of being too lenient toward groups that Ankara says pose a security threat, including militant Kurdish groups and people associated with a 2016 coup attempt.

NATO requires the unanimous approval of all 31 members to expand.

Turkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the participants in Thursday's talks would review steps Finland and Sweden took, especially in the context of fighting terrorism, since the last meeting, which was held in Ankara on June 14.

In a new development just before the meeting, a Turkish man was found guilty of

attempted aggravated extortion, weapons possession and attempted terrorist financing, saying he was acting on behalf of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party.

The Stockholm District Court sentenced Yahya Güngör to a total of 4 1/2 years in prison for the crimes, after which he would be expelled from Sweden and banned from returning.

It was the first time that a Swedish court sentenced someone for terrorist financing of the party, Judge Mans Wigen said.

Also known as PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party has waged an insurgency in south-east Türkiye since 1984 and is considered a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the United States and the European Union. It's unclear whether the Swedish court action would have any impact on Erdogan's thinking.

Yellen in China to mend strained ties

AP ■ BEIJING

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen plans to tell Chinese officials Washington wants healthy economic competition but will defend US trade curbs imposed on security grounds and express concern about Beijing's export controls on metals used in semiconductors and solar panels, a senior Treasury official said on Thursday.

Yellen was due to meet on Friday with China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, as part of efforts to revive relations that are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes over security, technology and other irritants. Treasury officials have said she wouldn't meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Washington doesn't support decoupling or disconnecting US and Chinese industries and markets and Yellen will reiterate that message, the Treasury official said. Businesspeople have warned that might harm innovation and growth as both governments tighten controls on trade in technology and other goods deemed sensitive.

Yellen planned to discuss "targeted action" by Washington on trade due to national security or human rights concerns, according to the official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

Her visit follows one by Secretary of



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, right, arrives at Beijing Capital International Airport as Yang Yingming, center, Director General of the Department of International Economic Relations of China's Ministry of Finance, looks on, in Beijing, China on Thursday.

State Antony Blinken, who met Xi last month in the highest-level US visit to Beijing in five years. The two agreed to stabilise relations but failed to agree on improving communications between their militaries.

China's government has been frustrated by US curbs on Chinese access to advanced processor chips on security grounds. That threatens to delay or derail the ruling Communist Party's efforts to develop telecoms, artificial intelligence and other technologies.

Xi accused Washington in March of trying to hamper China's development.

Washington doesn't use security-related restrictions for economic benefit and considers national security "non-negotiable", the Treasury official said.

The United States wants "healthy economic competition" with China but considers some of Beijing's trade practices unfair, the official said.

They said Yellen would detail those concerns in meetings with Chinese officials.

Israeli forces shell southern Lebanon border village

AP ■ BEIRUT

Israeli forces shelled a southern Lebanese border village on Thursday after several explosions were heard in a disputed area where the borders of Syria, Lebanon and Israel meet.

Tensions continue to flare in the border area over two tents erected by the militant group Hezbollah and Israel's building of a wall around the Lebanese part of a village that Israeli troops captured during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

A Lebanese military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of not being cleared to provide information to journalists said one rocket was fired toward Israel from the border town of Kfar Chouba and that Israeli forces responded with two rocket attacks.

The Israeli Defence Forces first said no explosion took place in its territory and only on the Lebanese side of the border near Ghajar.

Minutes later, it said a

Lebanese rocket landed in Israeli territory near the border and that Israeli forces had since shelled parts of Kfar Chouba.

It was unclear who fired the rocket from Lebanon. The Lebanese army did not immediately comment on the explosions.

The UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said it could not verify that rocket fire caused the explosion but that the sounds were "consistent with a possible launch."

UNIFIL sent peacekeepers to investigate what happened while the head of the mission speaks to both Lebanese and Israeli authorities to ease the situation. "This incident comes at a sensitive time and in an area that has already experienced tensions earlier this week," UNIFIL said in a statement.

"We urge everyone to exercise restraint and avoid any action that could cause further escalation." Minutes after the explosions, Iran-backed

Hezbollah issued a statement about Israel's wall in the village of Ghajar.

The village is split into Lebanese and Israeli sides along a border known as the blue line that was demarcated after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000.

"It is not just a routine breach of what the occupation forces are accustomed to from time to time," the statement said. It did comment on the explosions. As part of the UN Security Council resolution that ended the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, Israel is to withdraw from the northern part of Ghajar, which has not happened.

UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon have called on Israel for years to end its building work in northern Ghajar and to withdraw its troops.

Lebanese soldiers in Mays al-Jabal, another border town, obstructed an Israeli bulldozer accompanied by Israeli soldiers on Wednesday that reached over the technical fence to remove plants and

trees from the Lebanese side.

The tense standoff did not result in any clashes.

The situation also has been heated along Chebaa Farms and around Kfar Chouba. Israel captured those areas from Syria during the 1967 Mideast war, and they are part of Syria's Golan Heights that Israel annexed in 1981.

The Lebanese government says the area belongs to Lebanon.

In early June, Israel filed a complaint with the UN saying that Hezbollah had set up tents several dozen metres (yards) inside the disputed territory.

Israeli media have since reported that Hezbollah removed one of the two tents, but the group did not confirm the action.

Later that month, Israeli soldiers fired tear gas to disperse scores of Lebanese protesters who pelted the troops with stones along the border near the disputed territory. Hezbollah also shot down an Israeli drone last month.

Death toll from SA toxic gas leak reaches 17, 10 hospitalised

AP ■ BOKSBURG

The death toll from a toxic gas leak that authorities blamed on an illegal gold processing operation in South Africa rose to 17, including three children, as police removed canisters from a community of closely packed shacks and sifted through evidence on Thursday. The leak of what authorities said was a toxic nitrate gas happened on Wednesday night in the informal Angelo settlement in Boksburg, a city on the eastern outskirts of Johannesburg.

The three children who died were ages 1, 6 and 15, police said. At least 10 people were hospitalised, including a 2-month-old baby, two 4 year olds and a 9 year old, according to Panyaza Lesufi, the premier of Gauteng province, who gave an update on Thursday.

A statement from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's office said it was a "devastating and tragic loss of innocent lives".

Bodies remained on the ground, some of them covered in sheets or blankets, for hours after the gas leak was reported around 8 pm on Wednesday as emergency service responders waited for forensic investigators and pathologists to do their work.

"It's not a nice scene at all. ... It's painful, emotionally draining and tragic," Lesufi was quoted as saying in news reports as he visited the settlement on Wednesday night.

An Associated Press journalist saw a forensic investigator covering the body of a small child with a blanket. Another body, covered in a white cloth with a shoe sticking out, lay under a strip of yellow police tape cordoning off the area. The bodies eventually were removed.

Search teams combed the area deep into the night looking for other possible casualties. Authorities didn't say if the people engaged in the illegal gold processing thought

to have caused the gas leak were among the dead, but police opened a criminal case. Investigators narrow their way through narrow alleys between shacks and other makeshift homes that were dark due to a lack of streetlights, a common situation in the deeply impoverished informal settlements found in and around South Africa's cities.

Emergency services spokesman William Ntlati said the deaths were caused by the inhalation of nitrate gas that leaked from a gas cylinder being kept in a shack where illegal miners were separating gold from rock and dirt. He said the leak had emptied the canister.

Lesufi, the Gauteng premier, tweeted videos that showed the dusty inside of the shack and at least four gas cylinders on metal stands. The footage included what Lesufi said was the cylinder that leaked lying on the floor next to the shack's entrance.

The search teams concentrated on an area stretching out 100 metres (yards) from the cylinder to check for more dead or injured people, Ntlati said.

Police later began tearing down the shack, and Lesufi said all gas cylinders were removed from the site.

Illegal mining is rife in the gold-rich areas around Johannesburg, where miners go into closed off and disused mines to search for any deposits left over. They then attempt to process some of that gold in secret, often in makeshift and highly dangerous facilities. Mining fatalities underground are also common and the South African government department responsible for mining announced recently that at least 31 illegal miners were believed to have died in a gas explosion in a disused mine in the city of Welkom in central South Africa in May. The cause was methane gas, the mining department said.

8-year-old girl dies after SUV crashes into London school

London (AP): An 8-year-old girl was killed on Thursday when an SUV crashed into a private elementary school on a very narrow road in the Wimbledon district of southwest London, police said. The crash wasn't believed to be terrorism, and the driver was taken into custody.

The girl died at the scene, Detective Chief Superintendent Clair Kelland said at a briefing near the site. "Our thoughts are with her family at this incredibly difficult time," said a visibly shaken Kelland, who is the Metropolitan Police force's local commander for southwest London.

"The driver of a car, a woman in her 40s, stopped at the scene and has since been arrested for causing death by dangerous driving and remains in police custody."

She confirmed that the crash wasn't being treated as terror-related, but urged people not to speculate as to what happened.

John Martin, chief paramedic for London Ambulance Service, said that 16 people were treated at the scene, 10 of whom were hospitalised.

Police were called to The Study Preparatory School, a private all-girls school, at 9.54 am, along with paramedics on the ground and air ambulances.

Stephen Hammond, Wimbledon's representative in Parliament, said the section of the school where the crash took place caters to younger children between the ages of 4 and 8.

The crash occurred about a mile away from the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, which is hosting the world-famous Wimbledon tennis tournament. Unlike the grand slam event, the school is located in a fairly remote area surrounded by local parks, horse trails and golf courses. Police have extended a large cordon around the school and television pictures from overhead showed the SUV, which appeared to be a Land Rover, up against the wall of the building.

Dalai Lama's kindness serve as an inspiration to many: Blinken

Washington (PTI): The Dalai Lama's kindness and humility serve as an inspiration to many around the world, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday as he greeted the India-based Tibetan spiritual leader on his 88th birthday.

Blinken also said the United States is unwavering in its commitment to support the linguistic, cultural, and religious identity of Tibetans, including the ability to freely choose and venerate their religious leaders without interference. "I extend my warmest wishes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the occasion of his 88th birthday, an auspicious day for the Tibetan community," he said.

"His Holiness's kindness and humility serve as an inspiration to many around the world, and I have deep admira-



ration for his ongoing commitment to peace and nonviolence," Blinken said in a statement.

The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a Chinese crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet. India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in-exile has been based in Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then.

Indian nursing student in Aus buried alive by boyfriend

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

In a horrific act of vengeance, a 21-year-old Indian nursing student in Australia was abducted by her jilted ex-boyfriend from India, driven nearly 650 km and buried alive in South Australia state's remote Flinders Ranges, a court has heard.

Jasmeen Kaur from Adelaide City was killed by Tarikjeet Singh in March 2021, a month after reporting him to the police for stalking.

Kaur was abducted from her workplace on March 5, 2021, and driven more than 400 miles (644 km) while bound with cable ties in the boot of a car Singh had borrowed from his flatmate, news.com.au portal and other websites reported on Wednesday.

He buried Kaur in a shallow grave after making "superficial" cuts to her throat which

were not enough to kill her and she was aware of her surroundings when she died at some point on March 6. Singh pleaded guilty to the murder but the horrific details of his crime came to light during sentencing submissions at the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Prosecutor Carmen Matteo said the murder was "not efficient" and Kaur was "made to suffer".

"She had to have been consciously suffering what could only be described as the absolute terror of breathing in and swallowing soil and dying in that way," Matteo said.

Kaur's family, including her mother, were in the court to hear the sentencing submissions.

The court heard Singh planned the killing because he was unable to get over the breakdown of their relationship.

"The way in which Kaur was killed involved, really, an uncommon level of cruelty," Matteo said.

"It's not known when her throat was cut, it's not known when or how she got into or was placed into that burial grave, and it's not known when that was dug, other than the prosecution says it had to have been while she was still alive and in preparation for her burial.

"[It was] a killing that was committed as an act of vengeance or as an act of revenge," she said.

Singh wrote several messages to Kaur in the lead-up to her death that he never ended up sending.

"Your bad luck that I am still alive, cheap, wait and watch, will get the answer, each and every single one will get the answer," one message said.

Record-high earth's temp holds for 3rd consecutive day

AP ■ NEW YORK

Earth's average temperature remained at a record high on Wednesday, after two days in which the planet reached unofficial records. It's the latest marker in a series of climate-change-driven extremes. The average global temperature was 17.18 Celsius (62.9 degrees Fahrenheit), according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition.

That matched a record set on Tuesday of 17.18 Celsius (62.9 Fahrenheit), and came after a previous record of 17.01 Celsius (62.6 degrees Fahrenheit) was set on Monday.

Scientists have warned for months that 2023 could see



record heat as human-caused climate change, driven largely by the burning of fossil fuels like coal, natural gas and oil, warmed the atmosphere.

They also noted that La Nina, the natural cooling of the ocean that had acted as a counter to that warming, was giving way to El Nino, the reverse phenomenon marked by warming oceans. The North Atlantic has seen record

warmth this year.

"A record like this is another piece of evidence for the now massively supported proposition that global warming is pushing us into a hotter future," said Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who was not part of the calculations.

University of Maine climate scientist Sean Birkle, creator of the Climate Reanalyzer, said the daily figures are unofficial but a useful snapshot of what's happening in a warming world.

While the figures are not an official government record, "this is showing us an indication of where we are right now," said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration chief scientist Sarah Knappick. And NOAA indicated it will take the figures into consideration for its official record calculations.

Meta takes aim at Twitter with launch of 'Threads'

AP ■ LONDON

Meta has unveiled an app called Threads to rival Twitter, targeting users looking for an alternative to the social media platform owned — and frequently changed — by Elon Musk. Threads is billed as a text-based version of Meta's photo-sharing app Instagram that the company says provides "a new, separate space for real-time updates and public conversations."

It went live late Wednesday in Apple and Google Android app stores, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg saying 10 million people had signed up in the first seven hours. There were some early glitches, including Zuckerberg's posts — or Threads as they're dubbed — not loading in several places including the United Kingdom, India and Lebanon. But his replies to other users did appear. Threads launched in

more than 100 countries — including the US, Britain, Australia, Canada and Japan — and has already drawn celebrity users like chef Gordon Ramsay, pop star Shakira and actor Jack Black as well as accounts from Airbnb, Guinness World Records, Netflix, Vogue magazine and other media outlets.

The Twitter-like microblogging experience suggests that Meta Platforms has been gearing up to directly challenge the platform after Musk's tumultuous ownership has resulted in a series of unpopular changes that have turned off users and advertisers.

Zuckerberg said in some early replies on Threads that he's focused on making the app "a friendly place," which will "ultimately be the key to its success." "That's one reason why Twitter never succeeded as much as I think it should have,



and we want to do it differently," he wrote. On Threads, there are buttons to like, repost, reply to or quote a thread, and users see the number of likes and replies that a post has received.

Posts are limited to 500 characters, which is more than Twitter's 280-character threshold, and can include links, photos and videos up to five minutes long.

Despite that, Meta said its "vision is that Threads will be a new app more focused on text and dialogue, modeled after what Instagram has done for

photo and video." Instagram users will be able to log in with their existing usernames and follow the same accounts on the new app. New users will have to set up an Instagram account. Meta emphasized measures to keep users safe, including enforcing Instagram's community guidelines and providing tools to control who can mention or reply to users.

Meta's new offering, however, has raised data privacy concerns. Threads could collect a wide range of personal information, including health, financial, contacts, browsing and search history, location data, purchases and "sensitive info," according to its data privacy disclosure on the App Store. Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey pointed it out in a snarky tweet saying, "All your Threads are belong to us" that included a screenshot of the disclosure. Musk replied "yeah."

One place Threads won't be rolled out is in the European Union, which has strict data privacy rules. Meta has informed Ireland's Data Privacy Commission that it has no plans yet to launch Threads in the 27-nation bloc, commission spokesman Graham Doyle said. The Irish watchdog is Meta's main privacy regulator for the EU because the company's regional headquarters is based in Dublin.

The company is working on rolling the app out to more countries but pointed to regulatory uncertainty for its decision to hold off on a European launch. Analysts said its success is far from guaranteed, citing Meta's track record of starting standalone apps that were later shut down. Also in question is whether it's the right move for Meta, which announced tens of thousands of layoffs over the past year amid a tech industry slowdown.

Belarus leader claims Wagner chief is in Russia

AP ■ MINSK

The mercenary leader who led a short-lived mutiny against the Kremlin in Russia and his Wagner troops are in their field camps, the president of Belarus said on Thursday, raising new questions about the deal that ended the extraordinary challenge to President Vladimir Putin's rule.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's claim could not be independently verified, and the Kremlin refused to comment on Yevgeny Prigozhin's whereabouts.

It was not clear if travelling to Russia would violate the deal, which allowed the Wagner chief to move to Belarus in exchange for ending the rebellion and a promise of amnesty for him and his troops.

Few details of the agreement brokered by Lukashenko have emerged. Last week, Lukashenko said the mercenary leader was in Belarus.

Russian media later reported he was seen at his offices in St. Petersburg, a sign



File photo of Yevgeny Prigozhin

that the deal may have allowed him to finalise his affairs in Russia.

On Thursday, Lukashenko told international reporters that the mercenary leader was in St. Petersburg and Wagner's troops were in their camps.

He did not specify the location of the camps, but Prigozhin's mercenaries fought alongside Russian forces in eastern Ukraine before their revolt and also have bases on the Russian territory.

Asked about where Prigozhin is, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment, but reaffirmed that the deal that ended the mutiny envisaged his move to Belarus.

Lukashenko said his government offered Wagner, a private military contractor that has sent troops around the world to fight for Russia's interests, the use of Belarusian military camps but the company had not made a final decision.

He also said that Prigozhin has been given back the cash and weapons that were confiscated by Russian authorities.

country and said any Wagner troops there would be required to sign a contract with Belarusian authorities that would outline conditions and limitations of their actions.

He dismissed the suggestions that the mercenaries could attack Ukraine from Belarusian territory, which Russian troops used as a staging ground ahead of their invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Moscow has also maintained military presence in Belarus.

During their short revolt, Prigozhin's mercenaries quickly swept through the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and captured the military headquarters there before marching to within about 200 kilometres (125 miles) of the Russian capital. Prigozhin described it as a "march of justice" to oust the Russian defense minister and the General Staff chief.

The Wagner fighters faced little resistance, smashing occasional roadblocks and downing at least six helicopters and a command post aircraft, killing at least 10 airmen.

When the deal was struck, the Wagner chief ordered his troops to return to their camps.

The abortive rebellion represented the biggest threat to Putin in his more than two decades in power, exposing his weakness and eroding the Kremlin's authority.

Lukashenko said he warned Prigozhin that he and his troops would be destroyed if they failed to make a deal to end their mutiny and that Belarus would send a brigade to help protect Moscow.

"It was necessary to nip it in the bud. It was very dangerous, as history shows," Lukashenko said.

Asked about the deployment of Russia's tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, Lukashenko said they are intended to deter any aggression against the country.

Putin and Lukashenko both have said that some of them already have been moved to Belarus. "These weapons serve strictly defensive purposes," he said, adding that if Belarus faces an aggression, "the answer will come instantly."

Russian cruise missile attack on Ukraine city of Lviv kills 4 people

AP ■ LVIW

Russia fired cruise missiles Thursday from a western Ukraine city far from the front line of the war, killing at least four people in an apartment building in what officials said was the heaviest attack on civilian areas of Lviv since the Kremlin's forces invaded the country last year.

The nighttime attack destroyed the roof and the top two floors of a residential building, injuring 34 people. Emergency crews with search dogs went through the rubble. The youngest victim was 21 years old and the oldest was 95, according to Maksym Kozlytskiy, head of Regional Military Administration.

"This woman survived the Second World War but, unfortunately, she didn't survive" Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kozlytskiy said. Debris and wrecked parked cars lined the street outside the building, which overlooks a small neighbourhood park with swings and climbing frames amid trees. Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said around 60 apartments and 50 cars in the area of strike were damaged. He announced two days of official mourning. US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink described the attack as "vicious."

"Russia's repeated attacks on civilians are absolutely horrifying," she tweeted.

Ukraine's air force reported it intercepted seven of the 10 Kalibr cruise missiles that Russia fired from Black Sea toward the Lviv region and its namesake city — more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) away — around 1 am on Thursday.

The Kremlin's forces have repeatedly hit civilian areas during the war, though Russian officials say they choose only targets of military value.

Lviv is near the western border with Poland and is more than 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the front lines of the war in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Kyiv's counteroffensive to dislodge Russian forces is in its early stages. Sadovyi, the mayor, addressed residents in a video message, saying the attack was the largest on Lviv's civilian infrastructure since the beginning of last year's invasion.

"Russians are hitting us. That's how they love us. I'm sorry for those people who were killed. They were young. So sorry for them," said Ganna Fedorenko, a local resident, holding her hands crossed on her chest. She received injuries on her face, and an adhesive plaster turned red with blood on her right cheek. "This is terrible. They hit civilians."

The Ministry of Internal Affairs said 64 people had to leave their homes. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised "a response to the enemy. A tangible one."

US releases video of Russian jets intercepting US drones

Washington (AP): Russian fighter jets flew dangerously close to several US drone aircraft over Syria, setting off flares and forcing the MQ-9 Reapers to take evasive maneuvers, the Air Force said.

US Air Forces Central released a video of the encounter that took place on Wednesday, showing a Russian SU-35 fighter closing in on a Reaper, and later showed a number of the so-called parachute flares moving into the drone's flight path. The flares are attached to parachutes.

US Gen. Alex Grynkech, commander of 9th Air Force in the Middle East, said three of the US drones were operating over Syria after 10:30 am local time, on a mission against the Islamic State group which was not detailed, when three of the Russian aircraft "began harassing the drones". In a statement, Grynkech said one of the Russian pilots moved their aircraft in front of a drone and engaged the SU-35's afterburner, which greatly increases its speed and air pressure. The jet blast from the afterburner can

Russian navy ships visit Shanghai as sides reaffirm military ties amid Ukraine conflict



Gromkiy corvette of Russian Pacific fleet is shown in an undated photo. The Cold War-era frigates Gromkiy and Otlichnyy began on Wednesday a seven-day visit to the financial hub of Shanghai, China's largest city and biggest port.

AP ■ BEIJING

A pair of Russia navy ships are visiting China as the countries reaffirm their military ties amid Russia's war in Ukraine. The Cold War-era frigates Gromkiy and Otlichnyy arrived in the financial hub of Shanghai, China's largest city and biggest port, on Wednesday for a seven-day visit.

Following the port call, the ships will conduct joint drills with their Chinese counterparts focusing on ship-to-ship communications, maneuvering in formation and maritime search and rescue, state television's military channel reported Thursday.

The visit follows a meeting Monday in Beijing between China's defense minister and the head of Russia's navy, the first formal military talks between the friendly neighbors since a short-lived mutiny by the Russian mercenary group Wagner.

China has reassured Russia of its continued support

US releases video of Russian jets intercepting US drones

potentially damage the Reaper's electronics, and Grynkech said it reduced the drone operator's ability to safely operate the aircraft.

"Russian military aircraft engaged in unsafe and unprofessional behaviour while interacting with US aircraft in Syria," he said, adding that the actions threaten the safety of the US and Russian forces. "We urge Russian forces in Syria to cease this reckless behaviour and adhere to the standards of behaviour expected of a professional air force so we can resume our focus on the enduring defeat of ISIS."

Army Gen. Erik Kurilla, head of US Central Command, said in a statement that Russia's violation of ongoing efforts to clear the airspace over Syria "increases the risk of escalation or miscalculation". About 900 US forces are deployed to Syria to work with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces battling the Islamic State militants there. No other details about the drone operation were provided, and it's not clear where over Syria the incidents took place.

Pak court gives one-day exemption to Imran Khan from appearance

Islamabad (PTI): A Pakistani court here on Thursday accepted former prime minister Imran Khan's plea for personal exemption from the Tashakhana corruption case hearing, ordering his appearance before the court on Friday.

Khan, 70, was to appear in person before the Additional District and Sessions Court in Islamabad on Thursday.

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

Khan booked in six cases

Islamabad (PTI) Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has been named in six cases, including three under the tough Anti-Terrorism Act, for the unprecedented attack on the Lahore High Court and requested the court to fix any date for hearing after July 10.

The court accepted the plea for personal exemption from the Tashakhana case hearing, ordering Khan's appearance before the court on Friday, the Dawn newspaper reported. Despite the request for extended exemption, the court granted PTI chief Khan a day-long exemption while instructing his counsel to ensure the former prime minister's presence in court the following day, the report added.

Rasandik Engineering Industries India Limited
(CIN: L74210HR1984PLC032233)

Reg. Off: 1, Roj-Ka-Meo Industrial Area, Sohna, Haryana - 122103
Web: www.rasandik.com Email: cs@rasandik.com

NOTICE OF 39TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE INTIMATION FOR AGM

NOTICE is hereby given that the 39th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of Members of Rasandik Engineering Industries India Limited will be held on **Saturday, July 29, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. (IST)** through Video Conferencing ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") in compliance with all the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Rules made thereunder and SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (Listing Regulations) read with General Circular Nos. 14/2020, 17/2020, 20/2020, 02/2021, 19/2021, 21/2021 and 2/2022 dated 8th April 2020, 13th April 2020, 5th May 2020, 13th January 2021, December 08, 2021, December 14, 2021 and May 05, 2022 respectively, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circuits") and Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMDC/1/CIR/P/2020/79, Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMDC/2/CIR/2021/11 and Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMDC/2/CIR/P/2022/62 dated 12th May 2020, January 15, 2021 and May 13, 2022 respectively, issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI Circulars") (collectively referred to as "relevant circulars").

In compliance with said MCA Circuits and SEBI Circulars, electronic copies of the Notice of 39th AGM and Annual Report for the Financial Year 2022-2023 of the Company has been sent to all the Members on July 5, 2023, whose e-mail addresses are registered with the Company/Depositories. The same are also available on the Company's website www.rasandik.com, website of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com and also available on the website of **Link Intime India Private Limited (Link Intime)** at <http://e.investorlinkintime.co.in>. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with rules made thereunder and Regulation 42 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, as amended, the Register of Members and Share Transfer books of the Company will remain closed on **Monday, July 24, 2023 to Friday, July 29, 2023 (both days inclusive)** for the said AGM.

Pursuant to Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, the Members are provided with the facility to cast their votes on all resolutions set forth in the Notice of 39th AGM using electronic voting system (e-voting) provided by **Link Intime**.

The voting rights of Members shall be in proportion to the equity shares held by them in the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on the **cut-off date i.e. Saturday, July 22, 2023**.

Detailed procedure for remote e-voting/e-voting during AGM and to attend the AGM through VC/OAVM through the **Link Intime** is provided in the Notice of the AGM. The Members are requested to read the instructions pertaining to e-voting/e-voting during AGM through VC/OAVM as described in the Notice of AGM carefully.

All Members are informed that:

- The businesses as stated in the Notice of 39th AGM will be transacted by electronic means through e-voting platform of **Link Intime** i.e. <https://investorlinkintime.co.in/>;
- The remote e-voting shall commence on **Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at 9:00 am (IST) and ends on Friday, July 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm (IST)**;
- The **Cut-off date** for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means (remote e-voting before the AGM as well as e-voting during the AGM) is **Saturday, July 22, 2023**;
- A person whose name is recorded in the Register of Members or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting before the AGM as well as e-voting during the AGM. Any member who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a Member of the Company after the sending of the Notice and holding shares as on the cut-off date i.e. Saturday, July 22, 2023, may obtain the User ID and Password by sending a request at enotices@linkintime.co.in or contact on: - Tel: **022-4918 6000**. However, if a person is already registered with Link Intime for e-voting, then existing user ID and password can be used for casting vote;
- Members present in the AGM through VC/OAVM facility and who had not cast their votes on the resolutions through remote e-voting and are otherwise not barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through e-voting system during the AGM;
- Member may note that:
 - The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by **Link Intime** after the aforesaid date and time for e-voting and the remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the specified period;
 - Once the vote on a resolution is cast by the members, they shall not be allowed to change it subsequently;
 - The facility for electronic voting shall be made available at the AGM for the members who have not cast their votes by remote e-voting;
 - Members who have cast their vote on resolution(s) by remote e-voting prior to the AGM will also be eligible to participate in the AGM through VC/OAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote on such resolution(s) again.

7. Procedure: Attending the AGM:
(a) Web-link to attend: <https://investorlinkintime.co.in>
(b) Detailed procedure: Refer Page No. 20 to 25 of the AGM Notice.
(c) For queries/issues login: Send an e-mail to instameet@linkintime.co.in or call 022-49186175.
(d) You are requested to update your mobile number/contact number/address/e-mail address with the relevant Depository Participant and Company at all times.

The relevant documents referred to in this Notice are available for inspection by the Members through electronic mode. The Members may write to the Company at cs@rasandik.com in this regard, by mentioning "Request for Inspection" in the subject of the E-mail.

Any query / concern / grievances connected with voting/AGM by electronic means, if any, may be addressed to the Company by writing to Mr. Pradeep Chandra Nayak, Company Secretary, Rasandik Engineering Industries India Limited, at the Registered Office of the Company or email at cs@rasandik.com.

Mr. Awanshu Kumar, (Membership No. FCS 510888) of M/s. AKDC & Associates, Practising Chartered Accountant, has been appointed as the Scrutinizer by the Board of Directors for providing facility to the Members of the Company to scrutinize the remote e-voting process before the AGM as well as remote e-voting during the AGM in a fair and transparent manner.

In case you have any queries, /grievances pertaining to remote e-voting (before the AGM and during the AGM), you may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") for Shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available in the download section of <https://investorlinkintime.co.in> or write an e-mail to enotices@linkintime.co.in or call on 022-49186000 / 011-49411000 or contact Mr. Sunil Mishra, Team Member at sunil.mishra@linkintime.co.in.

For Rasandik Engineering Industries India Limited
Sd/-
Pradeep Chandra Nayak
Company Secretary

Date: 05.07.2023
Place: Sohna, Haryana

UN records the highest number of 'grave violations' against children in conflicts

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Children experienced the highest number of "grave violations" in conflicts verified by the United Nations in 2022, with the conflicts between Israeli and Palestinians and in Congo and Somalia putting the most youngsters in peril, the UN children's agency said.

UNICEF also expressed particular concern about their plight in Haiti, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ukraine, where Russia has been put on the UN blacklist.

"Grave violations" include the recruitment and use of children by combatants, killings and injuries, sexual violence, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals.

Omar Abdi, UNICEF's deputy executive director, told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that the more than 27,000 grave violations, up

from 24,000 the previous year, are the highest number verified by the UN since its monitoring reports began in 2005. The number of conflict situations "of concern" was also the highest — at 26. Since the report, Abdi said, a serious conflict has erupted in Sudan where over 1 million children have been displaced by violent conflict and the UN has received reports that hundreds have been killed and injured. He also said UNICEF expects an increase in Palestinian children affected due to recent escalations in violence.

Government and parties to conflicts are not fulfilling their commitments to protect children, and "meaningful and unambiguous action" is needed, the UNICEF official said.

In his yearly report to the council late last month, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres put Russian forces on the UN's annual blacklist of

Public Notice

Public Notice TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to inform the General Public that following share certificate of **Kirloskar Pneumatic Company Limited**, having its Registered Office at **Hadapsar Industrial Estate, Pune, Maharashtra, 411013**, registered in the name of the following Shareholder/s has been lost by them :-

Sr. No.	Name of the Shareholder/s	Certificate No. /s	Distinctive Number/s	No. of Shares	
1.	Vinim Barkat Ram (Deceased)	R02230	21727 - 21731	12760802 - 12761013	212
2.	Meera Barkat Ram				

The Public are hereby cautioned against purchasing or dealing in any way with the above referred share certificates. Any person who has any claim in respect of the said share certificate/s should lodge such claim with the Company or its Registrar and Transfer Agents **Link Intime India Private Limited 247 Park, C-101, 1st Floor, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli (W), Mumbai - 400083**, within 15 days of publication of this notice after which no claim will be entertained and the Company shall proceed to issue Duplicate Share Certificate/s.

Place - **New Delhi**.
Date: **07 / 07 / 2023**.

Meera Barkat Ram

कार्यालय प्रधान महाप्रबन्धक (अभियन्त्रण)—आर
उ.प्र. राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण,
ए-1/4 खखनपुर, कानपुर

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

एवम् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि सार्वजनिक के निम्न जनसमूहों में स्थित औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के विद्युत अनुसंधान एवं स्व-स्वयं कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्रबन्धकों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत एवं आई एच आर श्रेणी में विद्युत लार्डशिप एवं अनुसंधान केन्द्रों/कर्मों से ई-निविदाओं आमंत्रित की जाती है जो दिनांक 10.07.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 17.07.2023 को अपराह्न 5.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। निविदाओं को दिनांक 18.07.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11.00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा शायद पत्रों की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 20.07.2023 को सायं 5.00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा संबंधी विवरण निम्नवत है :-

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत रु. (लाख में)
1.	Upgradation of electrical system of street light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I.A. Foundary Nager, E.P.I.P. Sikandra ABC & Staff Colony, Distt-Agra	143.54
2.	Upgradation and A.M.C. of electrical system of street light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I.A. G.C. Jhansi & Bijauli, Distt.-Jhansi	167.49

नोट:- 1. निविदादाता अपन-निविदाओं में समस्त कर एवं जी.एस.टी. सहित दरें अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्य हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उ.प्र. शासन, लखनऊ में श्रेणी 'क' अनुमोदित साइडस्वैच अपलोड करने अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट: www.onlineupsida.com पर स्थित ई-लिंक एवं यूएचएससी की वेबसाइट: <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

वर्चिष्ठ प्रबन्धक (यु.) विद्युत
उ.प्र. र. औ. वि. प्रा., कानपुर

Sensex, Nifty end at new record

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Equity benchmark indices scaled fresh all-time closing highs on Thursday, driven by unabated foreign fund inflows and buying in index major Reliance Industries.



Defying a weak trend in the global markets, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 339.60 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at its new all-time closing high of 65,785.64. During the day, the benchmark jumped 386.94 points or 0.59 per cent to hit its lifetime intra-day peak of 65,832.98.



The NSE Nifty rallied 98.80 points or 0.51 per cent to end at a new record high of 19,497.30. In intra-day, it advanced 113.7 points or 0.58 per cent to reach its all-time intra-day peak of 19,512.20.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra emerged as the biggest gainer, climbing nearly 5 per cent. Power Grid, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, NTPC, Axis Bank, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints and Wipro were among the other major gainers.

GST Council to tighten registration rules

Physical verification to be mandatory in 'high risk' cases

The changes proposed by the Law Committee, comprising officers from Centre and states, with a view to contain fake registration under Goods and Services Tax (GST), would be considered by the Union finance minister-chaired GST Council.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI
In order to check fake registration, the GST Council is likely to reduce the time period to 30 days, from 45 days currently, for submission of PAN-linked bank account details of the person seeking registration with tax authorities.

The central and state GST officers are currently undertaking a special drive to catch fake registration. During the drive so far, 17,000 GSTINs were found to be non-existent. Of this, 11,015 GSTINs have been suspended and 4,972 have been cancelled, while Rs 15,000 crore tax evasion has been detected.

son, within a period of 45 days from grant of registration or the date on which returns are due to be furnished, whichever is earlier.

The Council, in its meeting on July 11, is likely to provide for mandatory physical verification of the business premises of "high risk" applicants before granting of GST registration.

Sources said in light of several cases of unscrupulous elements obtaining fake/bogus GST registration, it is desirable to strengthen the process of registration under GST by amending provisions of Central GST Rules, wherever required.

The Law Committee suggested that the time period be reduced to 30 days from the date of outward supplies of goods or services in GSTR-1 or using invoice furnishing facility, whichever is earlier.

Also, the GST Rules are likely to be amended to state that person whose business premises is being verified should not be present at the spot during the physical verification.

As per the existing GST Rules, a registered person is required to furnish details of PAN-linked bank account, which is in name of the registered per-

son, within a period of 45 days from grant of registration or the date on which returns are due to be furnished, whichever is earlier.

the Permanent Account Number (PAN) of the proprietor shall also be linked with the Aadhaar number of the proprietor. In 'high risk' cases, the Law Committee suggested that the registration shall be granted within 30 days of application, after physical verification of the place of business.

Retail inflation likely to have remained flat at 4.26% in June, says Barclays

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Retail inflation is likely to have remained flat at 4.26 per cent in June compared to May, British brokerage Barclays has said, despite soaring vegetable prices and steady fuel prices.

of tomatoes has crossed even Rs 140 per kilogram in many markets as the monsoon played truant in June.



mostly reflecting a higher base. Sequentially, they estimate food prices rose faster in June than in May when it rose 1.1 per cent, making it the highest level since May 2022.



Unseasonal rain made this summer challenging, says Coca-Cola India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Unseasonal rains have made this summer a challenging one for beverages major Coca-Cola India although sales became better as the season progressed, according to Vice President Sundeep Bajoria.

industry, particularly for away-from-home channels, he added. When asked about the reports over aspartame, which is used in Diet Coke as an artificial sweetener, he declined to comment.

DPIIT to roll out mandatory quality norms for home electrical appliances; one order to cover 85 standards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will soon roll out mandatory quality control and safety standards for a number of household electrical appliances, a senior official said on Thursday.

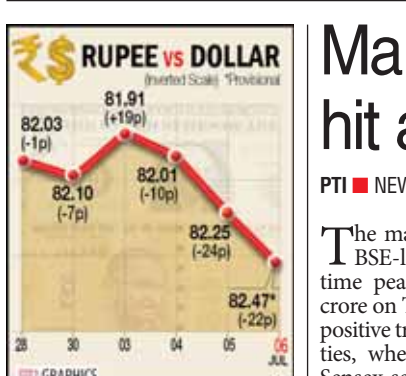


He said that the move will help in addressing safety concerns about these products.



Recent modifications in Twitter pose problems for users, pave way for competition: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Some users on microblogging site Twitter are shifting to third-party apps since the company has made verification necessary within 30 days for accessing TweetDeck, a move which industry watchers believe could give an edge to rival platforms.



Rupee falls 22 paise to close at 82.47 against US dollar
PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market valuation of BSE-listed firms hit all-time high of ₹301.70 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a lifetime peak of Rs 301.70 lakh crore on Thursday, mirroring a positive trend in domestic equities, where benchmark index Sensex settled at a new record high.

Investors' wealth climbed Rs 1.80 lakh crore on Thursday helped by a rally in equities. BSE firms' mcap reached the historic Rs 200 lakh crore mark on February 4, 2021. The total market valuation of all listed firms at the BSE had first hit Rs 100 lakh crore level on November 28, 2014.

Audi to launch electric SUV Q8 e-tron in India in August



starting our journey of the next generation (electric) cars. Subsequently in the coming years we'd also see more electric cars making way to India," Dhillon said.

INBRIEF
SALIVA-BASED GENOME TESTING
New Delhi: Lord's Mark Industries has launched wholly owned subsidiary Lord's Mark Biotech to promote genome testing in India.

The rupee depreciated by 22 paise to close at 82.47 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a stronger American currency in the overseas market and elevated crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the US dollar gained on safe-haven demand amid risk aversion and rising expectations of a hawkish US Federal Reserve monetary policy in July.

German luxury carmaker Audi will launch electric SUV Q8 e-tron in India next month to strengthen its electric vehicle portfolio in the country, according to a senior company official.

strengthen our (EV) portfolio with what is the latest available across Audi's offering," Dhillon said the Q8 e-tron is being launched in India in the same cycle where globally it is being launched, underlining the significance of the Indian market.

DROPPED FROM TEAM INDIA, MAVI TAKES SIX WICKETS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shivam Mavi grabbed six wickets to wreck a formidable West Zone batting unit and the pacer now wants to build on the performance to construct an all-format career for himself.

Mavi's 6 for 44 was instrumental in Central Zone bundling out West for 220 in the first innings of the Duleep Trophy semifinals at Alur grounds.

"I have been performing well with the red ball in the last three or four years. Hopefully, I will get to play in Test matches. It is not like I want to play only in one format and I am working hard to be ready for all three formats," said Mavi.

The national selectors have entrusted Mavi with Central Zone captaincy in the domestic season opener.

It was a huge vote of confidence for the 24-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, underlining his position as a prominent candidate in the waiting list.

"I feel very happy about it. The selectors have given me such a big responsibility. It is (captaincy) difficult for fast bowlers in India because fast bowlers get tired here because of the conditions.



"But here (Bangalore) the conditions are fine and we don't get tired that much. I have played in England and the weather is quite similar here. We get time to think as a captain," said Mavi.

Mavi handled the captaincy part well without affecting his bowling. Out of six wickets, three were Cheteshwar Pujara, Suryakumar Yadav and Sarfaraz Khan, breaking the West middle-order.

In fact, Mavi has now taken nine wickets from his last three innings. Simplicity, Mavi says, is the mantra of his success.

"It does not matter to me who the batsman is. For me, it is all about bowling in the right areas and if I know if I can do that, I will get the wickets," explained Mavi.

However, Mavi had to wait three months or so to return to the field after playing the Ahmedabad T20I for India against New Zealand in February earlier this year.

He did not get a game in IPL 2023 despite being in the rolls of Gujarat Titans. So, was it tough for him to be in touch with the game during this time away? Mavi did not read too much into it?

"Getting selected for a match depends on the coach and captain.

But I was using that time to do net sessions. I was bowling long spells at nets. I was in a good space.

"I was bowling 7 to 8 overs at nets. I kept myself motivated thinking that I will get a chance sooner and I was focusing on improving my skills," said Mavi.

However, Mavi admitted that finding his rhythm in a real match situation was a bit tough after that considerable break?

"Yes. I was playing after three months. It was a bit tough to find the rhythm on the first day. The four overs that I'd bowled in the first evening was a bit tough for me. But it became better when I came back to bowl on the second day," said Mavi.

Now, a busy domestic season awaits Mavi and he is aware that workload management is quite important for him to traverse the distance.

"We have to upload our workload in the AMS monitoring system on match days. We wear that system and play.

"It helps us to know the extent of workload -- how many kilometers we covered and how many strides we took in a day etc. It is good for us," he said.



Tamim Iqbal announces shock international

IANS ■ CHATTOGRAM

A day after Bangladesh lost the first ODI to Afghanistan by 17 runs, ODI captain Tamim Iqbal shocked everyone by announcing his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect.

Iqbal's decision to abruptly end his 16-year international career comes just three months before Bangladesh play in the ODI World Cup, to be held in India from October 5 to November 19.

"This is the end for me. I have given my best. I have tried my best. I am retiring from international cricket from this moment. Yesterday against Afghanistan was my last international game."

"It was not a sudden decision. I was thinking about this for different reasons. I don't want to mention here. I have spoken to my family members about it. I thought this is the right time for me to retire from international cricket," Iqbal was quoted as saying by ESPNCricinfo in a tearful press conference in Chattogram.

Iqbal made his international debut for Bangladesh in February 2007 and played in 241 ODIs, scoring 8,313 runs with 14 centuries - both of which are the most by a batter from the country.

The veteran opener, who made heads turn with a quickfire fifty in an upset win over India in the 2007 ODI World Cup, is also the only Bangladesh batter to have scored centuries in all three formats of the game and had already retired from T20Is in 2022.

"I don't have much to say. One thing I will definitely say is, I tried my best (sobbing). I did try my best. Maybe I was not good enough or good enough. I don't know. But I tried my

100% whenever I was in the field."

"There are a lot of other things I want to say, but as you can see I am almost unable to speak. But I hope you respect the situation. It is not an easy situation to speak. Quitting international cricket is not easy. I hope you understand. I am sorry to call you on such a short notice. I thank you all in the media," added an emotional Iqbal.

Iqbal scored 5,134 runs in 70 Tests, the second-highest for a Bangladesh batter, at an average of 38.89, including ten centuries. As Bangladesh's ODI skipper, Tamim won 21 out of 37 matches and led the team to a third-place finish in the ODI Super League, ensuring their direct qualification for the World Cup in India later in the year.

"I also want to thank the fans. Your love and faith in me inspired me to give my very best for Bangladesh. I want to ask for your prayers for the next chapter of my life. Please keep me in your prayers."

"I am sorry if I missed anyone to thank. But whoever has helped me to grow as a cricketer and human being, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. My mother, my brother, my wife and two children. They suffered a lot in my journey. They also had much to cherish. I thank them as well. I have nothing more to say."

"Please end my topic here. It is the end. At least for international cricket. Let's not poke too much about it. Why, why, what is it, what else could have happened? Let's put an end to this. I have always said that the team is bigger than any individual. Let's focus on the team. Two more games to go in the series. I think we should win. There are two major trophies," concluded Iqbal.

Federer hopes Nadal can retire 'on his own terms'



IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Swiss tennis legend Roger Federer believes his former rival Rafael Nadal can "retire on his own terms", considering the injuries that have hindered the Spaniard from participating in consecutive Grand Slam tournaments.

Since sustaining a hip muscle injury during his second-round loss to Mackenzie McDonald at the Australian Open in January, Nadal has been absent from competitive tennis.

The 36-year-old was unable to participate in the

French Open, a tournament he has been a dominant force in for 18 years, for the first time since 2004. Additionally, he missed Wimbledon, a Grand Slam tournament he has triumphed in twice.

In the latter stages of his career, Federer also experienced a series of injuries that posed significant challenges.

Ultimately, Federer's physical condition allowed him to conclude his remarkable career by participating in doubles matches alongside Nadal at the Laver Cup in London last year.

"I mean, all of us: (Andy)

Murray, (Novak) Djokovic, Nadal and me, I think the four of us when I retired were all sitting there crying about me retiring - or because of the music, who knows," Federer told CNN.

"Everybody had their own reasons why they were crying. I think you realise how fortunate we are to still be playing at this later stage of our careers because tennis players used to retire at 30.

"I mean, 26 for (Bjorn) Borg, 32 for (Pete) Sampras, 36 for (Andre) Agassi. This was like playing deep and now here we are all sitting there around 35-40. We all know how fortunate we are and so I think Rafa knew that, too. So seeing him going through this more difficult period now, obviously I've been there and I just hope that he can go out on his terms [and] he can still play a little bit," he said.

Federer also expressed his desire for Nadal to have a more competitive final year on the tennis circuit as the 22-time grand slam champion said in May that next season will be his last on the tour.

"I still hope we'll see not just the doubles like I did, but more than that. I still believe that's going to happen," said Federer.

AC Milan and Monza to honour Berlusconi with annual friendly

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan and Monza will honour Silvio Berlusconi with an annual friendly named after their deceased former owner, the two Serie A teams announced on Thursday.

In a joint statement, the clubs said that the first edition of the Silvio Berlusconi Trophy would be held at Monza's U-Power Stadium on August 8, with the match switching venues each year.

"The initiative aims to honour and keep alive the memory of president Silvio Berlusconi, who wrote indelible pages in both clubs' histories," the clubs said.

Former Italian prime minister and media mogul Berlusconi, who died last month aged 86, was an extremely divisive figure in the country's political and cultural spheres.

But his enormous success as a club owner earned him the admiration of legions of fans.

He reigned supreme at Milan from 1986 until 2017, buying an ailing club on the brink of bankruptcy and turning them into titans of the European game.

During his time at the San Siro Milan won 29 trophies,



including five Champions League and eight Serie A titles.

After selling Milan for 740 million euros he picked up Monza, then in the third tier, for a relative song in 2018 through his holding company Fininvest and alongside long-time ally Adriano Galliani took them up to Serie A.

Monza finished 11th last season, their first ever in the top flight of Italian football, but Berlusconi's death has led to speculation that Fininvest could sell the club.

On Thursday Berlusconi's eldest son Pier Silvio said "we children will find a way to best keep dad's dream alive", adding that Galliani would be

"at the centre" of the club's future.

Sources told AFP on Thursday that Pier Silvio and his sister Marina Berlusconi would take joint control of Fininvest following the reading of his will.

The pair, who are children of Silvio Berlusconi's first wife Carla Dall'Oglio and until now held 7.65 percent in Fininvest, will according to the source increase their joint stake to 53 percent.

Marina Berlusconi has since 2005 been president of Fininvest, which controls a myriad of companies including the MediaForEurope (ex-MediaSet) television group, Mondadori publishing house and the Mediolanum bank.

Wawrinka wins and gets Djokovic next

PTI ■ WIMBLEDON

The courts are finally dry at Wimbledon and the sun is even shining through the clouds at times, giving organizers hope of fitting in a full day of tennis on Thursday for the first time at this year's tournament.

The first three days of action at the All England Club were affected by rain. Only eight matches were completed on Tuesday. Those matches were played on either Centre Court or No. 1 Court, the only stadiums on the grounds with roofs.

Because of the all the disruption, there were a handful of first-round matches being played on Day 4. Normally, the first Thursday of the tournament would wrap up the second round.

Among the winners was Stan Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion from Switzerland. Wawrinka beat No. 29-seeded Tomas Martin Etcheverry of Argentina 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to advance to the third round.

The 38-year-old Wawrinka, who won his major titles at the other three Grand Slam tour-



naments, will next face Novak Djokovic - the 23-time Grand Slam champion who is going for his record-tying eighth title at Wimbledon. That match is scheduled to be played Friday on Centre Court.

"There's zero opportunity to win Wimbledon for me, I think," said Wawrinka, who reached the quarterfinals at the All England Club in 2014 and 2015. "I'm playing better each match, and

as I say, I think it's an honor to play Novak here. I was missing that on my career to play him in the Grand Slam in Wimbledon. That's the last I never played him, and it's going to be a difficult challenge.

"Hopefully I can make a competitive match, but if you will look at recent results, I don't really stand a chance."

Later Thursday, two-time champion Andy Murray was to

play fifth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas on Centre Court in the second round, while fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula was scheduled to meet Cristina Bucsa on No. 1 Court.

Alexander Zverev, who reached the 2020 U.S. Open final but missed most of last season after injuring his ankle in the French Open semifinals, finally got on court and beat Dutch qualifier Gijs Brouwer 6-

4, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) in the first round.

The 19th-seeded German has twice reached the fourth round at Wimbledon, including in 2021. He again reached the French Open semifinals this year.

In the women's draw, Sofia Kenin and Elina Svitolina both advanced to the third round. Kenin eliminated seventh-seeded Coco Gauff in the first

round, while Svitolina beat five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams.

Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, will next face Svitolina, who is back on tour after the birth of her first child in October with husband Gael Monfils.

"I've got to figure out a good strategy against her," said Kenin, a 24-year-old American. "She gets a lot of balls back, from what I remember. I mean, she's got a big serve, big backhand. There is nothing off about her game."

Mirra Andreeva, a 16-year-old qualifier from Russia who is ranked 102nd, reached the third round in her Wimbledon debut. She advanced when No. 10-seeded Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic retired from the match with a lower leg injury with Andreeva leading 6-3, 4-0.

"For sure it's not the way I wanted to win the match. But still I advance to the next round, so I'm happy with that," Andreeva said.

Krejickova won the French Open in 2021. Her best showing at the All England Club was reaching the fourth round the same year.



Andreeva, 16, into Wimbledon third round

AFP ■ LONDON

Russian 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva reached the third round of a Grand Slam for a second successive time at Wimbledon on Thursday.

Andreeva was leading Czech 10th seed Barbora Krejickova 6-3, 4-0 when the former French Open champion retired with an injury.

Just as she had done at the French Open, the

teenager came through qualifying for Wimbledon and next faces either compatriot Anastasia Potapova or Kaja Juvan of Slovenia.

Making her main draw debut, Andreeva, ranked at 102 in the world, saw off China's Wang Xiyu in the first round in a match that finished late Wednesday.

In Paris last month, it took world number seven Coco Gauff to stop her in three sets in the last 32.

MARSH CENTURY POWERS OZ TO 240-5 AT TEA IN 3RD ASHES TEST

AP ■ LEEDS

Australia allrounder Mitchell Marsh took advantage of England's sloppy catching to smash a brutal century and change the game on the first day Thursday of the third Ashes test at Headingley.

The home side started the must-win match with fire in its belly and was well on top when Marsh, making his first appearance in almost four years as an injury replacement, nicked Chris Woakes to slip with just 12 to his name.

Had Joe Root taken the regulation chance just after lunch, Australia would have been in trouble on 98-5, but Marsh made him pay in full as he powered them to 240-4 before tea.

Marsh batted with unfettered aggression after his reprieve, flaying 17 fours and four sixes as he racked up 118



at exactly a run a ball.

The pain finally stopped for England in the last over before the break, Woakes getting Marsh when an inside edge looped to Zak Crawley via the thigh pad. But significant damage had already been done.

England dictated terms in the first session, Mark Wood turning in an electrifying burst of breakneck speed to whip up the Leeds crowd and Stuart Broad striking twice, but ultimately their hands let them down.

As well as Root relieving Marsh, two chances slipped through the grasp of wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow. Back in the spotlight after he got himself stumped at Lord's, Bairstow put down two chances.

The first was a tricky take off Steve Smith but the second should have been a simple catch off Travis Head, who had 9 and went on to reach 39 not out.

Rinku Singh Set To Get Picked For Ireland T20Is



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On Wednesday, India announced a 15-member squad for the five-match T20I series against the West Indies that will take place on the Caribbean island next month. Star players Yashasvi Jaiswal and Tilak Varma got India calls, whereas players like Rituraj Gaikwad and Rinku Singh have not been included in the squad.

There have been a lot of debates about Rinku Singh's exclusion, and he wows every-

one with his incredible performance in the IPL 2023, when he smashed five sixes in five balls.

India will tour Ireland for a three-match T20I series to be played in July 2023. It is reported by PTI that Rinku will make his international debut for the Indian team against the Irish team.

According to a report in PTI, "Rinku Singh is likely to get his due opportunities in the three-match T20I series against Ireland, which starts on August 18 in Dublin".

Not only Rinku, Jitesh Sharma and Rituraj Gaikwad will also find a place in the team.

Jitesh Sharma was included in the Indian team for the first time during T20I series against Sri Lanka in January this year as a replacement for injured Sanju Samson but he didn't get a chance and then against New Zealand also he was part of the team.

Ashraf appointed as chairman of PCB

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan government has appointed a new 10-member PCB management committee, headed by Zaka Ashraf, for a period of four months.

The management committee will hold its first meeting in Lahore on Thursday. Ashraf was favourite to become chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board last month but the PCB had to postpone that election after the formation of its board of governors — which elects the new chairman — was challenged in multiple courts around the country.

The government has revised PCB election commissioner Ahmed Shehzad Farooq Rana and appointed advocate supreme court Mahmood Iqbal Khakwani in his place.

The PCB election of its new chairman was postponed on June 26 after Baluchistan High Court accepted the petition of Gul Mohammad Kakar, a former member of the PCB man-



agement committee, and set a hearing for July 17.

Before former chairman Najam Sethi dropped out of the election, he formed a 10-member board of governors that also included two direct nominees from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the PCB patron. Acting chairman Ahmed Shehzad Farooq Rana then changed several of the board of governors, prompting Kakar's court challenge.

Representatives of bigger cities such as Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Peshawar were replaced by men from smaller cities such as Dera Murad Jamali, Hyderabad, Larkana and Bahawalpur.

Kohli's problems outside off-stump continue

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Virat Kohli's struggles outside the off-stump continued as he was once again snapped behind the stumps during an intra-squad practice game while Yashasvi Jaiswal made strong claims for a coveted Test cap ahead of the series opener against the West Indies.

Jaiswal's Test debut is a matter of time but what could be a subject of discussion is his usual batting slot which is opening or one down, a position that the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara was forced to vacate after nearly three years of non-performance and an archaic style of Test match batting.

The Indian team included some local club cricketers along with its own 16 players for the two-day training-cum-practice game. The first Test begins on July 12.

Kohli, whose problems against deliveries on the corridor of uncertainty, is well documented, saw veteran left-arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat exploit it early on his spell.

The left-arm's angle is an

awkward one and Unadkat bowled one outside the off-stump, and India's No. 1 batter, without any distinct footwork, fished at it to be caught by a local fielder stationed at first slip.

Kohli's dismissals in Test cricket have had a pattern and the canny Unadkat hit the right line and length to get the prized scalp. The idea was match simulation keeping all the top-order batters in one team while the other group was loaded with bowlers.

Most of the batters retired after playing around 50 to 75 balls with Jaiswal doing his cause no harm with a 54 off 76 balls before taking a break.

WILL JAISWAL OPEN OR BAT AT NO. 3?

With Pujara being axed, the 20-year-old Jaiswal was seen opening the batting with skipper Rohit Sharma. An on-drive off Mohammed Siraj and a rasping square cut off Unadkat had class written all over it.

While Jaiswal got to play 76 balls, his skipper settled for 67 balls before retiring.

However, Jaiswal's promotion ahead of regular opener



Shubman Gill is an indication that head coach Rahul Dravid and skipper Rohit are thinking of bleeding the young Mumbai batter as an opener.

The long-term plan of the Indian team management could see them use Shubman Gill as their No. 3 batter and try out Jaiswal as an opener.

It must be mentioned that Gill, who has been one of the most consistent batters in recent times, is actually a middle-order player, who preferred to play at No. 3 or 4 during his days as India U-19 and India A player.

In fact, it was under Dravid's coaching in the age-group and pathways (India A) team that

Gill had batted in the middle-order.

He has a double hundred (204) in an 'A' Test against the West Indies in 2019 in Tarouba. In that innings, he batted at No. 5 (virtually No. 4) as Shahbaz Nadeem was sent in as night-watchman on the second evening.

With Kohli taking his spot at No. 4 and Ajinkya Rahane at No. 5, along with Ravindra Jadeja at No. 6 and KS Bharath at No. 7, the batting order looks more or less sorted.

ASHWIN SECOND SPINNER, SHARDUL SEAM BOWLING ALL-ROUNDER

On a predominantly dry track at the Dominica, Ravichandran Ashwin is likely to be the second spinner while Shardul Thakur will be the third seamer and lower middle-order enforcer. Shardul and Ashwin will take care of slot Nos. 8 and 9 respectively.

While Mohammed Siraj automatically selects himself as the leader of the pack, the choice for the second new ball bowler could be a tough one.

Besides rookie Mukesh Kumar's good form and incisive seam bowling, Navdeep Saini adds an extra yard of pace in the line-up, and Unadkat brings in the left-arm's angle and requisite variation in the attack.

The only place which could be debated is this particular bowling slot where three players have their cases.

Lara's advice on situations will be of great help in Tests against India: Brathwaite

PTI ■ ANTIGUA (WEST INDIES)

Legendary Brian Lara's tips on situational awareness of the game will greatly help the West Indies batters during the two-Test series against India beginning on July 12, feels skipper Kraigg Brathwaite.

West Indies have received a huge boost ahead of the multi-format series against India with Lara joining them as the team's performance mentor.

"It's great to have him here. In terms of the conversations we have with him, we always learn and he's big on planning... On how you are going to score your runs. His advice on situations is great and it will only help the batters," Brathwaite said in a statement on Cricket West Indies.

Lara had worked with the team earlier this year on the tours of Zimbabwe and South Africa and the captain said he has a positive influence on the players.

The two sides will kick-off their campaign in the new World Test Championship (WTC) cycle at the Roseau in Dominica.



India are coming off a WTC final defeat to Australia at The Oval recently and would be looking to overcome the disappointment in the Caribbean.

The team, led by Rohit Sharma, met legendary West Indies all-rounder Sir Garfield Sobers in Barbados on their arrival and shared pleasantries with him.

Brathwaite said his teammates were looking forward to the India games and called upon the spectators in Dominica — the venue of the first Test — to throw their weight behind the home team.

"It's important to start well. We are playing against India, so you know the guys are really looking forward to it. Dominica will host the first Test match, and we call for the supporters in Dominica to come out and support us — but the guys are really looking forward to the first two Test matches of this (WTC) cycle," he added.

"The guys (teammates) have put some good effort in the last three days, and they still have a few days left and you know we have (to) keep pushing hard."

Bas de Leede helps Netherlands' enter into ICC World Cup

PTI ■ BULAWAYO

An inspirational Netherlands scripted an incredible come-from-behind fairytale, riding on all-rounder Bas de Leede's individual brilliance as they beat Scotland by four wickets to join Sri Lanka as the second qualifying team for the ICC World Cup in India, starting October 5.

Needing 278 inside 44 overs to qualify, De Leede's power-packed 123 off 92 balls with help of seven fours and five sixes and his 113-run sixth-wicket stand in just 11.3 overs with Saqib Zulfiqar (33 not out) helped Netherlands to qualify in just 42.5 overs.

This is the fifth time that the Netherlands have qualified for the 50-over global event, having played in the 1996, 2003, 2007 and 2011 editions.

"Little bit lost for words. I thought what Bas de Leede and Saqib Zulfiqar did in the last 10 overs was unbelievable to watch," an emotional Netherlands skipper Scott Edwards said after the match.

"This group is just incredible. We put in the hard work and the guys just enjoy everyone's success. We had a different match-winner in every game. It's a pretty awesome feeling. It was just unbelievable batting by Leede and Saqib in the end," the skipper added.

Call it a coincidence, Bas's father Tim de Leede was an important member of the Netherlands team during the first three of those world tournaments.

Even though Scotland (+0.102) and Zimbabwe (-0.099) also finished with six points, Netherlands, by virtue of its win, leapfrogged them to reach a net run-rate of +0.230.

They will play Sri Lanka in the final but that match is of hardly any consequence apart from deciding who will finish as Qualifier 1 and which team ends with Qualifier 2 classifica-



tion.

Scotland, who looked favourites to earn the second spot behind Sri Lanka for the tournament proper, scored 277 for 9 courtesy a fine 106 off 111 balls by their best player Brendon McMullen and his 137-run stand for the fourth wicket with skipper Richie Berrington (64).

Right-arm medium pacer De Leede saved his best performance for his 30th ODI as he grabbed a maiden five-wicket haul -- 5/52 to restrict Scotland to under 300.

Then during the chase, he came when the 15th over was nearing its end and by the time he left, the Netherlands were on the brink of victory needing only three runs.

A lot of credit should also go to Indian-origin opener Vikramjit Singh (40), who provided a steady start and Saqib Zulfiqar (33 off 32 balls), who gave brilliant support to De Leede in their whirlwind 113-run stand for the sixth wicket in just 11.3 overs.

The qualifier in Zimbabwe this year has been a closely contested one with only Sri Lanka looking like a side in a league of its own as it asserted its

supremacy throughout the tournament.

However among other teams, Zimbabwe looked good till they faltered in their final hurdle and then Scotland, with a far better net run-rate than the Netherlands, needed to ensure that the opposition do not cross the target in 44 overs.

But the Netherlands have punched above their weight in this tournament and they tied a mammoth score of 374 and then won in the Super Over against the West Indies.

On the day, they were less than 100 in first 20 overs, having lost three wickets but De Leede played the innings of his life to bring about the greatest day in the life of these current crop of cricketers.

"We had a look at the targets, where we wanted to be at the halfway point. Maxy and Vikram set the platform for the rest of us to finish it," De Leede said after the match.

"The rate was 10 to 11 runs per over, so we had to go to the T20 mode, try as many runs as we could and see where it would take us. It's amazing, can't describe the feeling, it's going to be one big party tonight," he added.

Our goal not to beat India, but to win ODI WC: Babar Azam

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam on Thursday asserted that his team is focussed on winning the ODI World Cup in India and not just beating the arch-rivals in the much-awaited clash in Ahmedabad on October 15.

Pakistan are expected to travel to India for the ICC event though their participation is subject to government clearance.

"We are not thinking only about playing and winning against India in the World Cup. We are looking at doing well in every match if we are to win the ICC title.

"We are going to play the World Cup, not just India in India," said Babar. He also said that the rumblings in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will not have any bearing on the national team's performance in the ICC World Cup, or in the



assignments prior to that.

When asked if the recent changes in the PCB leadership and selection committee had affected the players, Babar said their work is to focus on cricket.

"We don't focus on what is happening in the PCB. We just focus on cricket. We have the entire schedule of our coming matches before us and we know what needs to be done to win matches as professionals," Babar

said. Asked how much pressure was there on the players knowing they had to go to India for the World Cup, Babar said as a team they were prepared to play anywhere.

"We have to play the World

Cup wherever it is held and we are excited about the challenges ahead of us," he said.

He also said that the Pakistan team is working on its plans for the Asia Cup and World Cup keeping in mind its strengths and the conditions in the host countries. The Pakistan skipper said that the upcoming Test series in Sri Lanka would be challenging as it is the start of the new World Test Championship cycle for them.

"We will be guided by Mickey Arthur in Sri Lanka as he had also remained their coach and knows the conditions there well," he said.

Babar also felt that the Test series in Sri Lanka would help Pakistan in their preparations for the 50-over Asia Cup and World Cup. "The formats are different but playing in conditions like Sri Lanka will help us prepare well," he said.