

OPINION 6
LET SOFT POWER
SHAPE THE WORLD

WORLD 9
N KOREA FIRES ITS FIRST
ICBM IN 3 MONTHS

MONEY 10
DOMESTIC PASSENGER VEHICLE
WHOLESALES RISE 2% IN JUNE: SIAM

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JULY 13, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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WB rural poll results hinge on HC's verdict

Court orders State, Centre, SEC to file affidavits on electoral malpractices charge

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court said on Wednesday that the panchayat elections in West Bengal and the declaration of results will be subject to its final orders in connection with ongoing matters regarding allegations of electoral malpractices on the day of polling.

The court directed the State Election Commission (SEC), the State Government, and the Central Government to submit affidavits addressing all the allegations raised in three petitions concerning malpractices during the elections.

When the court is seized of the matter, it goes without saying that whatever has been done thus far, i.e. the conduct of the elections and the declaration of results, will be subject to the ultimate orders that may be passed in this writ petition, the court said.

The court emphasised that whatever actions have been taken so far, including the conduct of the elections and the declaration of results, will be subject to the ultimate orders passed in the writ petition.

The SEC was instructed to inform all the candidates who



have been declared elected about this aspect.

The petitioners alleged large-scale violence and electoral malpractice during the panchayat election on July 8, and they requested the SEC to conduct repolling in approximately 50,000 booths.

Repolling was conducted in 696 booths, and the counting of ballots began on July 11.

One petitioner, who presented videos showing alleged malpractices on the election day, was directed to provide copies of the videos to the lawyers representing the SEC, the State Government, and the

Central Government by Wednesday.

The court scheduled the next hearing for July 19.

Taking a dim view of the SEC, the bench said it is of prima facie view that the response from the Commission is not adequate and that even on Wednesday, none of its officers was present in the court to give necessary instructions to its counsel.

"It is not clear why the commission is not proactive especially when the court had been monitoring the entire process and the first judgment was delivered on June 13," the

court said.

The court had passed a series of orders for the conduct of the three-tier rural elections in West Bengal in a free and fair manner.

The court said that it is surprised to note that even after the declaration of results, the state is not able to control the violence which has erupted in several places.

"The responsibility to ensure that there is no breach of peace lies with the State government. If the State Government is not in a position to safeguard its citizens, then it is a very serious matter to be taken note of," the court said.

Vote counting, which began on Tuesday, is being conducted at 339 venues across 22 districts. The process is expected to conclude on Wednesday evening. Strict security measures have been implemented, with armed state police personnel and central forces stationed at all counting venues. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC have been imposed outside the venues to maintain law and order. A total of 767 strong rooms have been set up across the 22 districts.

TMC inching closer to sweeping win, BJP gains

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) is inching closer to a sweeping victory in the rural polls in West Bengal, having won more than half of the seats declared so far by the State Election Commission (SEC). According to the latest updates as of 7:30 pm on Wednesday, the TMC has secured 34,913 gram panchayat seats and is leading in 607 seats out of a total of 63,229 seats.

The TMC's closest competitor, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has won 9,722 seats and is leading in 150 seats. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) has won 2,937 seats and is leading in 67 seats, while the Congress has won 2,543 seats and is leading in 63 seats.

Continued on Page 2

Yamuna water level at all-time high in Delhi

- Breaks 45 years record
- Kejriwal seeks help from Shah
- Section 144 imposed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Yamuna River in Delhi has reached its highest water level in the past 45 years, surpassing the previous record set in 1978. The rising water levels are a result of incessant rain in the upper catchment areas, including Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called for an emergency meeting to address the situation.

The floodwaters have inundated several areas along the Yamuna River, including parts of the Ring Road, Kashmiri Gate, Monastery Market, Garhi Mendu village, Usmanpur vil-

lage, Jaitpur, and Majnu ka Tila. The green belt along the riverbank has also been completely flooded.

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) headquarters is among the affected areas, with employees seen wading through the water to enter the office. Videos showed people folding their trousers and carrying their shoes before entering the building.

As a result, thousands of people have been shifted to safer areas as their homes and markets near the river were submerged. In response to the situation, the Delhi Police imposed prohibitory measures



under CrPC section 144 in flood-prone areas, restricting unlawful assembly and public movement in groups.

According to the Central Water Commission, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge crossed the 207-meter mark for the first time since 2013, reaching 207.71 meters by 4 pm on Wednesday.

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BJP, TMC spar over RS nominee choice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI:

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) decision to nominate Ananta Rai 'Maharaj', a vocal advocate for a separate state of 'Greater Cooch Behar' in West Bengal, as its candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections in the State has ignited a fresh storm of controversy.

Alongside, the BJP also announced the candidatures of

Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai and Kesrivesinh Zala from Gujarat for the Rajya Sabha polls.

The party's third candidate from Gujarat is the External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, who filed his nomination papers on Monday.

"I am happy that they have chosen me. I will try to serve the people of the state and my region," Rai told reporters after the news of his nomination by the BJP was released through a party notification from Delhi on Wednesday morning.

Rai is the leader of one of the factions of the Greater Cooch Behar People's Association (GCPA), which demands a separate State or union territory to be carved out of northern West Bengal.

He is believed to wield significant influence among the Rajbanshi community in the North Bengal region, which constitutes nearly 30 per cent of the electorate there. The Rajbanshis are one of the largest Scheduled Caste communities in the state, after the Matuas in South Bengal.

"We believe in inclusivity and moving towards the path of development by bringing all communities together. Our principles are based on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, and Sabka Vishwas' (Together with All, Development for All, Trust of All)," said Samik Bhattacharya, the BJP state spokesperson.

In response to Rai's nomination, TMC MP and spokesperson Santanu Sen

expressed his concerns, stating, "This only proves that the BJP supports separatist movements in the state. We have been saying for a long time that the BJP is fuelling a separatist movement in North Bengal and wants to divide the state. This development only strengthens our point. 'The BJP should clearly state whether they want to divide the state or not.'"

The Rajbanshis play a significant role in the electoral dynamics of four out of the eight Lok Sabha seats in North Bengal. In the 2019 elections, the BJP secured seven out of these eight seats in the region.

The Election Commission of India has scheduled the Rajya Sabha elections for ten seats in Gujarat, Goa, and West Bengal on July 24.

Sonia to attend 2nd Opp meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi has confirmed her participation in the upcoming two-day brainstorming session at the second Opposition meeting, scheduled to take place in Bengaluru next week.

This Congress has invited leaders from 24 parties, and Sonia has also extended a dinner invitation to the participants on July 17. Sources suggest that AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is among the probable attendees.

According to sources, several new parties will join the Opposition unity platform at the second meeting. These parties include MDMK, KDMK, VCK, RSP, Forward Block, IUML, Kerala Congress (Joseph), and Kerala Congress (Mani). The meeting aims to further strategize plans to challenge the BJP in the next Lok Sabha elections.

The first Opposition meeting was held in Patna, Bihar, on June 23.

Sixteen parties were invited to the meeting, convened by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish



Kumar. One of the key discussions in the Bengaluru meeting will be Nitish Kumar's proposal for a one-on-one formula, where opposing parties can field a joint candidate against the BJP to prevent a split in anti-BJP votes.

This meeting takes place against the backdrop of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), one of the main constituents, splitting into two parts.

One part has joined the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra. The possibility of further splits in opposition parties before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls will also be discussed at the Bengaluru meeting.

Continued on Page 2

Balalore train accident: Seven railway staffers suspended

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

At least seven railway employees, including three employees arrested by the CBI, were suspended on the charge of dereliction of duty leading to the triple train crash in Odisha, a top official said.

As many as 293 people were killed and over 1,200 injured in the triple train collision near Bahanaga Bazar railway station in Balalore district on June 2.

South Eastern Railway's General Manager Anil Kumar Mishra, told reporters, "Had the officials been alert, the accident could have been avoided."

"The railways have so far suspended seven employees, including three who were arrested by the CBI. According to norms, an employee arrested for 24 hours stands suspended," Mishra told reporters after visiting the accident site.

Earlier, the CBI had arrested senior Section Engineer (signal) Arun Kumar Mahanta, Section Engineer Mohammed Amir Khan and Technician Pappu Kumar. They have been taken on another four-day remand by the CBI.

Ease of biz: Jan Vishwas bill changes OK'd

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant move aimed at promoting the ease of doing business, the Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023. The bill seeks to decriminalise minor offenses by amending 183 provisions across 42 Acts administered by 19 Ministries.

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill was initially introduced by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in the Lok Sabha on December 22, 2022.

Subsequently, it was referred to a joint committee of Parliament for further examination. The committee engaged in detailed discussions with all the 19 Ministries and departments, as well as the legislative department and department of legal affairs.

In March of this year, the committee adopted its report, which was laid before the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.

The parliamentary panel

recommended that States and Union Territories follow the model of the Jan Vishwas Bill to decriminalise minor offenses, with the aim of facilitating ease of doing business and living.

Additionally, the panel suggested that the government should amend the provisions with retrospective effect to help reduce the backlog of court cases.

The committee also proposed that, where possible, imprisonment should be replaced with penalties to prevent a surge in litigation. The amendments in the bill aim to rationalize monetary penalties based on the gravity of the offenses, promoting trust-based governance.

The Acts being amended include The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Public Debt Act, 1944; Pharmacy Act, 1948; Cinematograph Act, 1952; Copyright Act, 1957; Patents Act, 1970; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; and Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

Continued on Page 2

India slams EU for taking up Manipur situation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the scheduled debate in the European Parliament on the situation in Manipur, India, the Indian Government has reiterated that the matter is "absolutely" internal to the country. A motion for a resolution on the Manipur situation was tabled in the EU Parliament, with discussions expected to take place on Wednesday night.

Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra stated that efforts have been made to reach out to concerned EU parliamentarians, emphasising that the situation in Manipur is an internal matter for India.

The State of Manipur has witnessed violent clashes, particularly between the Kuki and Meitei communities, for nearly two months, and Opposition parties have criticised the



Government for its handling of the situation.

Kwatra, during a Press conference, reaffirmed that the issue is entirely internal to India and that the Indian Government is aware of the developments in the EU Parliament. He mentioned that they have made it clear to the concerned EU parliamentarians that the matter should be considered as an internal affair.

Six parliamentary groups, representing various political

ideologies, have submitted motions for an urgent debate on the situation in Manipur during the plenary session in Strasbourg from July 10-13.

The motions seek a resolution from the European Parliament on the theme "India, the situation in Manipur." The debate is scheduled for Wednesday, followed by a vote on the proposed resolution.

This development coincides with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to France, where he will be the guest of honor at the Bastille Day Parade.

Regarding queries on whether India has engaged the political lobbying agency Alber & Geiger to persuade European parliamentarians to withdraw their motions, Kwatra did not provide a response.

Continued on Page 2

Men hurl chilli powder on police, kill murder accused

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Armed men barged inside a Rajasthan Roadways bus on Wednesday and shot dead a murder accused who was being escorted by a police team for a court hearing in Bharatpur, officials said.

Another man was injured in the firing and is admitted to a hospital in a critical state, they said. Both men were accused of killing a local BJP leader in 2022. According to police, the bus was stopped near Amoli toll plaza under Halena police station of Bharatpur by the men who came in a car and two motorcycles.

They entered the bus and hurled chilli powder on the policemen and started firing on Kuldeep Jagheena and Vijaypal,

they said.

The police have apprehended four accused, of which two were injured during police action. Jagheena and Vijaypal, accused in the murder of a local BJP leader Kripal Jagheena on September 4, 2022, were being taken to Bharatpur from Jaipur by a team of seven policemen led by a head constable armed with two semi-automatic rifles (SLR). SP Bharatpur Mridul Kachchawa said the two murder accused were rushed to RBM government hospital in Bharatpur where Jagheena was declared brought dead by doctors, while Vijaypal is being treated.

The police identified the culprits with the help of CCTV footage and a vehicle has been recovered.



They caught four accused identified as Babul Malipura, Saurabh Lulhara, Vishnu Jat and Dharmraj in the evening near Bayana in Bharatpur.

Police opened fire at the accused while they were fleeing in which Bablu and Vishnu received bullet injuries on their

policemen managed to protect Vijaypal from the direct assault.

He said the police team did not open fire in view of the security of the bus passengers. The officer said an inquiry will be done and action will be taken if any policeman is found guilty of negligence.

Jagheena, who was shot dead today, was the main accused in the killing of the local BJP leader. He along with four others was arrested on September 11 last year from Maharashtra in connection with the murder.

BJP State president CP Joshi raised questions on the role of policemen and asked whether the criminal was eliminated to silence his voice because the name of some "big man" was about to come up.

He alleged that the murder may have been done under some "well-thought-out strategy".

"The murder took place today so that the name of the main accused behind the killing of BJP Mandal President would not come up," Joshi alleged. "This could be some big conspiracy. Being the Home Minister of the state, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot should think about how crime is flourishing in Rajasthan under the patronage of his government," he said.

Joshi added, "Somewhere in such incidents, the nexus of politics and crime is clearly visible." Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore, in a video statement, said the incident was a blot on the image of the Congress Government.

10-year jail to 4 IM men for plotting terror attacks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Wednesday sentenced four Indian Mujahideen (IM) operatives to 10 years in jail for hatching a criminal conspiracy to wage war against the government by carrying out terrorist attacks across the country in 2012. The judgement, however, paved the way for their release as all of them have already served as much time in jail.

Special Judge Shailender Malik awarded the punishment to Danish Ansari, Aftab Alam, Imran Khan and Obaid-Ur-Rehman under various sections of the IPC and the anti-

terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The court, which had convicted the four on July 10, noted they had pleaded guilty to all the charges against them on July 7.

The special judge for terrorist cases noted the convicts were arrested in 2013, and directed the authorities concerned to release them against the period they have already served in prison, if their custody was not needed in other cases. The judge also referred to the socio-economic report of the convicts and said they belonged to the lower strata of society.

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Low-lying areas around Yamuna swell



Locals wade through a flooded bylane at Yamuna Bazar area, in New Delhi on Wednesday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER



Water level of Yamuna River at Old Iron Bridge goes up

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER



People from low-lying areas around the Yamuna river wade through floodwaters of the swollen river while relocating to a safer place, in New Delhi, Wednesday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

Kejriwal sends SOS to Shah

As Yamuna River crosses all-time record level of 207.71 meters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Yamuna River swelled up and crossed the all-time record level of 207.71 meters, breaching its previous all-time record of 207.49 metres on September 6, 1978, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday sent SOS to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking his intervention in the release of water from the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana.

In his letter, Kejriwal said the water level in Yamuna isn't increasing due to rain but because of the water released from the Hathnikund barrage.

After his letter, Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat responded to Kejriwal and said Hathnikund is just a barrage and there is no reservoir to store water and limit the water speed. "The water volume being released from Himachal Pradesh has reduced and the situation will improve," he said.

Holding Haryana responsible for flood in Yamuna, Kejriwal said, "it has not rained



in Delhi for the last three days.

"The water level in the Yamuna in Delhi is not increasing due to the rains in Delhi, but due to the water released from the Hathnikund barrage located in Haryana," he added, requesting the home minister to limit the speed of the release of water from Hathnikund barrage at a limited speed "so that the level of Yamuna in Delhi does not rise further." Noting that the G20 Summit is set to be held in a few weeks, Kejriwal stressed that the news of the flood in the national capital won't send a good message to the world.

"The news of flood in the capital of the country will not send a good message to the world. Together we will have to save the people of Delhi from this situation," Kejriwal wrote to Shah.

He said that as per the Central Water Commission estimates the level of Yamuna

will reach 207.72 metres on Wednesday night which is a matter of "grave" concern. "It's my humble request to you that if possible the water from Hathnikund barrage in Haryana should be released with a limited speed so that Yamuna's level in Delhi does not rise further," Kejriwal said in the letter to Shah.

Kejriwal said Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat has informed him that the volume of water being released to Haryana from Himachal Pradesh has reduced, which in turn will impact the water level in the Yamuna. However, he said it will take some time for the water level in the river to recede.

"Following my letter, I got a call from Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who said that Hathnikund is just a barrage and there is no reservoir to store water and limit the water speed.

The water volume being released from Himachal Pradesh has reduced and the situation will improve. But it will take time to reflect in the water level of the Yamuna," he said at a press conference after the meeting.

After review meeting with all stakeholders, Kejriwal said that the focus at the moment is to protect lives and directed officials to ensure the safe evacuation of residents and provide comprehensive support at designated relief centres. He added that nearby schools

will be converted into temporary relief camps, accommodating affected individuals and families. "Please vacate your houses. We have also been seeing that some people are going to watch the swollen river. Please don't go there to click selfies," he urged the people.

He said Boat Club, Monastery Market, Neeli Chhatra Temple, Yamuna Bazar, Neem Karoli gaushala, Vishwakarma Colony, the stretch between Majnu ka Tila and Wazirabad have been submerged.

The chief minister also said that Delhi government has informed NDRF that its help may be sought. District magistrates have also been directed to convert schools into relief camps, if needed, he said.

Sharing an update on Yamuna water levels on Twitter, Kejriwal said, "Central Water Commission predicts 207.72-metre water level in Yamuna tonight. Not good news for Delhi." There have been no rains in Delhi for the last two days. However, the levels of Yamuna are rising due to abnormally high volumes of water being released by Haryana from the Hathnikund barrage.

"Urge Centre to intervene and ensure that levels in Yamuna don't rise further. Highest Flood Level 207.49m (in 1978). Current Level 207.55m," he tweeted.

Flood water enters Tibetan Budh Market

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the Yamuna flood water enters the Tibetan Budh Market, known as Monastery market at the outer Ring Road Kashmere gate, a local shopkeeper said Delhi is now like Venice.

The Monastery market is one of the many places that have been affected due to the Yamuna river swelling to a record high. The water level in the river rose to 207.71 metres in Delhi at 4 pm on Wednesday, breaching its all-time record of 207.49 metres set in 1978, government agencies said.

According to officials, Garhi Mandu village near the Signature Bridge in Wazirabad is submerged. A majority of the people have been taken to safety and the rest are being evacuated using boats, they said. The low lying areas of Tibetan

Local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Ajay Mahawar said water has entered the houses of the residents of Garhi Mandu and Usmanpur villages.

"The power supply was cut off around 4 am as a precautionary measure and people were assisted to move to safer places. The problem is that many of them do not want to leave their houses despite the flood. We are also providing



People waded through in waterlogged Tibetan Budh Market in Delhi on Wednesday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

them food and distributing relief material through boats," he added. The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) headquarters is flooded and the employees were seen wading their way through the water accumulated at the entrance to get into the office.

Videos of the DTC headquarters located at Indraprastha showed people folding their trousers and holding their shoes in hand before entering the building. "Earlier, the situation would be this bad only when it rained for days. But this time, there is knee-deep water inside the headquarters. Adding to our woes, it also contains sewage water," a DTC employee said.

According to officials, the DTC headquarters building has been in need of repair for a long time. Constructed in 1958, the redevelopment project of the headquarters and bus depot has a long-standing proposal that has not achieved fruition till now, they said. The shopkeepers at the Monastery market were busy shifting their goods.

"The government has not done anything. Our goods have been destroyed. This is like Venice," one of them said, pointing towards the flooded market. Another man who runs a garments shop in the market said he had shifted the clothes to another shop owned by him in the area.

Traffic snarls slow down Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Wednesday witnessed traffic snarls in many areas due to waterlogging, damaged roads and movement of Kanwaris, as the city grappled with the aftermath of heavy rains over the weekend.

The Delhi Traffic Police issued an advisory in view of the rising water level of the Yamuna River following the rainfall and release of water by Haryana. Prohibitory measures under CrPC section 144 were imposed in flood-prone areas on Wednesday. As intermittent rains continued, airline operators advised people to allow more time for their journey to the airport.

In the Advisory, Delhi Traffic Police stated that the incessant rainfall in Delhi and surrounding areas has resulted in a rise in the water level of Yamuna. Furthermore, the release of water from Hathnikund Barrage has heightened the risk of flood-like conditions in low-lying areas in the vicinity of Yamuna River," it said.

A senior traffic police said that the movement of traffic on Outer Ring Road between Wazirabad Bridge and Vikas Marg and Mahatma Gandhi Road between Kalighat Mandir and Delhi Secretariat will be regulated.

'We lost our home, left with nothing'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Forced to leave their homes to escape the flooding caused by the swollen Yamuna river, there is anger among those staying in relief camps set up by the Delhi Government.

While some criticised the Government for failing to learn a lesson despite the Yamuna inundating people's homes every year, others claimed no rescue teams showed up to evacuate them.

"We lost our home. We are left with nothing. We have lost all our valuables and belongings. There was no one to evacuate us. We came here on



People from low-lying areas around the Yamuna river wade through floodwaters of the swollen river while relocating to a safer place, in New Delhi on Wednesday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

our own," claimed Rubi Devi, who is staying in a relief camp in east Delhi's Mayur Vihar, on Wednesday. "Our children are suffering more than us.

Their schools have been shut," she said. Rubi is among the many who lost the roof over their heads following days of heavy rains in Delhi and the upper catchment areas of the Yamuna.

Many of those staying in the Mayur Vihar relief camp complained about the lack of basic facilities. "We are facing so many problems here. We have lost everything. What will we do now? It's poor people like us who are suffering and not the politicians. The govern-

ment makes false promises but does nothing on the ground," complained another woman staying in the camp. "We came here by ourselves after wading through neck-deep water. Our houses were flooded.

Where will we go now? The tents allotted to us are such that if it rains, we will be rendered homeless again," she alleged. Radhe Krishan, who was waiting in a queue to get food, claimed, "A local gurdwara is serving food here.

What is government doing for us? A flood alert was sounded last year as well but the government hardly did anything.

Atishi, Saurabh take stock of relief measures

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj took stock of relief measures as the Yamuna river swelled to 207.83 metres on Wednesday. They also interacted with flood affected people.

To assess the preparedness of relief and rescue operations, Revenue Minister Atishi visited the flood relief camps at Mayur Vihar and Millennium Depot and interacted with the affected people. Saurabh Bharadwaj, the Minister of Irrigation and Flood Control,

took a motorboat tour of various parts of the Yamuna in the Civil Lines area of the city. He directed the officials to maintain a constant vigil for any emergency situation.

Atishi said, "Floods are a natural calamity, but as a government, it is our responsibility to assist and provide necessary facilities to the affected people. In this regard, we have set up relief camps for people from the Khadar areas." She said it has been ensured that these camps have proper accommodation, food, water, and medical facilities for the

residents. Around 2,500 camps have been established in six districts of Delhi, she added. The Revenue minister also interacted with the flood-affected individuals. She directed the administration to coordinate with local government schools to facilitate the education of children residing in the relief camps.

Atishi told reporters that embankments along Yamuna river in Delhi are being strengthened to prevent them from breaking. She said relief and rescue efforts are being carried out on a war footing.

BJP distributes food, relief material

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders, including party MPs and MLAs, met people displaced from Yamuna flood plains due to rising water levels in the river on Wednesday and provided them with food and other relief material. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva demanded Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal call an all-party meeting on the situation in the national capital.

Sachdeva accused Kejriwal of running away from his responsibility and seeking the help of the Centre, which he said showed that his government was not prepared to handle the flood situation in the city. Party MPs, including Harsh Vardhan, Manoj Tiwari, Ramesh Bidhuri and Gautam Gambhir, visited different areas and met the people displaced



from the flood plains of the Yamuna. BJP Camps are running at Yamuna Bazar, Sabhapur, Ghonda Third Pushta, Garhi Mandu, Gandhi Nagar Loha Pul, Near Akshardham Commonwealth Village, Near Samastipur Village, Opposite Mayur Vihar-1 Metro, Mayur Vihar Extension, Old Paltanpur Bhairav Marg, Jaitpur. These are being run by party workers, whose operations are being looked after by State General Secretary Dinesh Pratap Singh. South Delhi MP Bidhuri participated in flood relief work at Jaitpur Extension, while Tiwari, the North East Delhi MP, visited different places and distributed food to the affected

people at Old Usmanpur. Tiwari also coordinated with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel for evacuation of people from flooded Gandhi Mendu village in northeast Delhi and provided them with relief material.

East Delhi MP Gambhir also visited the flooded area in his constituency and ensured arrangements of food and other help to the affected people, a statement from his office said.

"Just like in the Covid pandemic, BJP leaders, workers, MPs and MLAs have extended a helping hand to affected people in Delhi due to swelling Yamuna river," Sachdeva said. "Every state government seeks help from Centre at time of crisis, but way Arvind Kejriwal has written a letter to Centre today shows that he has no preparation at all," he alleged.

LG calls meeting of DDMA after water level rises

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has called a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Thursday over the rising water level of the Yamuna, Raj Niwas officials said. During an inspection of the inundated banks of the Yamuna, Saxena told reporters that National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel have been deployed and everyone living in low-lying areas will be evacuated.

He expressed hope that the water level of the Yamuna will come down in the next few days as water discharge from Haryana's Hathnikund barrage has reduced. The lieutenant governor (LG) said the water level of the river is expected to reach 207.99 on Wednesday night. "NDRF



teams have been deployed. No affected area will be left untouched and we will provide assistance to everyone," Saxena said.

Earlier some people were reluctant to move to safer places but now they have expressed willingness to be shifted and they are being helped, he said. District magistrates and deputy commis-

sioners of affected areas have been issued necessary instructions and "we are ready for any eventuality," the LG said.

Haryana has reduced discharge of water in the Yamuna because the state is receiving lesser quantity of water from upper reaches of the river, he said and added that there is a barrage at Hathnikund in Haryana and it is not a reser-

voir. Water cannot be stored and had to be released, the LG said. "The situation will improve day after tomorrow," he said referring to reduced discharge from the barrage.

"Also, inspected the efforts of draining the flooding in Pragati Maidan Tunnel, through the adjacent MCD drain," Saxena said in another tweet. The traffic movement in Pragati Maidan tunnel remained closed for traffic movement on Wednesday as well for cleaning and maintenance work, officials said.

The tunnel has been closed since Sunday due to waterlogging following heavy rainfall in the city. "Due to cleaning and maintenance work, Pragati Maidan Tunnel will remain closed for traffic. Commuters are advised to plan their journey accordingly," the Delhi Traffic Police said in a tweet.

Modi to begin France, UAE's tour from today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a two-nation visit including France and United Arab Emirates (UAE) from July 13-15. He will first visit France from July 13-14 and hold formal talks with President Emmanuel Macron. Modi is the guest of honour for this year's French National Day known as Bastille Day. Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said here on Wednesday the recent civilian riots in Paris will not impact Prime Minister Modi's visit to France, adding that the recent weeks of unrest was the internal matter of the country. "The riots in Paris is their internal matter. From our perspective, we do not see any impact on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit. We have never had any doubt right

throughout the course and we have been preparing for it completely," Kwatra said while giving details of the Prime Minister's schedule. Giving details of his schedule, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here, the Prime Minister is visiting Paris at the invitation of President Macron. The Bastille Day parade on July 14 will also see participation of a tri-services Indian armed forces contingent. Indian Rafale jets will also take part in the fly-past on the occasion there. Modi will hold formal talks with Macron. He will host a State Banquet as well as a private dinner in honour of the Prime Minister. It was learnt Macron will host Modi for dinner at the Elysee Palace on July 13. The French President is also expected to host a state banquet at the Louvre Museum the next day. Macron may also take Modi for

a tour of the museum, sources said. Prime Minister Modi is also scheduled to meet the Prime Minister of France as well as the Presidents of the Senate and the National Assembly of France. He will separately interact with the Indian diaspora in France, CEOs of Indian and French companies, and prominent French personalities. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the India - France Strategic Partnership, and Prime Minister's visit will provide an opportunity to chart the course of the partnership for the future across diverse sectors such as strategic, cultural, scientific, academic and economic cooperation. Prime Minister Modi will, thereafter, visit Abu Dhabi on July 15 and hold talks with the President of UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Appreciate Modi's perspective on inclusive growth, says Al-Issa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Muslim World League Secretary-General and eminent Islamic scholar Sheikh Mohammed bin Al-Issa on Wednesday praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "passionate perspective" towards inclusive growth. He made this remark after meeting Modi here on Tuesday.

Al-Issa also said during the parleys both of them agreed on the importance of working together to confront all aspects of extremism and hatred, regardless of their source.

Al-Issa also said during the parleys both of them agreed on the importance of working together to confront all aspects of extremism and hatred, regardless of their source.

Al-Issa, who is on an India visit, met Modi on Tuesday and discussed furthering inter-faith dialogue, countering extremist ideologies, promoting global peace, and deepening partnership between India and Saudi Arabia. In a tweet on Wednesday, Al-Issa said he had an insightful discussion with



reason, as peace and prosperity in our diverse world can only be achieved with aware and comprehensive citizenship, he said. "Also, I elaborated upon the details of this important meeting in my lecture at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, which was delivered after the meeting with His Excellency the PM; it was attended by senior scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, along with thinkers and politicians-coming from different states of India-who valued and appreciated the lecture," Al-Issa said.

Earlier, in a tweet, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had said, "PM @narendramodi met H.E. Sheikh @MhmdAlIssa, Secretary General of Muslim World League (MWL) secretary-general said.

There was also agreement on the importance of working together on confronting all aspects of extremism and hatred, regardless of their source and

Indian prime minister on a variety of issues, including ways to further human-centric development and the importance of promoting understanding and harmony among the followers of faith and culture. "I appreciate His Excellency's passionate perspective towards inclusive growth," the Muslim World League (MWL) secretary-general said.

There was also agreement on the importance of working together on confronting all aspects of extremism and hatred, regardless of their source and

PM condoles Nepal PM's wife demise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/KATHMANDU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences to Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" following his wife Sita Dahal's demise. Afflicted by a rare neurological condition for a long time, she died at the age of 69 on Wednesday.

"Extremely saddened to learn about the demise of Mrs. Sita Dahal. I express my sincere condolences to @cmprachanda and pray that the departed soul finds eternal peace. Om Shanti," Modi tweeted.

Reports from Kathmandu said, Sita, who has been ill for a long time passed away Wednesday at Norvic International Hospital in Kathmandu. She was undergoing treatment at the hospital, where the doctors confirmed her death at 8.33 am, according to his press coordinator Surya Kiran Sharma.

Chargesheet against two for frauds using forged letters of ex-Prez, Min

Collected ₹25 L as membership fees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge sheet against two fraudsters who allegedly collected Rs 25 lakh from unsuspecting individuals as membership fees for a fake anti-graft organisation.

The accused sought to legitimise their organisation by using forged documents and letters bearing the names of former President Ram Nath Kovind and junior Personnel Minister Jitendra Singh.

According to the charge sheet filed before a special court in New Delhi, the CBI alleges that Renington Sales and Vincent Raju, based in Chennai, operated a zonal office named the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Crime (ACAC) Wing of India. They claimed the headquarters of this organisation to be located at LokAyoktha Building in Paharganj, New Delhi.

The CBI stated that the duo forged a letter dated May 11, 2018, in which they portrayed then-President Ram Nath

Kovind congratulating former Chief Justice of India R M Lodha for becoming the president of the fake organization. The purpose of this forgery, as alleged by the CBI, was to provide legitimacy to the fraudulent organization established by the accused.

Furthermore, the accused allegedly forged a letter in the name of Union Minister of State for Personnel and Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Jitendra Singh. This letter purportedly informed all Chief Secretaries of States about the appointment of retired Justice Lodha as the president of the ACAC Wing of India.

As per the charge sheet, the accused collected Rs 25 lakh from individuals by enrolling them as members and office-bearers of their fake organization, claiming it to be membership fees. The CBI alleged that the accused withdrew over Rs 10 lakh from an Indian Bank account in Chennai, proving their involvement in the fraudulent activities.

During the investigation, the CBI discovered that Sales had created an email ID, rmlodha.Justice@gmail.com, associated with a recovery mobile number. Various visiting cards carrying the same phone number were found in

possession of Sales. The agency also uncovered emails exchanged in the name of former Chief Justice of India R M Lodha from the premises of the second accused, Raju, whose residence also served as the office for the dubious organization.

The CBI conducted searches at Sales's house and recovered incriminating documents, including appointment letters, resolutions, bank account opening forms, copies of letters from the Minister of State, PMO, and Personnel, trademark certificates, and a pledge from the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). The search also yielded Rs 6 lakh in cash.

To present the ACAC Wing of India as a reputable entity, the accused fraudulently printed letterheads, rubber stamps, identity cards, and visiting cards for the organization. They incorporated the phrase 'Central Vigilance Commission Recognized' and India's National Emblem on the stationery, in an attempt to deceive individuals into believing in the authenticity of the organization. Please note that the above information is based on given news report and may not reflect the most recent updates on the subject.

CBI registers chargesheet against scribe, ex-Navy officer



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a charge sheet on Wednesday against freelance journalist Vivek Raghuvanshi and former Navy commander Ashish Pathak for their alleged involvement in the clandestine procurement of sensitive defence-related information and sharing it with foreign intelligence agencies.

According to officials, the CBI has named Raghuvanshi and Pathak as accused in the violation of the Official Secrets Act and related offences in its charge sheet filed before a special court in Delhi.

Raghuvanshi, who was listed as the India correspondent of a US-based portal on defence and strategic affairs, and Pathak were arrested on May 16.

The CBI had stated earlier this year that the accused, Raghuvanshi and his associate Pathak, were in possession of classified secret documents related to Indian defence establishments. The charge sheet has been filed against them based on these allegations.

The CBI took over the probe from the Delhi Police's Special Cell in May, following a directive from the Union Home Ministry. The investigation was initially carried out by the Special Cell, which had been tracking Raghuvanshi since September last year.

It has been alleged that Raghuvanshi and his relatives received Rs 3 crore from foreign sources. The Delhi Police's Special Cell received information through intelligence agencies about certain Indian journalists engaging in the procurement and transmission of sensitive information to foreign agencies, which had the potential to harm India's relations with friendly nations.

Cong stages silent protest in States over 'unfair' disqualification of Rahul

New Delhi: Expressing solidarity with Rahul Gandhi and protesting against his disqualification from Parliament, Congress leaders and scores of party workers observed a 'maun satyagraha' (silent protest) across several capital cities of states on Wednesday.

Party leaders strongly criticized the ruling BJP at the Centre, accusing the Narendra Modi government of resorting to "dirty tricks" to politically "eliminate" Rahul Gandhi and keep him away from Parliament through the defamation case. The Congress party emphasized that they and the common people stand with Rahul Gandhi in his "fight for truth and justice."

Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal issued a statement, saying that the party held a nationwide Maun Satyagraha, where every worker and leader voiced their opposition to the unfair and



undemocratic disqualification of Rahul Gandhi. Venugopal further stated, "We will continue to fight against every act of injustice by the BJP government, and we are confident that the truth will ultimately prevail." Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said that Rahul Gandhi is likely to approach the Supreme Court

"very soon" to challenge the Gujarat High Court's order rejecting his plea for a stay on his conviction in the defamation case. Singhvi, who is also Rahul Gandhi's lawyer in the case, said, "It will be very soon. It is currently being prepared. In the near future, you will come to know about it." Protests were held across various states,

with the protest in Kerala led by KPCC chief K Sudhakaran and attended by Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, MPs, and presidents of District Congress Committees, along with party workers.

In Madhya Pradesh, Congress leaders, MLAs, and party workers staged a silent protest led by state unit chief Kamal Nath, while neighboring Chhattisgarh was led by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. Protests in northern Indian states such as Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Punjab were put on hold due to adverse weather conditions in the region.

Baghel emphasized that the BJP-led government at the Centre was afraid of Rahul Gandhi due to the enthusiastic response generated by his nationwide foot march, and therefore, it was trying to "suppress" his voice. **PNS**

Cost to reduce risk of sickle cell beyond reach of people in sub-Saharan, India: Study

New Delhi: The costs required to reduce the risk of sickle cell disease (SCD) is beyond the reach of most individuals in India and sub-Saharan Africa, where the disease is most prevalent, a study has said, highlighting the enormous economic burden affecting individuals living with the blood disorder.

SCD is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders that affect hemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen through the body. The condition affects more than 20 million people worldwide. India, recently launched Sickle Cell anemia elimination Mission aiming to ensure that no baby is born with the disorder in the country after 2047. The mission aims to cover 7 crore people with screening, counselling for prevention and care for people with SCD in three and half years.

Reflecting the status of India's healthcare ecosystem, the authors of Commission also noted that there is a shortage of healthcare and scientific pro-

fessionals with expertise in SCD, as well as a lack of trials aimed at developing novel treatments in these countries.

The recent study suggested there were 376,000 (3.76 lakh) global SCD-related deaths in 2021, compared to 34,400 cause-specific deaths. "Whereas the majority of major causes of death are decreasing, the number of deaths due to sickle cell disease is increasing globally," said chair of the Commission, Frederic Piel from Imperial College London, UK.

"The costs required to reduce risk of sickle cell disease is beyond reach of most individuals in sub-Saharan Africa and India where disease is most prevalent - it needs to be directly funded by governments," said Piel.

According to the Commission, reducing the burden of SCD requires substantial financial and political commitment to improving data-collection, diagnosis, treatment and training, and doing so will hit lives of millions of patients and families worldwide. **PNS**

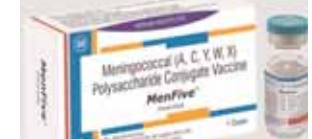
SII's meningitis vax gets WHO's prequalification

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Serum Institute of India (SII) on Wednesday said that its vaccine MenFive manufactured to protect against the five predominant causes of meningococcal meningitis in Africa has been prequalified by the World Health Organisation (WHO), making the vaccine eligible to be procured by United Nations agencies and Gavi.

"As the first conjugate vaccine to safeguard against the five predominant causes of this deadly disease, MenFive offers hope for a future free from annual outbreaks and epidemics in the African meningitis belt," SII CEO Adar Poonawalla said in a statement.

The vaccine protects against meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, Y, and X and is designed to eliminate annual meningitis outbreaks and epidemics in the African meningitis belt — a string of 26 countries from Senegal and The Gambia in the west to Ethiopia in the east.



clinical studies in The Gambia, India, and Mali. Importantly, prequalification allows MenFive to be procured by United Nations agencies and Gavi.

The vaccine protects against meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, Y, and X and is designed to eliminate annual meningitis outbreaks and epidemics in the African meningitis belt — a string of 26 countries from Senegal and The Gambia in the west to Ethiopia in the east.

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FORM NO.5 DRT/LKO DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Temple, Lucknow - 226007 (Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh) SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION O.A. No. 882/2022 [Summons to defendant under Section 19(4), of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993] O.A. No. 882/2022 ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant Versus Mr. Tanuj Singhal & Others ...Defendants To, Defendants 1) Mr. Tanuj Singhal S/o Shri Ramesh Chander, Resident of House No. 127, First Floor, Ashoka Enclave-III, Sector-35, Near Croun Interior Mall, Faridabad-121003 (Haryana). ALSO Flat No. A1-1702, 16th Floor, Tower-A1 Victory Ace, Plot No. GH-02, Sector-143, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida-201301(U.P.) 2) Mrs. Surbhi Agarwal W/o Mr. Tanuj Singhal, Resident of House No. 127, First Floor, Ashoka Enclave-III, Sector-35, Near Croun Interior Mall, Faridabad-121003 (Haryana). ALSO Flat No. A1-1702, 16th Floor, Tower-A1 Victory Ace, Plot No. GH-02, Sector-143, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida-201301(U.P.) 3) M/s. Dream Procon Private Ltd., Reg. Office at 702-704, D-Mall, Netaji Subash Place, Pitampura, New Delhi-110034. In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/ duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 30/10/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal Lucknow

FORM NO. 5 DRT/LKO DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Temple, Lucknow - 226007 (Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh) SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION O.A. No. 176/2023 [Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993] O.A. NO.176/2023 To, ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant Versus Mr. Kamal Kumar & Others ...Defendants To, Defendants 1) Mr. Kamal Kumar, S/o Shri. Rajendra Prasad, Resident of H No. 3 Kalka Garhi Ambedkar Road, Ghaziabad-201001 (U.P.) ALSO Flat No. 1408, 14th Floor, Tower-A, Antriksh Golf Link Plot No. GH-15A, Sector-1, Greater Noida-201307 (U.P.) 2) Mrs. Sonia Kardam, W/o Mr. Kamal Kumar, Resident of H No. 3 Kalka Garhi Ambedkar Road, Ghaziabad-201001 (U.P.) ALSO Flat No. 1408, 14th Floor, Tower-A, Antriksh Golf Link Plot No. GH-15A, Sector-1, Greater Noida-201307 (U.P.) 3) M/s Antriksh Engineers Pvt. Ltd., Regd Office at 34/C-8, Sector-8, Rohini, New Delhi-110085. In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/ duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 16/11/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal Lucknow

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Preeti Sharma who is purchasing Property No. 145, measuring 75 sq. yards, Kharsa No. 11/23, Village Karawa, Nagar, Mukund Vihar, Karawa Nagar, Haza Shikandra, Delhi, from Mr. Neeraj Kumar who is acquiring the aforesaid property after demise of his mother Mrs. Pirmila Devi w/o Mr. Suresh Kumar, who was the owner/attorney holder of Mr. Suraj Palvide Notarized GPA, ATIS & Will dated 10.01.1989 and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. To comply the requirements of Bank/NBFC, we give the public notice that if any person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP - 201301, Contact # 0120-4298379

FORM NO.5 DRT/LKO DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Temple, Lucknow - 226007 (Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh) SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION O.A. No. 47/2023 [Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993] O.A. No. 47/2023 ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant Versus Mr. Indraneel Bose & Others ...Defendants To, Defendants 1) M/s. Bose Design Pvt. Ltd. Office at C-12 1st Floor, Okhla Phase-1, New Delhi- 110020. In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/ duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 19/10/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

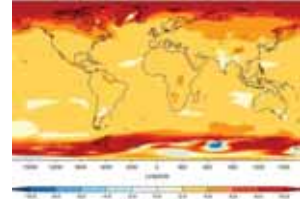
Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal Lucknow

Ground temp leads to deformation of ground: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A team of researchers has highlighted the phenomenon of "underground climate change" occurring in urban areas, which is causing unwanted settlement and deformation of foundations. The researchers published their findings in the journal Communications Engineering, expressing concerns about the impact on civil infrastructure.

The increase in temperature beneath urban areas, attributed to continuous heat diffusion from buildings and underground transportation systems, is warming the ground at a significant rate. The researchers found that the ground temperature can



increase by 0.1 to 2.5 degrees Celsius per decade in many urban areas globally. This rise in temperature leads to deformation of the ground, including expansion and contraction, resulting in excessive movement and the development of cracks in building foundations and surrounding areas.

temperature variations, according to Alessandro Rotta Loria, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at Northwestern University, who led the study conducted in Chicago.

The researchers used Chicago as a case study, but they believe that underground climate change is a common occurrence in dense urban areas worldwide.

Through simulations using temperature data collected by sensors in Chicago, the study revealed that the ground can experience swelling and expansion of up to 12 millimeters, as well as contraction and sinking beneath the weight of buildings by up to 8 millimeters. These variations, although imper-

ceptible to humans, exceed the tolerances of many building components and foundation systems, potentially compromising their long-term performance and durability. The researchers explained that urban areas tend to be warmer than rural areas due to the heat trapped by construction materials from human activity and solar radiation. This phenomenon has been extensively studied in the atmosphere, but the study focused on its subsurface counterpart, driven mainly by human activity.

The research team installed sensors above and below ground around the Chicago Loop and beneath Grant Park to measure temperatures. They discovered that air tempera-

tures in underground structures can be up to 25 degrees higher than the undisturbed ground temperature.

To mitigate the effects of underground climate change, future planning strategies could incorporate geothermal technologies to harness waste heat. Additionally, installing thermal insulation on buildings to minimize heat transfer into the ground could help address the issue, according to Rotta Loria.

It is important to note that the above information is based on the findings of the study published in the journal Communications Engineering and may not encompass all aspects or the latest developments regarding underground climate change.

RSS chief to inaugurate global temples' meet in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Dr Mohan Bhagwat will inaugurate the three-day International Temples Convention and Expo (ITCX) which will be held at the Rudraksh Convention Centre here from July 22. Developed by Temple Connect (India), it is the world's first event solely dedicated to the management of temples across the globe and will focus on nurturing and empowering the administration, management and operations of temple ecosystems.

Conceptualised by Temple Connect founder Giresh Kulkarni, along with ITCX Chairman Prasad Lad, who is also an Maharashtra MLC and show director Megha Ghosh, this event carves a space for free-flowing exchange of ideas, learning and invaluable insight among like-minded dignitaries who are at the helm of temple management, in order to establish, enable and promote best

practices for temple management teams worldwide. The Union Ministry of Tourism under the 'Incredible India' initiative has supported the convention which adds value to temple tourism and pilgrimage ecosystem.

To create a holistic impact, the sessions are tailored to include tried-and-tested as well as new-age practices to streamline sustainable temple management and development. Key conversations around green energy, archaeological architecture, langar (community kitchen) management, illuminations of lights for temples, etc will also be addressed. The lineup includes Tirupati Balaji Temple experts who will share knowledge on their flawless queue management system and charity/social organisations that clean and maintain ghats in Varanasi. The founder of the convention, Giresh Kulkarni, will also lead a session on temple economics and its expanded role in tourism that can boost the local economy and promote a destination by providing pilgrims with a

memorable experience. Other talks and sessions on relevant topics will be held by delegates of Kashi Vishwanath Mandir, Mahakala Jyotirling, Ayodhya Ram Mandir, Patna Sahib Gurudwara, Chidambaram Temple and Virupaksha Temple Hampi.

Prominent personalities who are also expected to participate are temple trustees, members of temple boards and trusts, along with visionaries, such as the Prince of Travancore (Padmanabhaswamy Temple), Rohan A Khaunte (Goa Tourism Minister), Dharma Reddy (Executive Officer - Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams), amongst many others.

ITCX aims to birth and nurture an ecosystem for networking, knowledge sharing and peer learning that will pan out through expert seminars, workshops and master classes on various topics. These include temple safety, security and surveillance, fund management, disaster management, sanitisation, and hygiene as

well as optimal use of new-age technology like artificial intelligence (AI) for protection against cyber-attacks and social media management to foster a strong and connected temple community. The event will also touch upon subjects like crowd and queue management, solid waste management, and infrastructure enhancement under the umbrella of pilgrim experience.

The event is designed for temples and temple trusts of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism in its first season. Representatives from Jain dharmshalas, leading devotional charities, associations in the Hindu Temples of the United Kingdom, ISKCON Temples, Anna Kshetra Managements, Purohit Mahasanga of various pilgrim locations, and Pilgrimage Promotion Boards will participate in this meet. Additionally, the convention serves as a platform to learn about diverse cultures, traditions, and arts and crafts of temples from around the world while also celebrating India's rich temple heritage.

AU campus vandalised after BVoc student's death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A large number of students went on a rampage on Wednesday over the death of BVoc (Bachelor of Vocational Degree courses) student at Allahabad University. In front of the Students' Union building, the students created a ruckus by blocking the road and raising slogans barged into the proctor's office and tore the files. They also vandalised the varsity properties. Some students allegedly caught a woman professor and threw her out of the office to give vent their ire.

Students created a ruckus in the Hindi and Sanskrit departments as well. They fled after the police arrived. The Allahabad University administration said that some outside chaotic elements led by Ajay Yadav Samrat vandalised the university campus. They also scuffled with women staff in which some teachers got hurt. The university administration has asked the police to take

action in this matter.

The whole matter started on Tuesday evening. Student Ashutosh Dubey, who was going home after classes at AU, suddenly got sick. He collapsed outside the dean's office. Fellow students took him in an e-rickshaw to SRN Hospital, but he lost his life.

It was alleged that an ambulance was parked in the premises of the varsity. However, no provision was made to take the student to the hospital. Ashutosh's father Ganesh Shankar Dubey has given a complaint against the vice-chancellor, registrar and chief proctor at the Colonelganj police station. The angry students staged a blockade in front of the Students' Union building on Wednesday morning were adamant on demanding a compensation of Rs 50 lakh to Ashutosh's family, action against the V-C, registrar and chief proctor. The police force was also called on the spot.

Ashutosh Dubey was pursuing BVoc from the Centre of Media Studies, Allahabad University. Father Ganesh Shankar Dubey of Ara Khurd village under Handia Kotwali, Ganganagar, was informed by the university administration that his son's health had suddenly deteriorated. When he reached the doctors had declared him dead.

He alleged that V-C Prof Sangeeta Srivastava, Registrar Prof NK Shukla, Chief Proctor Prof. Rakesh Singh's negligence in this matter and administrative laxity is evident. He alleged that had the university administration provided an ambulance on time, perhaps his son's life could have been saved. These three are responsible for the death of his son. Therefore, appropriate action should be taken by registering a report against them, he claimed.

Ashutosh Dubey (22) was pursuing BVoc from Allahabad University while staying at his

uncle's place in Badi Bagiya Allahpur under George Town police station and was preparing for competitive exams. On Tuesday morning he went to AU and after the classes he was going home in the afternoon. He went to drink water in front of the dean's office. As soon as he walked some distance after drinking water suddenly there was pain in his chest and he fell down. The fellow students called an ambulance parked in the main campus. But the ambulance driver did not come, so the boys took him to the hospital in an e-rickshaw where the doctors declared him dead.

Inspector Colonelganj Ram Mohan Rai said the body has been sent to the postmortem house. The cause of death is not yet clear and will be known after getting the postmortem report. The father has given a complaint against the V-C, registrar and chief proctor. The matter is being investigated.

DC unhappy over power cuts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A meeting of the Electricity department officers was held under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma which was also attended by District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam here on Tuesday. The DC expressed displeasure over the frequent power cuts in the city and instructed the Electricity department officers to stop it with immediate effect. Sharma also asked the Electricity department officers to rectify the work of the control room and connect it directly with the public utility.

The DC also directed the Electricity department to develop a feeder-wise call centre system and take feedback of the complaint disposals. He instructed the officers to run a massive campaign in all the 100 wards of the city for the next three days and during the period the officers should camp in their respective areas, check the duty of the employees, rectify



DC KR Sharma addressing Power department officers in Varanasi on Tuesday.

the major faults in time, talk to the public representatives and stay in constant contact with them so that if there is information about the faults, the same can be disposed of immediately.

He also called for the duty schedule of executive engi-

neers, junior engineers and linemen of all wards and asked the department to issue identity (ID) cards to the linemen so that they can be identified as employees of the Electricity department by the public in the area concerned. Expressing his displeasure over frequent

power cuts for more than four hours in Tulsipur and Sarayanandan areas and instructed the concerned executive engineer to go to the spot and ensure an early removal of faults. Senior officials of the Electricity department were also present in the meeting.

DM holds meeting with boatmen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam held a meeting with boatmen over the dispute relating to the plying of water taxis at Ravidas Ghat here on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by the senior police and Nagar Nigam (Municipal Corporation) apart from the office-bearers of some associations of boatmen.

In the meeting, there was a consensus that boatmen would form their own 11-member team and this team would work with the district admin-



DM S Rajalingam holding a meeting with boatmen in Varanasi on Tuesday.

istration officials to ensure a permanent solution to the problem within the next one month.

The DM asked the boatmen associations that overloading boats should not be operated in the river Ganga and no encroachments or dirt should be made on the Ganga ghats in the name of making or repairing boats so that the tourists visiting the Ganga ghats should not face any kind of inconvenience. In reply, boatmen assured the officers that no overloading boats would be operated in the river Ganga.

BHU signs MoU with ARSI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US-based Foundation for Advancement of Arts and Sciences from India (ARSI) to promote teaching/research in Mathematical Sciences in the varsity. As part of the understanding, BHU has received a sum of Rs 50 lakh. The MoU was signed by Prof Ravi S Kulkarni, President, ARSI and ex-Director, Harish Chandra Research Institute, Prayagraj and Prof Arun Kumar Singh, Registrar, BHU.

The endowment received from Advancement of Arts and Sciences from India will be used to support study and research in Mathematics, particularly with participation of external (national and international) scholars. This will include, involving renowned scholars as visiting professors, scholar-in-campus, or adjunct professors for a specified duration, hosting of international scholars at BHU for short, medium, and long-term visits for lectures, semi-

nars and other scholarly endeavors.

Prof Bantkeshwar Tiwari, DST-Centre for Interdisciplinary Mathematical Sciences, BHU, informed that a part of this money will be utilised in organising lecture series/training programmes/other academic activities in Mathematical Sciences at BHU in cooperation with The Mathematics Consortium (TMC).

ARSI President Prof Kulkarni, who visited BHU a number of times, said he has great affection for BHU and was impressed with the nation building vision of Mahamana through education. With the active association of Prof Kulkarni, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Mathematical Sciences, Institute of Science, BHU, organised a grand international conference of 'The Mathematics Consortium' in cooperation with American Mathematical Society under its centennial celebration of establishment. In May 2022 Prof Kulkarni visited BHU and expressed the foundation's desire for the endow-

ment donation and to collaborate with the university to promote the teaching/research in Mathematical Sciences, which has now taken shape of the MoU.

SSU TO SIGN MOU WITH SSSU: The Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shree Somnath Sanskrit University (SSSU), Veraval, Gujarat on the educational and cultural exchange for five years.

The Vice-Chancellor of SSU Prof Anand Kumar Tyagi and the V-C of SSSU Prof Lalit Kumar Patel on Tuesday held a meeting in SSU here and discussed in detail about various aspects of MoU between both universities on the educational and cultural exchange. Both the V-Cs agreed to sign a MoU soon on it for five years.

As per their educational facilities, both universities will work on the basic facilities of teachers and students, exchange of educational materials, exchange of culture and study on the subjects of Sanskrit, History,

Archaeology, Social Science, Tourist and Manuscript under the Memorandum of Understanding, both V-Cs informed, adding that the exchange of researchers, academic exchange in the field of Indian Knowledge System and exchange of library facilities will also be made.

Besides, both universities will also work together on some more activities such as the workshops will be held for the teachers as well as students, events will be held to enhance vocational and innovative skill, research in important fields will be made, activities in some subjects will be started, cooperative research projects, etc, they informed.

The job-oriented courses will be run to make the students self-reliant and the seminars, etc will be held on refresher course while training workshops will be held on various subjects, the V-C Prof Tyagi informed.

The MoU will be for five years initially and it could be extended. The administrative officers of both universities were present on the occasion.

UPCOMING NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY

Govt issues orders for appointment on 3 posts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With the state government issuing orders for appointment of three major administrative positions—vice-chancellor, registrar and finance controller—for the upcoming National Law University at Prayagraj, the university has started taking shape on ground.

Following a formal

approval granted by the UP Governor in this regard, the state government on July 6 had issued an order for the appointment of top three administrative posts for this upcoming university, foundation stone of which was laid by the former president of the country, Ram Nath Kovind on September 11, 2021.

The state government had allocated Rs 103 crore for

under-construction 'National Law University' in Jhalwa in February this year under UP Budget 2023-24 to provide a fillip to its construction work.

Uttar Pradesh Cabinet had approved the establishment of a National Law University at Prayagraj on July 29, 2020. For the establishment of this university, 'Uttar Pradesh National Law University

Prayagraj Act, 2020' was also passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislature in 2020.

On December 3, 2021, on the birth anniversary of the first President of India Rajendra Prasad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had announced that the National Law University in Deoghat, Jhalwa in Prayagraj will be named after Rajendra Prasad.

NCR GM confers awards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR), Satish Kumar conferred awards to staff for their alertness and contribution towards safety in train operations in the presence of PHODs of NCR. Seven railway staff were conferred with Safety awards by the General Manager on the occasion.

The awardees include Amarnath, Pointsman, Jigna, Prayagraj Division, Kashiram Kushwaha, Pointsman, Orchha, Jhansi division, Rammilan Yadav, Signal Assistant, Mohasa, Jhansi division, Dinesh Kumar Meena,

Gateman Engineer, Kosi Kalan, Agra division, Gajendra Kumar Yadav, Assistant Loco Pilot, Veerangana Laxmibai, Jhansi division, Mukesh Sahu, Loco Pilot, Veerangana Laxmibai, Jhansi division and Shashikant Kumar and constable, RPSF, Prayagraj Chheeki, Prayagraj Division.

Shashikant Kumar has been conferred with the Employee of the month Safety Award of June 2023. On June this year Shashikant Kumar while on duty saved the life of a woman who fell in the gap of train and platform. Due to his timely, vigilant and prompt action, the life of passenger

could be saved. He has rendered excellent service in the line of his duty with extraordinary commitment and full dedication.

SATENDRA KUMAR TAKES OVER AS PCSTE NCR: Satendra Kumar has taken over the charge as Principal Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer (PCSTE), North Central Railway (NCR). He took the charge as the outgoing PCSTE MK Beura has been transferred to South Eastern Railway (SER), Kolkata, as PCSTE.

Satendra Kumar is an Indian Railway Service of Signal Engineers (IR SSE)

Officer of 1990 batch and joined the Indian Railways in 1992 as ASTE, NER. Prior to this he was CSTE/Project/Co/NCR/Prayagraj. He has worked in various important capacities CSTE/Works/ECR, CCE/ECR, DyCSTE/Const/DNR & Sr.DSTE/MGS.

Satendra Kumar has graduated (BTech) from JK Institute of University of Allahabad. He was on deputation through IRCON at Sharjah UAE from August 2001 to August 2005. He is currently involved in Kavach work and automatic signalling work for 160 kmph speed of trains.

Utkarsh Unnayan career guidance camps to be held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a first private consultant agencies have been roped in to guide meritorious students of state-run secondary schools of Uttar Pradesh affiliated to UP Board choose the best suited career path.

For this help of one Delhi-based and two Lucknow-based companies will be taken.

Director General, School Education, Vijay Kiran Anand has directed all district inspectors of schools (DIOs) that with the cooperation of these three companies, 'Utkarsh Unnayan career guidance camps' should be

organised for those students who have scored more than 80 per cent marks in their Intermediate examination of 2023.

According to officials of the State Secondary Education department, the objective is to motivate the

meritorious students to take admissions in not just prestigious medical and engineering colleges but also explore other career options suited to their aptitude and interest.

Officials believe that due to lack of correct information regarding career options and

proper guidance, students are not able to utilise their talents properly. Many a times, they deviate from their objective due to which they are deprived of admissions to prestigious universities and educational institutions of the country.

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 Fresh-Tender Work:			
Sr. No.	Jobs No.	Name of work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	13/DGM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2023-24	M/o Road (Repair of footpath central verge and side patries and other misc. work Wazidpur T-Point to near Mother Dairy T-Point in sector-135), Noida	54.64
2	01/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	M/o Road (Repair and Painting of Central Verge & Footpath Around Sector-157) Noida.	71.07
3	02/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	M/o & D/o Sector - 152, 153 & 154 (Paint & Repair of Central Verge & Footpath of 45m in front of sector-151, 152, 153 & 154 parallel to expressway) Noida.	83.08
4	06/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	M/o Roads (Annual Maintenance of Road in Work Circle-10 Area) Noida.	48.67
5	08/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	M/o & D/o Village (Construction of C.C. Road & Drain Balance Street in Village Dairy Gurjar Proposed by Ch. Mahesh Kasana (B.K.U.) Noida	36.19
6	09/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	M/o Roads (Annual Maintenance of Drain in Work Circle-10 Area) Noida.	48.97
7	11/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	D/o Sector-145 to 148 (Construction of Service Road & Footpath at 45.00M Road Parallel to Expressway at U/S & D/S of Sector-148 Metro Station) Noida.	61.58

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 26.07.2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 27.07.2023 at 11.00 AM.

**Dy. General Manager
NOIDA**

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GRP arrest one, recover two mobile phones

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The GRP arrested one person and recovered two mobile phones on Tuesday. During routine patrolling the GRP personnel spotted a suspect on platform no 2 who was trying to flee on seeing them. The suspect was caught and on frisking two mobile phones were recovered from his possession. The nabbed person confessed that it was stolen from train passengers.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Going under

Heavy rains unleash chaos and expose how ill-prepared even Smart Cities are to deal with monsoon

July has seen more than its usual share of rain. At least five states are reeling under heavy rain and flood-like situation. In Gujarat, at least 60 people have died. Assam flood situation is scary and the monsoon season is turning a nightmare in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. India's monsoon season, often celebrated for bringing relief from scorching summers, sometimes resembles a curse. The nation's love-hate relationship with the monsoon has intensified as heavy rains wreak havoc, leaving behind a trail of destruction, loss of life and unimaginable hardship for millions. The monsoon rains have submerged our big 'smart cities' and their streets have turned into a network of canals. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that there is something drastically wrong with our cities and the way they are designed and maintained. Heavy rains, water logging and flooding have become a recurring nightmare for urban dwellers. The common man is left



bewildered about how his tax money is going down the drain and how much these so-called "smart cities" aren't that smart. Traffic lights malfunction, cars are stranded while drainage systems prove inadequate against nature's fury.

India's unique geographical features make it prone to intense monsoon rainfall. However, the magnitude of recent downpours has far exceeded expectations, catching both citizens and authorities off-guard. The resulting chaos has tested the resilience of communities and exposed the vulnerability of the nation's infrastructure. Each year, people are swept away by floodwaters or succumb to landslides, leaving families shattered and communities mourning. Houses and buildings crumble under the pressure of torrential rains, forcing residents to seek refuge in overcrowded, unhygienic relief camps. True, no infrastructure can be designed to withstand above-normal rains but adequate arrangements can certainly be made to ease the situation. The clogged drainages and vulnerable points can be mended. While it is true that monsoons are unpredictable, the recurrence and intensity of heavy rains call for better preparedness measures. Inadequate urban planning, encroachments on water bodies and improper drainage systems contribute to the severity of flooding. The neglect of disaster management, including early warning systems and evacuation plans, exacerbates the situation. It is about time the government invested money in well-designed drainage systems, resilient roads and reinforced bridges, rather than indulging in fanciful ideas of redecorating the cities. Besides, strict rules need to be implemented to clear encroachments on water bodies and ensure proper urban planning that factors in flood-prone areas. We may suggest efficient early warning systems which can help timely evacuation and minimise loss of life, it is likely to fall on deaf years. They know it already. All they need is the will to do it.

PICTALK



Lord Shiva devotees or 'Kanwariyas' carrying holy water from the Ganga river in the month of 'Shravan' reach Meerut. PTI

Omnichannel: Digital transactions for all

The omnichannel approach is propelling financial inclusion and empowering individuals to participate in the digital economy

The rise of digital payments has transformed the way we conduct financial transactions, making them faster, more convenient, and more secure. In recent years, governments and financial institutions worldwide have recognized the importance of digital payments in driving economic growth and financial inclusion. One such pioneering initiative is the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), which leverages the power of omnichannel technology to make digital payments accessible to people across the country. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is a transformative initiative launched by the Government of India to establish an open, secure, and interoperable infrastructure for digital commerce. Its primary objective is to enhance the accessibility and affordability of digital payments, empowering individuals and businesses to participate in the digital economy seamlessly. By integrating various payment service providers, banks, merchants, and consumers, ONDC acts



as a unified platform, fostering an inclusive ecosystem for digital transactions.

Traditionally, digital payments have relied heavily on smartphones and internet connectivity, limiting access to those with advanced devices and stable internet connections. However, the omnichannel approach adopted by ONDC transcends these barriers by leveraging multiple channels such as feature phones, interactive voice response systems, point-of-sale (POS) devices.

India has a vast population that still relies on feature phones for their communication needs. ONDC enables these users to make digital payments through feature phones, providing a simple and user-friendly interface that requires minimal data connectivity. Besides, by inte-

grating IVR systems, ONDC enables individuals who do not have access to smartphones or the internet to carry out digital transactions using their landline or feature phones. Users can simply dial a designated number and follow voice prompts to complete their transactions securely. ONDC extends its reach to brick-and-mortar establishments by integrating with POS devices. "By leveraging multiple channels, omnichannel payments ensure that individuals across all socio-economic backgrounds and varying levels of digital literacy can participate in the digital economy. This democratisation of digital payments contributes to greater financial inclusion," says Sulabh Tandon, chief business officer, of Airpay, India's first omnichannel payments facilitator. And this is visible on the streets where a vegetable vendor displays the QR code to accept digital payments. India has developed a dynamic and versatile payment gateway as well as a net banking platform. Lack of digital literacy is one of the reasons why the rural pockets of the country still prefer

cash. The lack of adequate banking infrastructure is another reason. The absence of merchant card machines at the local Kirana stores, considering their high costs, adds to the hindrance.

But now that is changing as well. Many companies in the domain are targeting the rural sector and changing the pattern of rural transactions by empowering grocery stores to become collection centres. In addition, cash deposited with the grocery stores will lead to a second revenue generation and offer better legroom to grow by providing a host of related services such as ticket booking, money transfer, etc. "We are empowering this new breed of micro-entrepreneurs and self-reliant business owners to provide formal financial products to their unserved consumers," says Tandon. Indeed, we are indeed entering into an exciting world of new possibilities where most transactions, big and small would be largely done on omnichannel minimising the risk of paper currency.

(The writer is a business consultant and development writer)



PRABHA GUPTA

Let soft power shape the world

Global problems have shown the importance of multilateral forums and the role of organisations like UNESCO in shaping the world order

Sovereign 'stories' or narratives (a term preferred by hardnosed mandarins) are part and parcel of modern-day diplomacy. The credibility or otherwise of sovereign 'stories' is the basis of much-discussed soft power, and it remains an irreplaceable weapon for shaping global perceptions about a nation. Therefore, effective presence and participation in multilateral organisations like UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) are invaluable. Its mandate of positing peace, dialogue, human rights, and sustainable development is pertinent to legitimise any regime or sovereign 'story'. Therefore, the likes of UNESCO have a way of influencing global curricula.

But like all multilateral platforms that require an element of global alignment, participation in such realms comes at a perceived 'cost' (financial, political, diplomatic or even geopolitical), and often some nations find the said 'cost' prohibitive. Given its wide base of almost all countries, it became increasingly challenging to align sovereign sensibilities owing to the difference in governance structures and ideologies – it was sometimes (especially in '70s/'80s) seen as the borough of communists, dictators, and illiberal regimes to attack 'Free World'. But the end of the cold war saw the emergence of asymmetric and non-linear challenges with a new world order where emerging geopolitical issues and the advent of China, redrew the global calculus.

In 1984, the Ronald Reagan administration withdrew from UNESCO citing that it, "has extraneously politicized virtually every subject it deals with. It has exhibited hostility towards a free society, especially a free market and a free press, and it has demonstrated unrestrained budgetary expansion". The multilateral organisation was not driving the Reganesque agenda, and the die-hard cold war warrior could no longer put up with its platitudinous outcomes. The US only rejoined post 9/11 when President George W Bush wanted to rally back global support for the war



on terror – the importance of 'story telling' came back.

But in 2017, it took yet another grandstanding Republican President Donald Trump to withdraw yet again owing to UNESCO's purported anti-Israel bias, a move dictated by domestic politics and electoral considerations. In any case, the US and Israel had stopped funding UNESCO since 2011 (when it admitted Palestine into its comity of nations), as also a hefty bill of \$534 million operating budget (22% of UNESCO's total) that the populist President Donald Trump was keen to prove as 'wasteful expenditure' (along with concerns on other platforms like NATO, WHO, UN etc.). Trump was oblivious to foreign perceptions or 'stories', and the United States suffered serious credibility issues, in his time.

Now, President Joe Biden is keen to make good his promise of rejoining UNESCO after the hiatus. Even as the US agrees to repay 'dues', it makes for smart investment given the reality of a decidedly weaker US and the need for it to leverage multilateralism, as opposed to make-believe its prowess a la 'Brexit'! With the Chinese asserting their influence in multilateral organizations e.g., WHO, the United States admitted that their readmission stemmed from the

66 THAT MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS NECESSITATE A COLLECTIVIST APPROACH AND STANDARDS, STANDING OUT OF THE ROOM AS DONE BY THE UNITED STATES, IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TUSSEL CONTINUES

Sir — Taking on Ajit Pawar and his band of supporters both Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis for forming the alliance but are now having to repent at leisure. Firstly there are limited berths in the cabinet and Ajit is driving a hard bargain for the most plum departments in the government for his men. BJP MLAs think that snatching those berths from his own men. BJP men feel when it comes to seat sharing all the NCP men may dig in their heels and insist on contesting from their own constituencies that would once again conflict with the BJP's interests. As for the Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena, the major reason they quit the Maha Vikas Aghadi was that the NCP men were already dominating the districts where they have constituencies and, in addition, Ajit as finance minister was not extending any funds to the Shiv Sainiks for developing their constituencies. They fear the return of similar domination which is why already about a half dozen of them have already approached Uddhav Thackeray seeking a homecoming. Meanwhile, there have been more MLAs who have switched back to Sharad Pawar after initially walking out with Ajit. The change of heart seems to have happened after noting that Pawar has lost none of his connection with the masses and may have more sympathy among the people than his nephew. With this, all is not well in Maharashtra and the politics may take dirty shape in the coming months.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

MANIPUR MAYHEM

Sir — The unprecedented violence that erupted in Manipur for the last few days is quite compromising in nature with respect to national security. A key difference between a border state like Manipur and another non-border state is its strategic importance. Manipur is having international proximity to other countries where many anti-Indian groups are in active mode. Under this latest development in Manipur politics,

Development sans facilities



Rampant urbanization without developing proper roads, water supply and drainage systems. The proper drainage system is not provided, and if provided not functioning. Year after year the same story. Year on year after the heavy rain not only Delhi even all the other cities transformed roads into gushing streams, parks into watery labyrinths and marketplaces into submerged realms. No obvious lessons were learnt at all and not an iota of counter actions were taken in advance. As a result, seasonal monsoon rain, which is

they can find a potential breeding ground for various propaganda and terrorist activities as the law and order situation is highly volatile. Border state people are our nation for more than one reason. They should be taken into confidence to counter both the existing as well as brewing insurgents. The people of Manipur should not feel alienate from mainstream India.

Arka Goswami | Durgapur

RAIN RAMPAGE

Sir — Rain rampage (in HP / North India / elsewhere) teaches us many cautions and precautionary measures (10 safety commandments) such as I) drop safety jackets and boats from helicopters to flooded homes/zones ii) supply (in advance) plenty of boats, lifeboats, life jackets to save people from drowning iii) remove obstacles / illegal structures in naalaahs / drains (for the smooth flow of water ... to avoid flooding of roads and homes) iv) low lying areas are the most affected. Educate peo-



BHOPIINDER SINGH

ple there on tying long ropes at sensitive zones in advance ... as support to hold them and walk out to safety v) to implement 100% clean energy (solar, wind, green hydrogen) to nullify climate change-related weather catastrophes vi) train the relevant saviours on how to evacuate the people safely and fast at war-footing (via all possible modes) vii) keep plenty of ambulances, medicines, first aid, oxygen cylinders and ambulance - doctors ready viii) spray medicines on standing flood water to nullify germs and spread diseases. ix) evacuate animals and people in advance from areas of regular inundation with water x) at regular flooding zones ... construct homes with higher / taller foundations or on pillars ... to keep people (and animals) safe ... at a height ... from water. Food to them can be dropped off via helicopters.

Recent global turmoil e.g., the Covid pandemic, the Ukraine-Russia war etc., have shown the importance of forging coalitions or understanding via multilateral forums to expand opportunities towards progressive and integrated opportunities. To treat forums like UNESCO as outdated bodies is to underestimate their potential in devising sovereign 'stories' or embellishing narratives to weave a compelling and therefore, winning storyline.

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

annually featured, is tearing down rampant hawks in the northern swath of the country and is reported to have caused a heavy toll on lives and property. I'm sure that one has to agree that poor town planning leads to this water logging, year after year. And the natural water outlets like lakes and tanks were also illegally occupied and made as slums that block the outgo. And everywhere concrete jungles, that never allow water to get absorbed by the earth. What a pity, even the recently constructed new buildings with modern facilities get such a pathetic scenario of water logging at Kartavya Path. This demonstrated how India's administration functions sluggishly; despite extensive efforts by the administration to develop the resources to lessen the effects of natural disasters. The high toll of lives and property exposes the Govt efforts.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

P Vasudeva Rao Sreelekha | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

MANTRAS ACT AT THE SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL

Mantras are not to be parroted they must be imbibed for spiritual growth



RAVI VALLURI

All religious orders and spiritual organisations endorse the chanting of words and syllables. These words intend to silence the mind, helping it move from cacophony to symphony. Among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs it is the cantillation of Om. Those professing Islam undertake incantations of Qur'anic passages or the names of Allah. Christians offer praise to the Lord by chanting scriptural texts, especially the Psalms. Jews too chant from the Old Testament.

Mantras act at the subconscious level of the mind and amortise turbulence which acts as a trigger to achieve the impossible. Hindus invoke deities like Narayana, Shiva, Guru, Shakti, and Hanuman to become mentally strong to overcome difficult situations in life.

THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE MANTRA

Several years ago, lived a Zen Master who specialised in teaching mantras. The foundation of his teachings was absolute faith in the mantra being chanted. Once two disciples approached him and expressed a desire to learn a mantra that would help them fly in the sky. The wise Master wanted to know if they were sure that they would carry out his instructions in toto and with absolute faith. The mentees eagerly agreed to do so and regularly practise the mantra. Very soon they began to levitate and over a period began to fly like majestic birds and gain momentous heights. Somewhere in the stratosphere one day, the two met and exchanged notes. Said the first novice, "Brother, what is the syllable imparted to you by the Holy Master?"

"La," replied the second freshman.

"Oh! I was given the mantra 'Ba,'" remarked the first greenhorn.

They surmised that if they were to combine the two mantras, surely their powers would get magnified and they could then circumnavigate the universe. In their minds, they thought it extremely unfair on the part of the Master to impart only one-half of the mantra to each of them. Their energy and enthusiasm doubled, but faith got punctured. Now they chanted the mantra 'Ba-La,' with great vigour. Much to their surprise they came hurtling down and landed with a big thud on the earth, blaming their teacher. The enlightened master with his clairvoyance had disseminated the sacred words to his students which were to be chanted for spiritual growth and not for gamesmanship and acquisition.



UPEND THE PYRAMID

There once lived a young boy, whose mother appeared to be on the last leg of her life. His father and the entire family were traumatized and overwrought. The young boy overheard the doctor tell his father that only a miracle could save the patient. In all innocence he rushed to the chemist housed in the hospital and placed all his savings, adding to a few paltry rupees, on the counter. He wanted the magic drug called 'miracle' to treat his dying mother. Taking pity on the child, the chemist gave them a few vitamin tablets.

The child prayed to Almighty God and handed over the 'miracle' medicine to his father, quite certain that his mother would now be saved. Much to the amazement of the medical fraternity and the family, the lady of the house regained consciousness and slowly recovered. The 'wonder drug' had a placebo effect on the mind of the child and the entire family was subsumed with positivity, which resulted in the startling recovery of the mother, much to the amazement of the medical fraternity. Buddha once famously said, "We are shaped by our thoughts." Thus, the efficacy of a mantra is not merely parroting it but imbibing its intrinsic pristine quality to achieve spiritual growth.

(The writer is the CEO of Chattisgarh East Railway Ltd, East West Railway Ltd and is a faculty of the Art of Living)

Moral victory of Guru Gobind Singh ji



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji wrote Zafarnama, a letter to Aurangzeb stating his resolve to fight his injustices. It is the proof of the Guru's spiritual prowess



In 1704, the combined forces of the Mughals and the Hill Chieftains came into conflict with Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru. They became jealous of the rising popularity of Guru Sahib for his call to join the Khalsa Panth and fight for justice against the repressive regime. The combined forces laid a siege on the fort of Anandpur Sahib where Guru Sahib, his family and a few soldiers of the Khalsa Army were staying. Since the siege did not deter Guru Sahib, out of desperation enemy forces promised a safe passage to Guru Sahib and his followers taking oath on sacred Quran. Oppositely, Guru Sahib was attacked by the enemy forces while leaving the Anandpur Sahib Fort.

In the ensuing battle and events thereof, his two elder sons were martyred fighting bravely in the Battle of Chamkaur Sahib. Later, his two younger sons were also martyred brutally by Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind and the arch-enemy of Guru Sahib. A series of battles thereof witnessed unsuccessful attempts by Wazir Khan to kill the Guru Sahib. The Guru Sahib went deep into the Malwa region after a decisive win in the Battle of Muktsar Sahib and decided to expose to Aurangzeb, the misdeed of his officials and army. He wrote a letter called 'Zafarnama' i.e. 'Epistle of Victory' to Aurangzeb, informing him about the violation of the oath taken on the holy Quran for giving him a safe passage, the excesses committed by his army and several other acts of cruelty and injustice.

A SPIRITUAL VICTORY LETTER:

Zafarnama (also called "Declaration of Victory") was penned by Guru Sahib originally in the Persian language in 1705. Presently, it is available in Dasam Granth in Gurmukhi script and contains 111 metered verses including four in Braj Bhasha. Thirty-four verses are in the praise of God; 32 deal with Aurangzeb's invitation for Guru Sahib to meet him and his refusal



IN ZAFARNAMA, GURU SAHIB REMINDS AURANGZEB HOW THE MUGHAL SOLDIERS HAD BROKEN THEIR OATHS SWORN UPON THE QURAN PROMISING SAFE PASSAGE TO HIM AND LAUNCHED A TREACHEROUS ATTACK

(The author is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab)

to meet the Emperor (instead Guru Sahib asks Aurangzeb to meet him); 24 verses describe the events in the Battle of Chamkaur Sahib; 15 verses reprove Aurangzeb for breaking written promises given by him to Guru Sahib and six verses speak good of Aurangzeb. In verses 78 and 79, Guru Sahib warned Aurangzeb about the resolve of the Khalsa not to rest until the Mughal Empire was destroyed.

In Zafarnama, Guru Sahib reminds Aurangzeb how the Mughal soldiers had broken their oaths sworn upon the Quran promising safe passage to him and launched a treacherous attack with a huge army. He reminds Aurangzeb that it was not a battle but a cowardly act committed by his soldiers. He wrote that despite sending a huge army to capture or kill him, the Mughal forces did not succeed in their ill motives. Guru Sahib praised the valour of Sikh martyrs who laid down their lives fearlessly during the battles and praised his own four courageous sons who got martyred while resisting the evil forces. Inviting the emperor to come and resolve issues with him, Guru Sahib wrote the most quoted verse (22): "Chun kar az hameh heelaat dar guzshat; Halal ast burdan ba shamsheer dast" meaning "All the modes of redressing the wrong having failed, raising the sword is pious and just".

Guru Sahib asked Aurangzeb whether he considered these developments fair and just. He further writes that true men of honour always keep their word even at the cost of their lives. Contrarily, treacherous men like Aurangzeb's officials say something and act the opposite. The responsibility for these mis-

deeds is to be borne by Aurangzeb. Guru Sahib reprimanded Aurangzeb that, as a religious man, what answer he would give to God for all his misdeeds? Guru Sahib concludes his letter with a desire to meet Aurangzeb personally and wanted that no obstacles should be created in his way. After reading the letter, Aurangzeb also expressed a wish to meet Guru Sahib.

Guru Sahib reminded Aurangzeb that his rule rested on unchecked loot, plunder and deceit; that the rosary in his hand was just a fraud; that the blood of his father and brother was smeared on his face; that his dismal failure in Deccan and Mewar was just a warning of Almighty against the maltreatment of his subjects. Guru Sahib cautioned him not to cast his evil eye on Punjab and cautioned him that his end was near and he would be duly punished in the Almighty's Court for his misdeeds. Thus, Guru Sahib drives a point that despite losing most of his Sikhs in the battles, he had won a moral victory over Aurangzeb.

As per the existing version of Zafarnama, Aurangzeb is told point-blank that he is not aware of the ground reality. Guru Sahib's response to this situation brings out the main traits of his character and personality. Despite these adversities, he established contacts with the Khalsa, continued the process of Amrit Sanchar for the Sikhs, defended himself against the cruelty, finalised the Adi Granth and wrote a historical letter to Aurangzeb taking a firm stand on moral grounds demanding justice.

Thus, Zafarnama is not merely a letter but an intellectual treatise that lays down moral and ethical

principles for Aurangzeb and the entire humanity. This communication amply demonstrates the courageous defiance of Guru Sahib against repression and reassures trust in the ultimate glory of the Almighty and victory of truth. This communication is, in fact, a reprimand by a spiritual entity, Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh possessing a higher moral and ethical stature as compared to a cruel and distorted inhuman, Aurangzeb. Zafarnama teaches us that despite extremely hostile conditions and huge personal loss, we should have confidence, courage and faith to chastise deceitful activities by others. It created a demoralising effect on Aurangzeb who realized that Guru Sahib is the only hope to lead him to the path of truth, and aroused the urge in him to meet the Guru. Unfortunately, the meeting did not materialise owing to the demise of Aurangzeb. As resultantly, humanity missed an opportunity for access to yet another inspirational and spiritual conversation between the two for the enlightenment of mankind. The struggle of Guru Sahib was actually against oppression and deception. He endeavoured to strengthen the oppressed masses through determination, courage and communication. It can be precisely said that the life history of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji is one of the most inspirational ones during the entire course of human civilization. He gave a new discourse on martyrdom by sacrificing his entire family. As a divine messenger, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji provided an exemplary purpose in life. The splendour of Dashmesh Pita's magnanimity and glory will always guide mankind.

Leverage technology in education for country's progress

India must transform its education and nurture a generation of educated and skilled individuals who can take the country forward by their skills and knowledge

Education holds a pivotal role in a nation's development within the ever-evolving global landscape. In India, with its diverse population and large youth demographic, there is a deep recognition of the urgent need to accelerate technological advancements in the field of education, including the not-for-profit segments. The adoption of technology in education is not only essential for bridging the digital divide but also for enhancing access to quality education and empowering India's future generations to flourish in an increasingly dynamic and interconnected world.



AKSHAY V

worldwide. This demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity to harness the potential of technology and revolutionise the education landscape. Even in not-for-profit and government organisations, this transformation plays a crucial role in the journey as technology stands as a powerful ally in amplifying their impact across levels.

By leveraging technology in education, India can lay a robust foundation for its socio-economic progress, nurturing a generation of educated and empowered individuals who will contribute significantly to the nation's growth and prosperity, regardless of their economic background or access to resources.

THE NEED OF ADOPTING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Data management: Effective data management is vital for educational initiatives, starting from tracking student enrolment, attendance, or program management. Technology solutions streamline data collection, analysis, and storage, enabling informed decision-making and collaboration among stakeholders. This enhances student performance and improves the efficiency of educational institutions.

Program Management: Educational programs typically involve diverse stakeholders, complex resource management, and multifaceted objectives. By harnessing technology, nonprofits and



government bodies can streamline program management, effectively track progress, monitor resource allocation, and ultimately enhance the quality of education delivered.

Enhancing Training and Capacity Building: Technology plays a crucial role in optimising training and capacity-building efforts for educational initiatives. By

leveraging technology, organisations can create customised training modules, track participant progress, and assess the impact of training on knowledge and skill development. Additionally, technological solutions enable the measurement of cascade loss, helping identify gaps and refine training approaches for greater efficiency in government and nonprofit programs.

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Chatbots: The incorporation of AI and chatbots into educational programs hold tremendous potential for enriching personalised learning experiences, delivering timely feedback to students, and enabling educators to effectively monitor student

progress. These innovative tools are particularly advantageous in addressing the unique and diverse needs of students throughout India.

IMPROVING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Technology plays a pivotal role in facilitating organisations to establish comprehensive monitoring frameworks, track key performance indicators, and assess the impact of their programs on the ground. By leveraging technology, organisations can enhance their capacity for accurate and data-driven monitoring and evaluation, leading to informed decision-making and continuous improvement in educational outcomes.

WAY FORWARD; LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR BETTER IMPACT AND OUTCOME

Today, India is moving fast in leveraging the technological boom at all sectors and levels. The importance of integrating this advancement in India's education and not-for-profit space cannot be overstated. By harnessing the power of technology in these areas, India has a unique opportunity to transform its education landscape and nurture a generation of educated, skilled, and empowered individuals. With proper infrastructure and required support, a thriving transformation at par with the global digital landscape can be built in the country.

(The writer is the founder & CEO of EdZola Technologies)

EU lawmakers back plan to fight climate change

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's parliament on Wednesday backed a major plan to protect nature and fight climate change in a cliffhanger vote that had the 27-nation bloc's global green credentials at stake.

After weeks of intense lobbying against the plan, the legislature still supported the general outlines of a European Commission bill in a razor-thin 324-312 vote with 12 abstentions.

The plan is a key part of the EU's vaunted European Green Deal that seeks to establish the world's most ambitious climate and biodiversity targets and make the bloc the global point of reference on all climate issues. The vote "marks a significant milestone in our commitment to fulfilling the Green Deal," said MEP Mohammed Chahim of the socialist group.

The plans proposed by the

European Commission, the EU's executive branch, set binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species, with the aim to cover at least 20 per cent of the region's land and sea areas by 2030.

After weeks of intense haggling and despite the staunch opposition of the legislature's biggest group, the European People's Party, the plan survived in the highly anticipated vote at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

The Christian Democrat's EPP opposition also highlighted the fundamental struggle in Europe on how to deal with climate issues.

Despite the succession of droughts, floods and heat waves increasingly hitting countless areas in Europe, the EPP wanted to hit the pause button on such environmental action and concentrate on economic competitiveness first and foremost over the next five years.

Together with other conservatives and the hard right, it said the plans would undermine food security, fuel inflation and hurt farmers.

Thousands of scientists and even multinational companies argued instead to back the proposed plans.

"The disinformation campaign and attempts to derail the Nature Restoration Law from the EPP leadership and their far-right friends has failed," said Greens leader Terry Reintke.

"Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and return to constructive and consensus based politics." On top of the overall vote, legislators also voted on more than 100 amendments to make the plan more flexible.

The approved amendments will be taken into negotiations with the member states that will take months before a final law can be approved.

'China-based hackers breached government email accounts'

AP ■ HONG KONG

China called a Microsoft restoration that a China-based hacking group breached government-linked email accounts "disinformation," saying Wednesday that the accusation was meant to divert attention from US cyber activities.

In a blog post published Tuesday, Microsoft said the group, which it identified as Storm-0558, gained access to email accounts linked to 25 organisations, including Western European government agencies.

The breach was detected weeks later when customers complained to Microsoft about abnormal mail activity.

"We assess this adversary is focused on espionage, such as gaining access to email systems for intelligence collection," Charlie Bell, Microsoft's executive vice president of security, said in a separate



largest hacker empire conducting the most cyber theft," Wang said in a routine briefing.

"Since last year, the cybersecurity organizations of China and other countries have issued many reports exposing the cyberattacks on China by the US Government over a long period of time, but the US has not made a response so far," he said.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who is at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where President Biden is, told ABC's "Good Morning America" that the investigation is ongoing.

"We detected it fairly rapidly and we were able to prevent further breaches," Sullivan said. "The matter is still being investigated, so I have to leave it there because we're gathering further information in consultation with Microsoft and we will continue to appraise the public as we

learn more." The Storm-0558 hackers used forged authentication tokens — pieces of information used to verify the identity of a user — required to access the email accounts, Microsoft said.

It said it has dealt with the attack and informed affected customers.

It also said it would continue to monitor Storm-0558's activities. Last month, Google-owned cybersecurity firm Mandiant said suspected state-backed Chinese hackers broke into the networks of hundreds of public and private sector organisations globally by using a security hole in a popular email security tool.

Earlier this year, Microsoft said state-backed Chinese hackers were targeting US critical infrastructure and could be laying the technical groundwork to disrupt critical communications between the US and Asia during future crises.

Sudan conflict displaces over 3.1 million people: UN

Cairo (AP): A raging conflict in Sudan has driven more than 3.1 million people from their homes, including over 700,000 who fled to neighbouring countries, the United Nations said Wednesday, amid growing concerns that the country is sliding into a "full-scale civil war." Sudan has plunged into chaos since mid-April when monthslong tensions between the military and its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere across the northeastern African nation.

The conflict derailed Sudanese hopes of restoring the country's fragile transition to democracy, which had begun after a popular uprising forced the military's removal of long-time dictator Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. A coup, led by the military and RSF, disrupted the democratic transition in October 2021.

More than 2.4 million people have fled their homes to safer areas inside the country, according to the International Organisation for Migration. Around 738,000 others crossed into neighbouring counties, the agency said.

Egypt is hosting the largest number of those who fled — more than 255,500 people — followed by Chad with over 238,000 and South Sudan with around 160,800, the IOM said. More than 62,000 people fled to Ethiopia, more than 16,700 to the Central African Republic and around 3,000 to Libya, it added. More than 72 per cent of those displaced were from Khartoum and around 9 per cent from West Darfur province, both places where the clashes have largely centred, the IOM said.

The IOM said 65 per cent of those who fled into neighbouring countries were Sudanese nationals and the rest were foreigners and refugees who were forced to return to their home countries. The conflict has turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields.

Thai EC says top candidate for PM may have broken election law

Bangkok (AP): Thailand's state Election Commission said Wednesday it concluded there is evidence that the top candidate to become the country's next prime minister, Move Forward Party leader Pita Limjaroenrat, violated election law and referred his case to the Constitutional Court for a ruling. The commission's decision, announced in a press release, means the court could order Pita to be suspended from his duties as a Member of Parliament until the ruling is issued. In theory it does not rule out him being nominated to become prime minister by Parliament on Thursday, because the post does not have to be held by a lawmaker. But it makes his confirmation by a vote in Parliament, which was already uncertain, even less likely.

Militants attack army garrison in Balochistan; 4 soldiers killed

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Heavily-armed militants attacked an army garrison in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province in the early hours of Wednesday, killing at least four soldiers and wounding five others, the army said. A group of terrorists launched a "dastardly attack" on Zhob Garrison in the north of the province, leading to clashes in which three militants were also killed, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the army - said in a statement.

The intense shootout also resulted in the death of a female passerby and left five other civilians injured, it added. A little known militant group - Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan - claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement, without providing any

details. An initial attempt of terrorists to sneak into the facility was countered by soldiers on duty and in the ensuing heavy exchange of fire, terrorists were contained into a small area at the boundary.

"A clearance operation by Security Forces is underway to apprehend remaining two terrorists as well," the statement said, adding that the security forces were determined to thwart all such "ghastly attempts at destroying peace" in Balochistan.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo condemned the attack on the Zhob garrison and paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for thwarting it by taking swift action.

He offered his condolences to the families of the dead and said that "Pakistan Army is the guarantor of peace and security in the region."

'Current Pak govt's tenure to end on Aug 14'

Islamabad (PTI): The tenure of Pakistan's current government will end on August 14 and the Election Commission will announce the date for the next general election, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured the nation on Wednesday.

Sharif's remarks came a day after his meeting with the chief of the ruling alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the Dawn newspaper reported. During the meeting, the PDM chief stressed the need for the dissolution of assemblies and the holding of general elections on time, it said.

Iowa Republicans pass bill banning abortions after 6 week pregnancy

AP ■ DES MOINES

Iowa's Republican-led Legislature passed a bill banning most abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy during a marathon special session Tuesday that continued late into the night. Gov. Kim Reynolds immediately said in a statement she would sign Friday. The bill passed with exclusively Republican support in a rare, one-day legislative burst lasting more than 14 hours over the vocal — and sometimes tense — objections from Democratic lawmakers and abortion advocates protesting at the Capitol.

Just after 11 p.m., lingering protesters in the gallery booed and yelled "shame" to state senators in the minutes after the bill was approved. Reynolds ordered the rare session after the state Supreme Court declined in



Pastor Michael Shower of Christ the Redeemer Church in Pella, Iowa, left, argues with Ryan Maher, of Des Moines, as protesters clashed in the Iowa State Capitol rotunda, while the Iowa Legislature convened for a special session on July 11, 2023.

June to reinstate a practical-identical law that she signed in 2018. "The Iowa Supreme Court questioned whether this legislature would pass the same law they did in 2018, and today they have

clear answer," Reynolds said in a statement. "The voices of Iowans and their democratically elected representatives cannot be ignored any longer, and justice for the unborn should not be delayed."

Thai diplomat meets Suu Kyi

AP ■ JAKARTA

Thailand's top diplomat said Wednesday that he met with ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi in detention over the weekend and she conveyed her openness to engage in talks to resolve the crisis gripping her strife-torn nation. Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai is the only government official outside of Myanmar known so far to have met with Suu Kyi since she was detained with other officials when the army seized power from her elected



government on Feb. 1, 2021. He told his counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, who are meeting in Indonesia's capital, that Suu Kyi was in good health when he met with her for more than an

hour on Sunday. "She encourages dialogue," Don told reporters in Jakarta when asked what message Suu Kyi conveyed to him. "Obviously we're trying to find a way to settle with Myanmar." The military takeover and the crackdown on the armed resistance to it plunged the country into deadly chaos. Western and European governments, including the United States, have imposed sanctions on Myanmar's military government and demanded the immediate release of Suu Kyi and other political detainees.

UN calls for more action to combat religious hatred

AP ■ GENEVA

The UN's top human rights body overwhelmingly approved a measure calling on countries to do more to prevent religious hatred in the wake of Quran burnings in Europe, over the objections of Western countries who fear tougher steps by governments could trample freedom of expression. Applause broke out in the cavernous chamber of the Human Rights Council on Wednesday after the 28-12 vote, with seven abstentions, on a measure brought by Pakistan and Palestine that was backed by many developing countries in Africa, as well as China and India, and Middle Eastern countries.

The resolution comes in the wake of recent Quran burnings in parts of Europe, and among other things, calls on countries to take steps to "prevent and prosecute acts and advocacy of religious hatred that constitute incitement to

discrimination, hostility or violence".

After the vote, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi of Pakistan insisted the measure "does not seek to curtail the right to free speech," but tries to strike a "prudent balance" between it and "special duties and responsibilities". "The opposition of a few in the room has emanated from their unwillingness to condemn the public desecration of the Holy Quran or any other religious book," Hashmi said. "They lack political, legal and moral courage to condemn this act, and it is the minimum that the council could have expected from them." A day earlier, however, Michele Taylor, the US ambassador to the council, said that the United States "strongly condemns the acts that have precipitated today's discussion, including desecration of the Holy Quran on June 28" — a reference to an incident in Sweden last month that fanned protest in some Muslim communities.

Af Taliban suspend Swedish aid groups activities

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The Afghan Taliban say they have suspended all the activities of Swedish organisations in the country in response to the recent burning of Islam's holy book in Stockholm.

The announcement left a Swedish non-governmental aid group perplexed about the future of its programs in Afghanistan, which provide education and medical facilities to thousands of people across the country.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan said it was seeking clarification from the Taliban.

Two weeks ago, a man identified in Swedish media as a refugee from Iraq burned a Quran outside a mosque in central Stockholm during the major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

The burning drew widespread condemnation in the

Muslim world, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that the incident would pose another obstacle to Sweden's bid for NATO membership, although he later scaled back his objection.

On Tuesday, Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Taliban government, took to Twitter to announce the suspension of Swedish activities in Afghanistan.

"The Islamic Emirate suspends Sweden's activities in Afghanistan until they apologize to the Muslims for the heinous act" of the desecration of the Quran, he said.

Sweden has had no embassy in the Afghan capital, Kabul since the Taliban seized the country in August 2021 while US and NATO troops were in the final weeks of their withdrawal after two decades of war. In a statement, the Swedish

Committee for Afghanistan said it "strongly condemns all acts of desecration of the Holy Quran, just as we condemn any attempt to create conflict or hostility between people based on religious belief, ethnicity, nationality, or any other division."

It was still unclear on Wednesday whether the aid organisation would be allowed to continue its operations.

The Afghan Taliban announced the measure Tuesday as the UN Human Rights Council was discussing the issue of the burning of Quran in Sweden.

On Wednesday, the UN body approved a measure calling on countries to do more to prevent religious hatred in the wake of Quran burnings in Europe, over the objections of Western countries who fear tougher steps by governments could trample on freedom of expression.

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NOTICE OF THE 30TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that 30th Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held on **Friday, the 04th August, 2023 at 10.00 A.M.** at A-24/7, Mohan Co-Operative Industrial Estate, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110044.

The Annual Report of the Company for the year 2022-23 including the financial statements along with the Notice of the AGM will be sent only by email to all those members whose email addresses are registered with the Company or with their respective Depository Participants and the Company's Registrar and Transfer Agent, in accordance with the MCA Circulars and the SEBI Circulars.

The dispatch of notice of AGM, through e-mail shall be completed by 11.07.2023. Notice is also hereby given, pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, and Regulation 42 of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015, that the register of members and share transfer books of the Company will remain closed from 28th July, 2023 to 04th August, 2023 (Both days inclusive) for 30th Annual General Meeting of the Company.

In compliance with the Regulation 44 of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015 and Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, the Company is pleased to inform that it is offering remote e-voting facility to all the shareholders of the Company in respect of all the items to be transacted at the said Meeting.

Members are also informed that the Notice of the 30th AGM along with detailed instructions for e-voting and Annual Report for the year 2022-23 will also be available on the Company's website <http://www.rathisteels.com/>, website of stock exchange i.e. www.bseindia.com. The e-voting period shall commence on Sunday 30th July, 2023 at 09:00 AM and shall end on Thursday 03rd August, 2023 at 05:00 PM.

The Company has appointed M/s PWR Associates, Company Secretaries, Delhi as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.

For detailed instructions pertaining to remote e-voting, Members may refer to the "Notes" set out in the Notice of the AGM. In case of any inquiry regarding e-voting or technical assistance, members may contact at info@maserv.com.

Members who have not registered their email addresses, so far, are also requested to register their email address in respect of demat holdings with depository through their concerned depository Participants. Members who hold the shares in physical form are requested to get their email id registered with MAS Services Limited, Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) of the Company.

By order of the Board
For RATHI BARS LIMITED

Sd/-
(Anamika Shukla)
Company Secretary and Compliance Officer

Date: 10.07.2023
Place: New Delhi

China sends large group of warplanes towards Taiwan

AP ■ TAIPEI

China sent navy ships and a large group of warplanes, including fighter jets and bombers, toward Taiwan over two days, the island's defense ministry said on Wednesday, before its annual military exercises aimed at defending itself against a possible invasion.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army sent 38 warplanes and 9 navy vessels around Taiwan, between 6 a.m. Tuesday to 6 a.m. Wednesday. From Wednesday morning until noon time, the military flew another 30 planes, among which included J-10 and J-16 fighters.

Prachanda's wife passes away

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Sita Dahal, wife of Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', died on Wednesday after suffering from a rare neurological condition. She was 69.

Sita, who had been ill for a long time, was undergoing treatment at Norvic International Hospital in Kathmandu, where the doctors confirmed her death at 8.33 am, according to Prime Minister's press coordinator Surya Kiran Sharma.

Sita, who was also an adviser to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre), was suffering from Progressive Supranuclear Palsy along with Parkinsonism, Diabetes Mellitus-II and Hypertension for a long time.

Progressive supranuclear palsy is a rare neurological condition that can cause problems



a statement signed by Sharma. Sita had undergone treatment in India in 2021. She also received treatment at the Baltimore-based John Hopkins Hospital in the United States of America in 2020 and prior to that she was also taken to Singapore for treatment in June 2018. Sita's body was kept at the party central office in Paris Danda, Koteswar from 11 am to 1 pm to pay the final tributes.

Her last rites were performed with state honours at Pashupatinath Aryaghat.

Daughters Renu and Ganga Dahal lit the funeral pyre of Sita. Several top ministers, MPs, secretaries, and officials of the diplomatic missions were among those present at the funeral. Prime Minister Prachanda and Sita had three daughters and one son. Their eldest daughter Gyanu Dahal and son Prakash Dahal have already passed away.

Four-member committee to probe Nepal helicopter crash

Kathmandu (PTI): The Nepal government has formed a four-member panel to probe the deadly helicopter crash near Mount Everest in the country's eastern region, authorities said on Wednesday.

The Manang Air helicopter 9N-AMV crashed on Tuesday, killing all six people on board, including five members of a Mexican family. The probe committee is headed by Budhisagar Lamichhane, joint secretary at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, according to the ministry sources. The helicopter took off from Surke Airport in Solukhumbu district at 10.04 am for Kathmandu and suddenly lost contact at an altitude above 12,000 feet at 10.13 am.

G7 pledges security deals with Ukraine

AP ■ VILNIUS (LITHUANIA)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed fresh commitments of weapons and ammunition to fight Russia's invasion even as he expressed disappointment over the lack of a clear path for his country to join NATO as the alliance wrapped up its annual summit on Wednesday.

"The Ukrainian delegation is bringing home a significant security victory for the Ukraine, for our country, for our people, for our children," he said while flanked by US President Joe Biden and other leaders from the Group of Seven most powerful democratic nations.

A joint declaration issued by the G7 lays the groundwork for each nation to negotiate agreements to help Ukraine bolster its military over the long term.

Zelenskyy described the initiative as a bridge toward eventual NATO membership and a deterrent against Russia.

"Our support will last long into the future," Biden said.

"We're going to help Ukraine build a strong, capable defense."

The announcement came as NATO leaders launched a new forum for deepening ties with Ukraine, known as the NATO-Ukraine Council.

It's intended to serve as a permanent body where the alliance's 31 members and Ukraine can hold consultations and call for meetings in emergency situations.

The setting is part of NATO's effort to bring Ukraine as close as possible to the military alliance without actually joining it.

On Tuesday, the leaders said in their communique summarizing the summit's conclusions that Ukraine can join "when allies agree and conditions are met."

"Today we meet as equals," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday at a news conference with Zelenskyy. "I look forward to the day we meet as allies." The ambiguous plan for Ukraine's future membership reflects the challenges of reaching consensus among the alliance's current members while the war continues, and has frustrated Zelenskyy even as he expressed appreciation for military hard-



From left, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz, British PM Rishi Sunak, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Brigitte Macron walk during a social dinner as part of the program of the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, Tuesday. AP/PTI

ware being promised by Group of Seven industrial nations.

"The results of the summit are good, but if there were an invitation, that would be ideal," Zelenskyy said, through a translator. He added that joining NATO would be "a serious motivating factor for Ukrainian society" at it resists

Russia.

Despite his disappointment, the Ukrainian leader was more conciliatory on Wednesday than the previous day, when he harshly criticised the lack of a timeline for membership as "unprecedented and absurd."

"NATO needs us just as we need NATO," he said alongside Stoltenberg. Ukraine's future membership was the most divisive and emotionally charged issue at this year's summit.

In essence, Western countries are willing to keep sending weapons to help Ukraine do the job that NATO was designed to do — hold the line against a Russian invasion — but not allow Ukraine to join its ranks and benefit from its security during the war. "We have to stay outside of this war but be able to support Ukraine. We managed that very delicate balancing act for the last 17 months. It's to the benefit of everyone that we maintain that balancing act," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said Wednesday.

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Indonesia seizes Iranian tanker

AP ■ JAKARTA

Indonesian authorities said on Wednesday they seized an Iranian tanker and arrested its crew members for illegally transferring oil to another vessel in the country's exclusive economic zone.

The Iranian-flagged — MT Arman 114 — transporting 272,569 metric tons (2.3 million barrels) of crude oil worth 4.6 trillion rupiah (USD 305 million) was seized on Friday while carrying out illegal transshipment of oil to the Cameroon-flagged tanker — MT S Tinos — in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone near Natuna waters, said Aan Kurnia, Indonesia's Coast Guard Chief. An Indonesian coast guard vessel detected suspicious activities at dawn and tried to approach the two tankers. The Iranian tanker fled toward Malaysian territorial waters while disposing of oil as the hose connecting the two tankers came loose. The tanker ignored various signals

to stop, ranging from horns and warnings via loudspeakers to shots in the air, Kurnia said.

He said the Iranian tanker, which was also carrying three passengers besides its crew, was later arrested by Indonesian Coast Guard with the help of its Malaysian counterpart. Authorities were still questioning the tanker's Egyptian national captain and 28 Syrian crew members, Kurnia said. The Cameroon-flagged tanker managed to escape. Kurnia said the tanker was facing a variety of violations, including not displaying a national flag, shutting off their identification systems, anchoring illegally, as well as the illegal transfer of fuel between ships and spilling oil.

Authorities were escorting the Iranian tanker to Batam island, near Singapore, for further investigation, Kurnia said.

In 2021, Indonesian authorities seized another Iranian tanker and a Panamanian tanker over a similar illegal transfer of oil.

Zelenskyy welcomes US decision to send cluster munition to Ukraine

AP ■ VILNIUS (LITHUANIA)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has welcomed the recent US decision to send cluster munitions to his country, saying Russia also uses the controversial and widely banned weapons. "Russia constantly uses cluster munitions on our territory. It wages war exclusively on our land. It kills our people," he said Wednesday at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. "This is about justice," Zelenskyy added. "We defend ourselves, without using (these) weapons on the territory of other states," Zelenskyy said.

Any cluster munitions supplied to Ukraine, he said, would be used "purely for military purposes" and "purely" in Russian-occupied parts of southern and eastern Ukraine.

President Joe Biden earlier this week described the decision to provide the projectiles as "very difficult," citing their record of killing civilians. Over 120 countries across the world — but not the US, Russia or Ukraine — have signed on to an international convention prohibiting the production of cluster munitions and discouraging their use. Both



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, shakes hands with Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda, next to, from left, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, US President Joe Biden, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council during the NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, Wednesday. AP/PTI

Moscow and Kyiv have deployed the munitions during the war, and Ukrainian regional officials have regularly accused Russian forces of using them to target civilians. NATO and Ukraine are holding their first ever high-level talks in a new format. The 31-nation alliance is not letting Ukraine join while the war with

Russia is going on, but has launched a NATO-Ukraine Council as part of its political commitment to the country. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg says it's "a forum where Ukraine and NATO allies will meet as equals, hold crisis consultations and jointly take decisions."

Iran prez begins Africa visit

AP ■ NAIROBI

Iran's president has begun a rare visit to Africa as his country, which is under heavy US economic sanctions, seeks to deepen partnerships around the world. President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Kenya on Wednesday is the first to the African continent by an Iranian leader in more than a decade. He is also expected to visit Uganda and Zimbabwe and meet with the presidents there.

Africa is a "continent of opportunities" and a great platform for Iranian products, Raisi told journalists in a briefing. He didn't take questions. "None of us is satisfied with the current volume of trade," he said.

Iran's leader specifically mentioned Africa's mineral resources and Iran's petrochemical experience, but the five memoranda of understanding signed on Wednesday by the Islamic Republic and Kenya appeared not to address either one.

Instead, they addressed information, communication and technology; fisheries; animal health and livestock production and investment promotion.

Kenyan President William Ruto called Iran a "critical strategic partner" and "global



Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, center, and Kenya's President William Ruto, right, arrive to give a joint press conference after meeting at State House in Nairobi, Kenya Wednesday. AP/PTI

innovation powerhouse." He expressed interest in expanding Kenya's agricultural exports to Iran and Central Asia well beyond tea.

Iran also intends to set up a manufacturing plant for Iranian vehicles in Kenya's port city of Mombasa, Ruto said.

Raisi's Africa visit is meant to "promote economic diplomacy, strengthen political relations with friendly and aligned countries, and diversify the export destinations," Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement upon his arrival. Last month, Iran's leader made his first visit to Latin America, stopping in Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua. In March, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to re-establish diplomatic ties in a major diplomatic breakthrough. Iran is in a growing standoff with Western nations over its nuclear programme, which has made major advances in the five years since then-US President Donald Trump withdrew his country from an international agreement that restricted it. Trump also restored sanctions on Iran that have contributed to a severe economic crisis.

Iran summons Russian envoy

Dubai (AP): Iran summoned Russia's ambassador on Wednesday after Moscow released a joint statement with Arab countries earlier this week challenging Iran's claim to disputed islands in the Persian Gulf. It marked a rare spat between Iran and Russia, which have deepened ties since Moscow invaded Ukraine, with Iran supplying killer drones that have been used to devastating effect there. Iran and Russia are also strong backers of President Bashar Assad in Syria's civil war. Iran's official IRNA news agency said the ambassador was summoned over a joint statement released Monday after a meeting in Moscow between Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

In the statement, the ministers affirmed their support for efforts "to reach a peaceful solution to the issue of the three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice," according to the Saudi Press Agency. Iran took control of the three islands after British forces withdrew in 1971 and considers them an "inseparable" part of its territory. The United Arab Emirates also claims the three islands and has long pressed for a negotiated solution. "We never stand upon ceremony with any side over Iran's independence, sovereignty and integrity," Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian tweeted, without naming Russia.

'At least 6 killed as Kenyans protest rising costs'

Nairobi: A police official said officers killed six people on Wednesday during new protests in Kenya against the rising cost of living, while a health worker said more than 50 schoolchildren in the capital, Nairobi, were tear-gassed.

The opposition leader behind the demonstrations vowed they would continue until a new law imposing taxes is repealed.

The police official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorised to speak publicly, said three people were killed in Mlolongo city in Machakos county, two in Kitengela town near Nairobi, and one in the town of Emali on the highway to the port city of Mombasa.

The official said more than 10 other people were taken to hospitals. The official said the six who were killed were shot for disrupting businesses, without elaborating. Police have been criticised by human rights watchdogs for their sometimes deadly response to such protests.

N Korea fires its first ICBM in 3 months amid spy flight threat

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired its first intercontinental ballistic missile in three months on Wednesday, two days after it threatened "shocking" consequences to protest what it called provocative US reconnaissance activity near its territory.

Some experts say North Korea likely launched its developmental, road-mobile Hwasong-18 ICBM, a type of solid-fuel weapon that is harder to detect and intercept than its liquid-fuel ICBMs. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un previously called the Hwasong-18 his most powerful nuclear weapon. The missile fired from North Korea's capital region around 10 a.m. flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) at a maximum altitude of 6,000 kilometers (3,730 miles) before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to South Korean and Japanese assessments. They said the missile was launched

on a high angle, in an apparent attempt to avoid neighboring countries.

South Korea's military called the launch "a grave provocation" and urged North Korea to refrain from additional launches. Chief Japanese Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno denounced North Korea's repeated missile launches as "threats to the peace and safety of Japan, the region and international society."

In a trilateral phone call, the chief nuclear envoys of South Korea, Japan and the U.S. agreed to sternly deal with North Korean provocations and boost their coordination to promote a stronger international response to the North's nuclear and missile programs, according to Seoul's Foreign Ministry.

The launch came while South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida are attending the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. In an emergency meeting of South

Korea's security council convened by video in Lithuania, Yoon warned North Korea would face more powerful international sanctions due to its illicit weapons programs.

North Korea's ICBM program targets the mainland US, while its shorter-range missiles are designed to hit South Korea and Japan, both key American allies in northeast Asia.

Since 2017, North Korea has performed a slew of ICBM tests, but some experts say the North still has some technologies to master to possess functioning nuclear-armed missiles capable of reaching major US cities.

The North's most recent previous ICBM test was the first launch of the Hwasong-18 in April.

After that launch, Kim said the missile would enhance the North's counter-attack capabilities and ordered the expansion of his country's nuclear arsenal to "constantly strike extreme uneasiness and horror" in its rivals.

Public Notice
BE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT my client Mrs PUSHPA GOEL W/o Late K.K. Goel R/o Krishna Convent School, Kayasthara, Sikandrabad 203205 (U.P.) do hereby debar and deprive her son Shivam Goel to claim any right, title or interest in any movable and immovable properties in her name thereof. My client is forced to take this harsh step due to matrimonial disputes of her son with his wife and insulting behavior of her son's family which has affected her health adversely.
Arun Kumar Kundra (Advocate) (Enroll No. D-341/78)

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Dharam Singh S/o Late Bhikari Singh R/o Village Manpur, Block Shyana, Distt. Bulandshahar my wife Mrs. Kiran Devi is a GPA Holder of Plot No. GU-90, Sector-145 and the sale Agreement is in my name. Due to human error, my name has been written Dharam Singh Sagar in the above said documents which is wrong. In future my name will be Dharam Singh for all purpose.

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236 Advt. No. BFU-23/10
VACANCIES
Online applications are invited on regular basis w.e.f 15/07/2023 to 07/08/2023 from eligible candidates through University website for the recruitment of post of Public Relation Officer (UR-1) under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. For details/ Updates/ eligibility/ No. of Posts/ terms & conditions visit website www.bfuh.ac.in
nil/12/11/2023/25803 Dated GHD :- 7/12/2023 REGISTRAR

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236
ADMISSION NOTICE-MASTER IN PHYSIOTHERAPY (MPT) COURSE, SESSION 2023
Online Applications for admission to Master of Physiotherapy (MPT) course, session 2023 are invited from eligible candidates on the University website upto 27th July, 2023 through University website. Last date of deposition of online application fee through University online payment gateway is 28th July, 2023. 1st Round of Physical Counseling will be held on 04th August, 2023 at Senate Hall, BFUHS, Faridkot. **Note 1:** Tuition Fee will be collected on the spot of counseling venue in the shape of Demand Draft Vg. Registrar, BFUHS payable at Faridkot. **Note 2:** Candidates who are non-bonafide residents of Punjab will be considered in subsequent round of Counseling. For details/updates kindly visit University website (www.bfuh.ac.in) regularly.
nil/12/20/2023/25805 Dated GHD :- 7/12/2023 REGISTRAR

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236
Admission Notice to MBBS/BDS Course under NEET UG-2023
Online Registration/Application are invited through University website from eligible candidates on the basis of NEET-UG-2023 and as per Punjab Govt. Notification/Prospectus for admission to UG Medical/Dental Courses in Govt./Private colleges of Punjab w.e.f 13.07.2023 to 20.07.2023. Last date for deposition of Registration Fee through Online Payment Gateway is 21.07.2023. Combined Online counseling for admission to undergraduate (Medical/Dental) courses in all the Medical/Dental Colleges including under Private Universities and Minority Institutions in the State of Punjab will be conducted by BFUHS Faridkot. Any update issued by MCC/Govt. of India/Govt. of Punjab regarding UG admissions session 2023 shall be applicable. For Prospectus/Schedule/Fee/Details and updates visit at www.bfuh.ac.in
nil/12/19/2023/25804 Dated GHD :- 7/12/2023 REGISTRAR

WELCURE DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS LTD. CIN No. : L24232DL1998PLC227773 Regd. Off. : 33/36 Basement (Back side), West Patel Nagar near Ram Jass Group, West Delhi, Delhi-110008 E-mail : welcuredrugs227@gmail.com , Website : www.welcure.com STATEMENT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2023 Part I (Lacs.)				
Particulars	Quarter Ending/ Current Year Ending (31/03/2023)	Year to date (Figure) Current Year Ending (31/03/2023)		Corresponding 3 Months Ended in the previous year (31/03/2022)
		(Audited)	(Audited)	
1. Total Income from Operations	22.12	23.71	8.25	
2. Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax(after Extraordinary items)	16.70	23.71	6.70	
3. Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax(after Extraordinary items)	16.70	10.17	6.70	
4. Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax(after Extraordinary items)	16.70	10.71	6.70	
5. Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income(after tax)]	16.70	10.17	6.70	
6. Equity Share Capital	1,343.91	1,343.91	1,211.86	
7. Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year.				
8. Earning Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)		0.00	0.00	0.00
9. Dividend		0.00	0.00	0.00

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarter Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarter Financial Results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange and the listed entity.
2. The above financial results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on July 11, 2023.
3. The impact on net profit/loss, total comprehensive income or any other relevant financial items due to changes in accounting policies shall be disclosed by means of footnote.
4. # Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind-AS Rules/AS Rules, whichever is applicable.
For WELCURE DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS LTD. Sd/- Name: Vishal Mehra Designation: Managing Director DIN : 0971741 Date : 11.07.2023

APPENDIX - IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) 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 Properties mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 31.07.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 50,86,919/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh Eighty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Nineteen only) i.e. Rs. 37,55,097/- (Rupees Thirty Seven Lakh Fifty Five Thousand Ninety Seven only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLAPPAN00339629, and Rs. 13,31,822/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Thirty One Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Two only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLAPPAN00499754, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 04.07.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 05.07.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from DEEPAK KUMAR (PROPRIETOR, NIRMAL TRADING CO.), POONAM DEVI, OMBIR and SEEMA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Properties will be Rs. 30,00,000/- (Rupees Thirty Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 3,00,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
PROPERTY No. 1 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY BEARING SHOP NUMBER 7, ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHT AND GROUND FLOOR, MEASURING 18 SQ. YARDS (EAST TO WEST 9 FEET NORTH TO SOUTH 18 FEET) SQUARE YARDS, WAKA ABADI, OM SHOPPING MALL, SITUATED IN MASAD MOHALLA (MOHANPURA), SONEPAT NEAR GEETA BHAWAN CHOWK, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT SONEPAT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF SONEPAT MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, SONEPAT, HARYANA-131001 AND THE SAME IS BOUNDED AS UNDER :- EAST :- SHOPNUMBER 8 WEST :- SHOPNUMBER 6 NORTH :- OTHER PROPERTY SOUTH :- ROAD 18 FEET WIDE
PROPERTY No. 2 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY BEARING SHOP NUMBER 8, ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHT AND GROUND FLOOR, MEASURING 18 SQ. YARDS (EAST TO WEST 9 FEET NORTH TO SOUTH 18 FEET) SQUARE YARDS, WAKA ABADI, OM SHOPPING MALL, SITUATED IN MASAD MOHALLA (MOHANPURA), SONEPAT NEAR GEETA BHAWAN CHOWK, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT SONEPAT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF SONEPAT MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, SONEPAT, HARYANA-131001 AND THE SAME IS BOUNDED AS UNDER :- EAST :- SHOPNUMBER 9 WEST :- SHOPNUMBER 7 NORTH :- OTHER PROPERTY SOUTH :- ROAD 18 FEET WIDE
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in
Date : 07.07.2023 Place : SONEPAT Sd/- Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

Milan Kundera dies in Paris aged 94

AP ■ PARIS

Milan Kundera, whose dissident writings in communist Czechoslovakia transformed him into an exiled satirist of totalitarianism, has died in Paris. He was 94.

The renowned author died Tuesday afternoon, his long-standing publishing house Gallimard said in a one-sentence statement on Wednesday. It confirmed that he died in Paris but provided no further information.

The European Parliament



held a moment of silence upon news of his passing. The Unbearable Lightness of Being", Kundera's best-known novel, opens wrenchingly with Soviet tanks rolling through Prague, the Czech

capital that was the author's home until he moved to France in 1975. Weaving together themes of love and exile, politics and the deeply personal, Kundera's novel won critical acclaim, earning him a wide readership among Westerners who embraced both his anti-Soviet subversion and the eroticism threaded through many of his works.

"If someone had told me as a boy: One day you will see your nation vanish from the world, I would have considered it nonsense, something

I couldn't possibly imagine. A man knows he is mortal, but he takes it for granted that his nation possesses a kind of eternal life," he told the author Philip Roth in a New York Times interview in 1980, the year before he became a naturalised French citizen. In 1989, the Velvet Revolution pushed Communists from power and Kundera's nation was reborn as the Czech Republic, but by then he had made a new life — and a complete identity — in his apartment on Paris' Left Bank.

India, EFTA agree for early conclusion of talks on FTA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the four-nation bloc EFTA have agreed for early conclusion of negotiations for a free trade agreement, which aims at increasing economic ties between the countries, the Commerce Ministry said on Wednesday.

India and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states --Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland -- are negotiating the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held discussions on the progress of the agreement with a delegation from the European Free Trade Association, led by the Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Helene Budliger Artieda, in London on July 11 and 12.

Helene Budliger Artieda was also accompanied with the industry stakeholders from pharmaceutical, machinery and electronics of EFTA states.

"The deliberations between the minister Piyush Goyal and state secretary Helene Budliger Artieda were fruitful and detailed discussions on crucial issues, with the shared goal of swiftly concluding the TEPA negotiations," it said.

The primary objective of these negotiations is to establish a fair, mutually beneficial, and comprehensive trade deal between India and EFTA.



Over the past few months, India and EFTA have intensified their engagement, highlighting the commitment of both parties to achieving an early conclusion to the TEPA negotiations, it added.

The meeting in London further bolstered this commitment, with both sides demonstrating a strong willingness to progress towards a final agreement.

Goyal expressed his satisfaction with the progress made during the meeting, highlighting the constructive and collaborative nature of the discussions.

The meeting in London added momentum to the ongoing negotiations between India and EFTA.

"Both sides have reaffirmed their commitment to expedite the conclusion of the TEPA, recognizing the potential for enhanced economic cooperation and trade between the two regions," it said, adding the successful conclusion of the

agreement will set the stage for a new deeper economic collaboration.

Under such pacts, two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them, besides easing norms to promote trade in services and investments.

EFTA countries are not part of the European Union (EU). EFTA is an inter-governmental organisation for the promotion and intensification of free trade. It was founded as an alternative for states that did not wish to join the European Community.

India's exports to EFTA countries during April-June 2022-23 stood at USD 1.67 billion as against USD 1.74 billion in 2021-22. Imports aggregated at USD 15 billion during the 11-month period as compared to USD 25.5 billion in 2021-22. The trade gap is in favour of the EFTA group.

June retail inflation marginally up at 4.81% on higher food prices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation rose to a three-month high of 4.81 per cent in June, mainly on account of hardening prices of cereals and pulses, though it remained within the comfort zone of the Reserve Bank.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation moved northwards after declining for four months since February. The RBI, which will be announcing its next set of bi-monthly monetary policy early next month, mainly factors in the retail inflation while deciding the benchmark interest rate (repo).

Retail or CPI inflation stood at 4.31 per cent (revised upward from 4.25 per cent) in May and 7 per cent in June 2022. The previous high CPI was in March at 5.66 per cent.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the inflation in the food basket was at 4.49 per cent in June, higher than 2.96 per cent in May. The food basket accounts for nearly half of the CPI.

The data revealed that annual rate of price rise was 19.19 per cent in case of spices, 12.71 per cent in 'cereals and products', 10.53 per cent in 'pulses and products', and 7 per cent in eggs. Fruits were marginally costlier in June year-on-year.

However, there was a decline in inflation in 'oil and fats' (- 18.12 per cent) and veg-



etables (-0.93 per cent).

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head - Research and Outreach, ICRA, said the spike in vegetable prices is set to push the CPI inflation to an uncomfortable 5.3-5.5 per cent in July 2023.

"We expect the vegetable price shock to result in the Q2 FY2024 CPI inflation exceeding the (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee's last forecast of 5.2 per cent.

"Accordingly, we anticipate that the Committee will retain its hawkish tone in August 2023, keep the repo rate unchanged and signal that a pivot to rate cuts remains distant," she said.

Narinder Wadhwa, National President, Commodity Participants Association of India (CPAI), opined that rise in inflation suggests a potential change in the factors influencing consumer prices.

"It may be influenced by various factors such as changes in demand-supply dynamics, fluctuations in global commodity prices, government

policies, or other economic factors. The rise in inflation is higher than street's expectations," he said.

The government has tasked the central bank to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Last month, the Reserve Bank kept policy rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent and projected retail inflation for the current fiscal to average at 5.1 per cent, with June quarter inflation pegged at 4.6 per cent.

The NSO data further showed that inflation was at 4.72 per cent in rural areas and 4.96 per cent in urban India. However, the food inflation was marginally higher than the national average in the rural areas.

The price data are collected from selected 1,114 urban markets and 1,181 villages covering all states and UTs through personal visits by field staff of field operations division of NSO, in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on a weekly roster.

Space start-ups, industry bodies welcome GST exemption for satellite launch services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The Indian private sector on Wednesday welcomed the Government's decision to exempt satellite launch services by private organisations from GST, saying the move will help them offer competitive rates to put satellites in orbit.

The GST Council, at a meeting on Tuesday, decided that GST exemption on satellite launch services supplied by ISRO, Antrix Corporation Limited and New Space India Limited (NSIL) may be extended to such services supplied by organisations in the private sector also to encourage start-ups.

The Indian Space Association-EY report had said that the space launch segment was expected to grow rapidly by 2025 at the rate of 13 per cent per annum.

"This step will give financial relief to the players and will incentivise growth of this nascent sector. We believe it will help enable the growth of

indigenous launch capabilities and ensure a level playing field for all," Lt Gen A K Bhatt (retd.) Director General, Indian Space Association (ISPA) said.

He said the satellite launch segment has become a key focus area for Indian startups and SMEs, driving innovation and seeking new revenue opportunities.

"As of now, GST exemption is for government launches through NSIL. This GST exemption extending to private players is a welcome move which will create a level playing field and also encourage Indian satellite companies to opt for launch services from domestic private companies," Pawan Kumar Chandana, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Skyroot Aerospace told PTI.

Last year, Skyroot became India's first private company to launch a rocket into space. It plans to launch the Vikram-1 rocket into orbit later this year and launch commercial operations next year.

Domestic passenger vehicle wholesales rise 2% in June: SIAM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle wholesales in the domestic market witnessed a 2 per cent year-on-year rise to 3,27,487 units in June, as demand remained strong especially for the multi-utility vehicles, industry body SIAM said on Wednesday.

Passenger vehicle dispatches to dealers in June 2022 stood at 3,20,985 units.

Total two-wheeler sales rose by 2 per cent to 13,30,826 units last month, as against 13,08,764 units in the year-ago period, SIAM said.

Total three-wheeler wholesales saw a nearly two-fold jump in sales to 53,019 units in June, as compared to 26,701 units in June 2022, it added.

During the April-June quarter, passenger vehicle sales rose to 9,95,974 units, up 9 per cent, as against 9,10,495 units in the same period of the last fiscal, the data showed.

Total two-wheeler sales during the June quarter rose by 11 per cent to 41,40,964 units, as against 37,24,533 units in the year-ago period.

Commercial vehicle sales however declined to 2,17,046 units, from 2,24,488 units in the same quarter last year.

Total three-wheeler dis-



patches rose to 1,44,475 units in April-June quarter, as against 76,293 units in same period last fiscal.

Total sales in the June quarter rose to 54,98,602 units, as compared to 49,35,910 units in April-June period of last financial year.

"Overall the passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers have performed well in Q1 of 2023-24, although some sub-segments have shown slight momentary decline, compared to Q1 of last year," SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal said.

With expectations of a reasonable monsoon, which has now covered most parts of the country, coupled with lowering inflation, the industry expects the economy to continue to grow, which in turn should help the auto sector, he added.

However, high interest rates remain a concern, Aggarwal said.

Sebi refuses to lift ban on 9 entities for misleading YT videos

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has refused to lift the Securities market ban imposed on nine entities in a case concerning manipulating the share prices of Sharpline Broadcast Ltd through uploading misleading videos on YouTube channels.

The regulator, through an interim order in March, barred 24 entities from the securities market based on prima facie findings, and now it has confirmed the ban against nine of them.

"The prima facie findings in the interim order dated March 2, 2023, that the notices (nine entities) have prima facie engaged in a fraudulent and manipulative scheme resulting in prima facie contravention of provisions of the PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trading Practices) Regulations, stand confirmed," Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in an order on Tuesday.

The nine entities are Jatin Manubhai Shah, Angad M Rathod, Heli Jatin Shah, Daivik Jatin Shah, Ashok Kumar Agrawal, Anshu Aggarwal, Anshul Aggarwal, Hemant Dusat and Anshul Aggarwal Co HUF.

Of these, Sebi has given



certain relaxations to four of them.

In its interim order, Sebi found that during the second half of May 2022, false and misleading YouTube videos about Sharpline Broadcast were uploaded on two YouTube channels - Midcap Calls and Profit Yatra.

These videos peddled false and misleading news to recommend that investors buy stocks of New Delhi-based Sharpline for extraordinary profits, Sebi said.

Following the release of the videos on YouTube, there was an increase in prices and

trading volume of the Sharpline scrip.

The volumes appear to have been contributed by a large number of retail investors who might have been influenced by the misleading videos.

Sebi classified these entities into categories like creator of YouTube channels, net sellers and volume creators.

The entities orchestrated an egregious case of "pump-and-dump" of Sharpline Broadcast, wherein they collectively helped create trading volumes and interest in the scrip, spread patently false and misleading YouTube videos about the scrip, and hence induced unsuspecting small investors to buy the scrip at elevated prices, Sebi added.

PwC India, Zoho announce partnership to enhance digital transformation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Chennai-headquartered technology company Zoho on Wednesday announced a partnership with PwC India with an aim to enhance digital transformation across the technology ecosystem.

Through this partnership, PwC India and Zoho will help medium-to-large enterprises in the country, accelerate their digital transformation journey, enabling them to gain a competitive edge in the market, a release said.

It further said that PwC India and Zoho will focus on providing clients and businesses with bespoke transformation solutions, such as customer experience platform, custom applications, HR tech, and financial management applications, including accounting solutions.

"With Zoho's robust product portfolio and our sectoral and technology expertise, we are in a position to empower organisations in their transformative journeys, delivering human-led, tech-powered innovative solutions," said Vivek Belgavi, partner and leader - alliances and ecosystems, PwC India.

Speaking on the partnership, Bishan Singh, head, channel ecosystem, Zoho Corp, said, "We are confident that our customers will benefit from the breadth and depth of Zoho's offering coupled with the industry expertise of PwC. We plan to expand our partnership with PwC to other geographies in the coming years."

Zoho's products have been built on a common technology stack, owned by the company, enabling it to make a unified offering.

Fueled by the resilience of the Indian economy, investment in the domestic capital markets through participatory notes rose to Rs 1.04 lakh crore in May-end, the highest level in over five years.

This includes the value of P-note investments in Indian equity, debt, and hybrid securities.

Also, this marks the third consecutive monthly increase in the investment level through this route, data with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

Participatory notes (P-notes) are issued by registered Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly.

They, however, need to go through a due diligence process. According to Sebi data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets -- equity, debt, and hybrid securities -- stood at Rs 1,04,585 crore at the end of May, as compared to Rs 95,911 crore in April-end.

In comparison, the investment through the route was Rs 88,600 crore in March-end, Rs 88,398 crore in February-end and Rs 91,469 crore in January-end.

VIT-AP signs MoU with UK's ISDC

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

VIT-AP School of Business (VSB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ISDC, UK.

As per the MoU, ISDC will offer globally recognized ISDC certificate in Digital Marketing to the BBA students of VSB pursuing Digital Marketing specialization. For the BBA Fintech specialization students, ISDC will offer certificate in Fintech, with assessment and recognition from ACCA.

ISDC and VSB also entered into an agreement to offer ACCA professional certification to the B Com (Finance) students of the university, with 9 paper exemptions.

Students enrolling for ACCA through VIT-AP would be required to appear for the remaining 4 papers at the ACCA Professional level only, with all the papers at Foundation level of ACCA being fully exempted.

Dr SV Kota Reddy, Vice Chancellor of the university appreciated the efforts of VSB in offering professional certifications and industry connect to the students of VIT-AP university and hoped that maximum number of students get benefitted from this initiative.



Rajesh Poonia, Zonal Head - South, ISDC highlighted the importance of ISDC certificate in Digital Marketing and said that the course contents include Digital Marketing Fundamentals, Inbound and Outbound Marketing, SEO, Web and Social Media Analytics which would be covered in 140 hours.

The Fintech certificate would be covered in 250 hours spread across two semesters, covering Business and Technology, Fintech, Fintech Application in Financial Services and Fintech Apps.

The training for ACCA courses would comprise 240 lecture hours, revisions and mock exams, handled by expert trainers of ISDC, UK.

Dr Jagadish Chandra Mudiganti, Registrar, VIT-AP

University was of the view that the Fintech certification would pool in placement opportunities for the B.Tech students and requested ISDC to provide curriculum mapping to the B.Tech students of VIT-AP university.

Dr Shanthakumari SS, Dean of VSB thanked ISDC for extending the collaboration with VSB, from the current Business Analytics certification to other domains such as Digital Marketing and Fintech specialization.

Dr Raghavendra, Associate Dean of VSB, Mr. Akhil Agarwal, Regional Manager - AP and Telangana, ISDC, Dr. Arunkumar Sivakumar, Program Chair - BBA and Dr. Gopalakrishna UM, Program Chair - B.Com were present on the occasion.

SRM Medical College celebrates Doctors' Day Research Conclave

PNS ■ KATTANKULATHUR

SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCH & RC) celebrated Doctors' Day Research Conclave to highlight the contribution of doctors to the healthcare system.

Registrar of SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) prof S Ponnusamy said 1st of July every year is celebrated as Doctors Day to honour the contribution of Dr B C Roy who attained great fame for his contributions towards the progress of healthcare system. It is an ideal occasion also to pay respects to the doctors for their services towards strengthening healthcare system in our country, he said.

Services of physicians deserve a big salute, none can forget their selfless services during the pandemic time. It was owing to their efforts that vaccines to mitigate the problem posed by Covid saw the light of the day, said SRMIST Registrar.

Great amount of hardwork of researchers, medical practitioners helped us prepare the



vaccines quickly.

Stressing the importance of research, he said students from the medical fraternity must also play an active part in promoting research as it is essential in working out newer modes of treatment and medicines to heal the ailments.

Over 600 publications are being brought out in engineering wing of SRMIST per annum, said Prof Ponnusamy. I want students from the medical fraternity also to reach that extent.

Dr Lt Col ARavikumar, Pro Vice Chancellor (MHS) at SRMIST said achieving results in the field of research could only be possible after putting in great deal of efforts. Continuous work is required to taste suc-

cess, he said.

The landscape of higher learning is not the way it was earlier, innovation and research are now acquiring prominence. Learning does not mean mere absorption of subject knowledge and reproducing it. It is about innovative thinking, trying different ways to work out solutions to issues bothering us, said Dr Lt Col Ravikumar.

"Students can try to do things differently which can later translate into research." Focus is now on even familiarising the undergraduate students also on the importance of research. He said Doctors Day is when we pay tributes to Dr B C Roy who is known for his contributions to the field of healthcare.

UPCOMING IMC 2023 SHOULD BECOME INDIA'S PREMIER TECH EVENT: MIN

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Wednesday asserted that the 2023 edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) should become India's premier technology event.

Organised by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), IMC 2023 will be held from October 27 to 29 at the Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

The theme of the marquee event will be 'Global Digital Innovation', and it is envisaged as a meeting point for industry, government, academics and other key stakeholders in the

technology ecosystem, the minister said.

Addressing the curtain raiser of the event, Vaishnav said at least 100 universities should be connected to the event virtually. Accordingly, the event should be virtually displayed in major universities like IIT Madras, and IIT Gandhinagar, where other universities part of their ecosystem can also join in, he said.

The minister added that there should be five or six partner nations given that India is trying to become a major exporter in the telecom sector. MoS Telecommunication Devu Singh Chauhan was also present on the occasion.

Ashwin gets openers as West Indies slump to 68 for 4 at lunch

PTI ■ DOMINICA

Ravichandran Ashwin removed both openers with his sheer artistry as West Indies crawled to 68 for 4 at lunch against India on the opening day of the first Test, here on Wednesday.

Shardul Thakur (1/7 in 3 overs), operating as the third seamer in overseas conditions for the first time, continued with his happy knack of picking wickets, while Ravindra Jadeja (1/6 in 2 overs) also found his name in wickets column due to a magnificent catch by Mohammed Siraj to dismiss Jermaine Blackwood (14).

At the break, debutant Alick Athanaze (13 batting) was at the crease as West Indies could hit only six fours in 28 overs bowled during the session.

Opting to bat first, West Indies openers Tagenarine Chanderpaul (12, 44 balls) and Kraigg Brathwaite (20 off 46 balls) went into a shell during the first hour as both Siraj (0/17 in 8 overs) and Jaydev Unadkat (0/7 in 5 overs) settled down to a nice fuller Test match length, beating the outside edge of both openers on multiple occasions.

The pressure created by the pace duo did reap dividends as Ashwin (2/25 in 10 overs) slowed the pace of his deliveries, used the available drift to a good advantage to make life uncomfortable for the two openers.



There was a nice loop and he did challenge both inside and outside edge during the second hour.

Tagenarine's stance and trigger shuffle from leg to off-stump does have an uncanny resemblance with his illustrious father Shivnarine although he is slightly more side-on compared to his 'Old Man'.

Sensing his shuffle, Ashwin

got one to hang in the air and drift into the southpaw, who played inside the line only to find it beat his outside edge after pitching and there was a death rattle. West Indies skipper Brathwaite, easily the best Test batter in the side over the last five years, was increasingly getting frustrated as Ashwin bowled fluently quicker at times to him. He did try to hit out of trou-

ble with a slog swept boundary but the canny operator fired one across the line, inducing Brathwaite to go for a mindless bottom-handed slog over mid-on. However the mistimed slog only became easiest skiers for skipper Rohit Sharma stationed at cover.

Left-handed Raymon Reifer (2 off 18 balls) never looked in control as Siraj softened him up

with some short balls.

So when Shardul, who is a notch slower came into the attack, he wanted to come on front-foot and get his cover drive going. Shardul quickly slipped one across the stumps and the thick outside edge was snapped by a diving Ishant Kishan behind the stumps.

GILL AT 3

India batter Shubman Gill doesn't see the role of a number three much different to an opener after deciding to bat lower down the order.

Gill would fill the big shoes of Cheteshwar Pujara at number three, starting with the two-Test series against the West Indies.

Debutant Yashasvi Jaiswal has been tasked to open alongside Rohit Sharma in the series opener.

"They (Team management) asked me where I wanted to bat, and I said I wanted No. 3. It is a position where I want to consolidate," Gill told host broadcasters ahead of the opening Test here.

Gill said the experience of opening for India would come handy at number three.

"It is always good to play with the new ball. I have the experience with the new ball, and when you're batting at No. 3, it is not very different although it is a little bit of a difference," he added. Asked if he already started feeling like a senior player, he said: "Not really. Roles are differ-

ent. Definitely not feeling that way."

Coming off a rare month-long break, Gill has had a superb 2023 where the Gujarat Titans opener won the IPL Orange Cap by amassing 890 runs in 17 matches.

He also scored a maiden IPL hundred this season, thereby becoming the first to score a century in Tests, ODIs, T20Is and IPL in the same calendar year.

Having started the year with an ODI double against New Zealand, Gill carried the form into T20Is when he scored a century against the same team.

"I really enjoyed the one-month break, spent time with my family. This is my first time in Barbados it was, also first time in Dominica. We came here much before, had good training."

About Gill's batting reshuffle, skipper Rohit said the young batter discussed that with coach Dravid. "Gill will play at No. 3 because he himself wants to play at that position. He discussed with Rahul (Dravid) and told him that 'I've played all my cricket at 3 and 4, I think I can do better for my team if I bat at No. 3'."

"It becomes good for us also, we got a left-hander. Indian cricket desperately needed a left-hander. We found Yashasvi Jaiswal he looks very promising. Let's hope he (Jaiswal) performs for his team and makes the spot his own," the skipper added.



Shah, Ashraf finalise Asia Cup schedule; India-Pak matches in Dambulla

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much anticipated Asia Cup games between India and Pakistan will be held in Sri Lanka as agreed upon by the previous dispensation of host PCB, IPL chairman Arun Dharmal confirmed on Wednesday.

Dharmal, who is in Durban for the ICC Chief Executives Meet (CEC), informed that BCCI secretary Jay Shah and new PCB management committee chairman Zaka Ashraf met ahead of ICC board meeting on Thursday to finalise the Asia Cup schedule.

Ashraf, who took charge earlier this month, had expressed his displeasure over the hybrid model accepted by the previous regime under Najam Sethi. PCB has the hosting rights for the tournament to be held in Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 31-September 17.

"Our secretary met PCB head Zaka Ashraf and the Asia Cup schedule was finalised and

it is on course as it was discussed earlier. There will be four games of league stage in Pakistan, followed by 9 games in Sri Lanka including both India versus Pakistan game and a third game if both teams reach the final," Dharmal said.

Dharmal rubbished reports emerging from Pakistan media that India will travel to the neighbouring country as its sports minister Ehsan Mazari had been claiming. "There was no such discussion held. Neither India is travelling to Pakistan nor our secretary will be travelling contrary to reports that have surfaced. Only the schedule was finalised," Dharmal added.

India, in all likelihood, will play Pakistan in Dambulla just like 2010 edition.

Pakistan's only home match in their country will be against minnows Nepal.

The other three games are Afghanistan versus Bangladesh, Bangladesh versus Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka versus Afghanistan.

Indian women eye 3-0 sweep of Bangladesh

PTI ■ MIRPUR

With focus firmly on batting, the Indian women's cricket team will be eyeing a 3-0 sweep of Bangladesh, when the fancied visitors take on the beleaguered hosts in the final T20 International here on Thursday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led outfit won the first two matches without much fuss and will be looking to do an encore when it takes to the field in the third game. However, it is easier said than done given India's mediocre outing with the bat in the second match.

Barring Richa Ghosh, who is not part of the team due to fitness issues and captain Harmanpreet Kaur, there are no real power hitters in the side and that weakness was exposed on Tuesday when India managed a below par 95 before Bangladesh self-destructed to hand the visitors the series on a platter.

There will be added pressure on under performing Shafali Verma, who looked in good touch on Tuesday but could not make it count.

While her 14-ball 19 eventually turned out to be the team's highest score in the forgettable collapse, the young batter is well aware of her capabilities and expectations from her, and has another chance to get back among big runs before the ODI leg of the tour starting July 16.

The likes of Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Yastika Bhatia rely on the bowlers' pace to find boundaries but against the Bangladesh spin-



ners they had a tough time.

Harleen batted with a sorry strike rate of 28.57 while Jemimah took 21 balls to score eight runs, which is not good enough in the modern game.

Senior pro and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana too will be keen to get going after getting dismissed for a run-a-ball 13 on Tuesday.

All-rounder Deepti Sharma too needs to do more as a finisher. If skipper Harmanpreet doesn't fire, the team struggles to find the big sixes.

India were expected to blank Bangladesh and in all probability they would do that on Thursday but concerns remain in all departments for the tougher battles ahead. Besides a dismal batting show, the Indian fielding too left a lot to be desired.

The Indian bowlers, however, will enter the final T20I high on morale.

It is expected to be another game dominated by spinners, who took as many as 16 wick-

ets in the game and bowled 35 overs. Pooja Vastrakar was the only Indian pacer used in Bangladesh's innings in the second game and bowled only six balls while Marufa Akter bowled four overs for the home team.

For India, rookie spinners Minnu Mani and Anusha Baredy have given a good account of themselves in the two games and will be looking to make the most of another opportunity.

Defending 96, Deepti Sharma and Shafali delivered with the ball to bundle out the opponents in exactly 20 overs, with Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana (38 off 55 balls) playing a lone hand.

As far as the home team is concerned, there batters too would look to give a much better account of themselves to raise hopes of a consolation win, which looks unlikely at the moment given the Indian team's all-round strength even though the Bangladesh bowlers did extremely well to restrict the visitors in their last outing.

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The relentless West Zone bowlers left South Zone on a fragile terrain at 182 for seven on the opening day of the Duleep Trophy final here on Wednesday. Fielding by choice, West never let the advantage slip on a largely overcast day that was eventually called off a few minutes into the extended session due to poor light.

Captain Hanuma Vihari offered a lone battle while making 63 off 130 balls for South. But the conditions meant that single man heroics would not suffice. Even though they were operating in a favourable space, West Zone pacers Arzan Nag-waswalla, Chintan Gaja and Atit Sheth should be lauded for maintaining a tight leash on South batting.

They moved the ball quite

Bowlers help West Zone gain control of Duleep Trophy final

appreciably to keep Mayank Agarwal and R Samarth, the South openers, cautious.

The first wicket did not take long to come, though it was more the result of the batter's callousness. Samarth opted to cut Gaja's short and wide delivery outside the off-stump and Harvik Desai, who replaced Het Patel, completed a simple catch behind the stumps.

Thereafter Mayank and Tilak Varma started to move things ahead for the South. In the process, Mayank, who began the match at 6976 runs, also completed 7000 runs in First-



Class cricket from 159 innings.

However, Mayank was not able to convert the start. The Karnataka right-hander's expan-

sive drive off Sheth had fatal consequences, ending in a catch to Sarfaraz Khan at third slip. At 42 for 2, South were in

some danger but the best passage of their innings followed. Tilak and Hanuma Vihari milked 79 runs for the third wicket as South inched towards a safer zone. South went to lunch at 100 for two.

Vihari tried to late cut left-arm spinner Shams Mulani but the ball snaked onto the stumps after taking the edge of his bat.

Tilak perished to Nagwaswalla as the West Zone ate into the meat of South batting order quickly in the post lunch session. West snaffled four wickets in this period for 66 runs to leave their opponents in a spot of bother.

You could see that he was going to be around for a while: Dravid looks back at Kohli's maiden Test series

PTI ■ DOMINICA

Virat Kohli was only taking his first strides in Test cricket when India played here last in 2011, but Rahul Dravid, then a towering figure in the squad, knew he was a "special talent" set for a long and successful career.

In a video shared by the BCCI ahead of the opening Test of the two-match series, both Dravid, now the team's head coach, and senior batter Kohli reminisced about the game that took place more than two decades ago.

"When I came here in 2011 that was a very special occasion for this Island and for the ground here. To come back in a different capacity, to come here as a coach and bring a team here, Virat was the only one who was there when we came here in 2011," Dravid said.

"I remember it was Virat's first Test



series with the Indian team, he was this young kid who had done really well in One Day cricket and he was just finding his feet a little bit in Test cricket.

"But you could see there was a special talent out there and you could see that he

was going to be around for a while. How long you can never say so you can be very proud of his journey," Dravid added.

Kohli recently took to Twitter to share a picture of himself with Dravid and expressed his gratitude for the reunion after 12 years.

Dravid said, "I certainly never thought that I would coach and come here 10 years later, but it is nice to have seen his journey, see him grow from being a young player on that trip to now being a senior veteran."

"I shouldn't call him a veteran, but a senior player on the trip. It is great to see his journey and I think of myself as someone who is a young coach starting a journey as well. So, the tables have turned a little bit (laughs)." Kohli said he is blessed to be one of the two survivors from that squad of 2011 and said he could never imagine that he would be back where it all started form him in the game's traditional format.

MCC recommends extra funding for Test cricket and women's game

PTI ■ LONDON

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the custodians of the laws of the game, has pushed for extra funding to protect Test cricket and the women's game, and suggested a significant reduction in ODIs after the 2027 World Cup.

In a recent meeting at the Lord's, the MCC's 13-member World Cricket Committee (WCC) proposed "removing bilateral ODIs, other than in the one year preceding each World Cup". The panel made the suggestion keeping in mind the crowded calendar, which features T20 domestic franchise leagues around the world.

"The committee questioned the role men's One Day International (ODI) cricket now plays outside of ICC World Cups, and recommended it be significantly reduced following the completion of the 2027 ICC Men's World Cup," the MCC said in a statement posted on its website. "The suggestion is that a scarcity of ODI cricket would increase the quality, achieved by removing bilateral ODIs, other than in the one-year preceding each World Cup. This would, as a consequence, also create much-needed space in the global cricketing calendar."

The MCC committee proposed extra funding to keep the five-day format significant and alive. It also asked the ICC member boards to provide funding to strengthen the women's game globally.

The committee, headed by former England captain Mike Gatting and has Sourav Ganguly and Jhulan Goswami from India, has asked the ICC to create a balanced and equitable Future Tours Programme for men's cricket after 2027.

Chennai Lions to play Puneri Paltan in UTT season 4 opener

PTI ■ PUNE

Chennai Lions, led by star paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal, will look to make a winning start to their title defence against hosts Puneri Paltan in the fourth season of Ultimate Table Tennis, beginning here on Thursday.

Chennai Lions had defeated Dabang Delhi in the final of the third season held four years ago in 2019, and will look for a repeat performance this year as the UTT returns with a six-team competition to be played here from July 13 to 30.

Sharath is among the four players who were retained by their respective franchises in this year's players' draft and will be the star attraction in the tournament ahead of this year's Asian Games in Hangzhou (China) and 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Sharath, ranked 54 in the world, has been a part of the UTT ever since the competition began and he had made it clear that the fourth edition will kickstart his preparation for next year's Olympics.

Among other big Indian players, Manika Batra and Sathiyam

Gnanasekaran were retained by Bengaluru Smashers and Dabang Delhi respectively.

Former world No. 1 in U-18 and U-21 categories, Manav Thakkar is expected to lead the charge of U Mumba TT.

Alongside four-time Olympian Sharath, Chennai Lions also have Australia's Yangzi Liu and Germany's Benedikt Duda as one female and male overseas players, as well as India's Sutirtha Mukherjee, Payas Jain and Prapti Sen.

Sutirtha's career graph has been on the rise as the 27-year-old won three gold medals — singles, team and mixed doubles — in the South Asian Games in 2019. Recently, she won the doubles title with Ayhika Mukherjee in Tunis at the WTT Contender.

Puneri Paltan, on the other hand, will have Egypt's Omar Assar as their star attraction.

The Egyptian, ranked 22, had recently created history when he became the first from his country and only the second African player to reach the quarter-finals of the World Table Tennis



Championship, held in South Africa this year. He has won the last two ITTF-African Cup titles.

Czech Republic's Hana Matelova is the overseas female player for Puneri Paltan, who also have India's Snehit SFR, Anusha Kutumbale, Archana Kamath and Manush Shah.

World No. 38 Batra will lead the charge of Bengaluru Smashers alongside alongside Ankur Bhattacharjee, Sanil Shetty, Poymantee Baisya, Kazakhstan's Kirill Gerassimenko and Natalia Bajor of Poland.

The first Indian player to reach top 25, Sathiyam spearheaded Dabang Delhi's campaign in the last edition of UTT when the side reached the final, and the franchise will be hoping to do one better this time around with Sreeja Akula, Ayhika, Anirban Ghosh, Slovakia's Barbora Balazova and Jon Persson of Sweden in tow.

World No. 43 Alvaro Robles will be the overseas attraction in the Goa Challengers team, who also have Suthasini Sawettabut from Thailand as overseas female player.

COOPERATION

“The vision of a community with a shared future for mankind upholds the good of humanity.”

We have carried forward the spirit of good-neighborliness, and advocated equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness between civilizations. We have called for peaceful coexistence and harmonious development of different civilizations, and expanded people-to-people and cultural cooperation. We have enhanced the popular support for our state-to-state relations.

—An excerpt from speech delivered by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

On July 5, the International Conference on China and the World: Towards Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind was held in Beijing. Maria Francesca Staiano, director of the Center on China Studies of the International Relations Institute of the National University of La Plata, said that the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind is enjoying growing popularity, because it is promoting exchanges and mutual learning between

human civilizations and advancing them as well. During the conference, noted experts and scholars from political and government circles of different countries, international organizations, and the field of social sciences, as well as representatives of Chinese and foreign think tanks and the press referred to a series of China-proposed global initiatives in their speeches, such as the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative. They

agreed that these Chinese proposals constitute the pillars for building a community with a shared future for mankind, and has pointed out a realistic path towards a better world. “In a world of greater uncertainty, China has prescribed a cure for solving the world’s pressing problems by stressing a shared future for mankind,” said Xulio Rios, a renowned Spanish expert on China studies. He believes that Chinese proposals have provided more choices for mankind

to address new challenges in the international arena. The former Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf highly acclaimed the Global Development Initiative. He said, “The Global Development Initiative has provided a roadmap for global development so that the world will advance according to a sound logic. China has also proposed the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is a concrete step to promote global development and progress.” Chinese President Xi

Jinping first proposed to build a community with a shared future for mankind in 2013. Over the past decade, this vision has steadily enriched its content, produced practical results, and become increasingly relevant to the present times. “China is a true practitioner of multilateralism.” Jasna Plevnik, president of the Croatian think tank Geoeconomic Forum (GEOFO), said that China has extensively participated in international cooperation and made crucial efforts in addressing

climate change and other common challenges faced by mankind. “China’s eradication of absolute poverty figures prominently in the history of mankind’s fight against poverty.” Kenneth Quinn, president emeritus of the World Food Prize Foundation, highly praised China’s efforts in poverty reduction. He also expressed his hope that the U.S. and China will join hands in promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. (Staff correspondents)

VIEWS

Chinese modernization has created a new form of human advancement

China persists in continuing its peaceful development road and pledges never to seek hegemony or engage in expansion. It is striving to safeguard world peace and development as it pursues its own development, and will make greater contributions to world peace and development through its own development. In the process, it has blazed a new path of modernization. Instead of simply copying the experiences of other countries, China has carried forward its fine historical and cultural traditions to explore a development road in light of its own national conditions. This has set an example for other developing countries in exploring their modernization paths that are in line with their national conditions. China has always closely

linked its development with the progress of the entire mankind, and considered its modernization as part of human modernization. China never exports its development model, but advocates that every country should independently explore a development path that suits its own national conditions. Chinese modernization has created a new form of human advancement and expanded space for progress of human civilization. China’s successful practice shows that different civilizations can achieve their own wonderfulness in their pursuit of modernization. (People’s Daily; the author is Schemur Mammadov, director of the Azerbaijan “Eurasian Observation” Center for International Studies.)

ECOLOGY

Xishuangbanna: Monitoring and early warning system prevents human-elephant conflicts

“Dear villagers, for your personal safety, please beware that elephants are spotted near No 682-1 monitoring station in the Wild Elephant Valley!” In the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve, whenever an infrared camera captures a wild elephant, the early warning system will go off, and an announcement will be broadcasted. Wild Asian elephants are under first-grade state protection in China. They are mainly distributed in Xishuangbanna, Pu’er, and Lincang of Yunnan Province. The latest monitoring results show that Yunnan has a wild Asian elephant population of more than 300. In August 2020, the wild Asian elephants early warning system was put into operation in the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve. As of June 12 this year, the system has sent more than 10,000 early warnings cumulatively, effectively preventing human-elephant conflicts. Around April every year, the wild Asian elephants will look for food outside the nature reserve, which is sur-

rounded by villages. The wild Asian elephants monitoring and early warning system has been built to ensure the people’s safety in life and work and prevent human-elephant conflicts. According to Tan Xuji, head of the Asian elephant monitoring center with the reserve’s scientific research institute, with the help of 600 infrared cameras and 177 intelligent broadcasting sets, the wild Asian elephants monitoring and early warning system can cover the 38 areas in 12 towns and townships of Jinhong, Mengla, and Menghai where the wild species frequently appear. The system uses artificial intelligence (AI) image recognition technology to identify wild Asian elephants with an accuracy of more than 90 percent, achieving real-time monitoring and prompt early warnings and providing a basis for subsequent scientific studies. The entire process from capturing images of the elephants to sending early warnings only takes about 15 seconds, said Tan. (Xinhua)

EXPO



Representatives from multinational companies were conducting an investigation in Yunnan, on June 20th.

“We look forward to deepening cooperation with Yunnan”

“When industry peers come together to learn from each other and meet the challenges in a joint way, we can hopefully promote the industry’s green and low-carbon development,” said Li Bin, president of Alfa Laval Group’s China Energy Division. He believes that visiting and connecting with Yunnan will bring more opportunities for cooperation. The China International Import Expo (CIIE) is the world’s first import-themed national-level expo. As part of the 6th CIIE, which is scheduled to be held in Shanghai from November 5 to 10 this year, the “CIIE in Yunnan” event was held in Kunming from June 19 to 21. Joining 108 multinational companies and four international business associations, Alfa Laval Group participated in this event to share the opportunities brought by Yunnan’s development. Yin Ji, chief representative of the Investment Promotion Agency of the Brazilian State of São Paulo, said that Brazil attaches great importance to the CIIE platform. Yin, who was visiting Yunnan for the first time, explained that as an office of a Brazilian local government in China, the Investment Promotion Agency seeks to not only attract

more Chinese companies to invest in Brazil but also introduce high-quality Brazilian products such as coffee, beef, and honey to Chinese consumers. Speaking of Yunnan’s distinctive and highly-reputed biomedical industry, Yin hopes that both sides will start from this area to deepen exchanges and cooperation between more Brazilian and Yunnan companies. Zheng Xin is a representative of Winza, a Pakistani jewelry brand. During the 6th China-South Asia Expo held in 2022, Zheng and his colleagues brought featured Pakistani jewelry products to Kunming, which were favored by many consumers. “I believe that as Yunnan opens up wider to the outside world, especially as it becomes a pivot of China’s opening up to South and Southeast Asia, it will attract more overseas investors,” he said. “Rich in resources, Yunnan is building itself into a world-class clean energy industry cluster. We look forward to deepening our cooperation with Yunnan and helping it develop its petrochemical and energy industries in a sustainable manner,” said Sun Lidong, vice president of Milliken Asia Pacific. (Yunnan Daily)

COUNTY TOWN

Ningjin takes lion’s share of China’s fitness equipment market

If treadmills, rowing machines, spinning bikes, and strength equipment still sound strange to your ears, you just need to visit a gymnasium in a Chinese city. The fitness enthusiasts there will explain to you very clearly what these things are and how they work. However, even Chinese fitness enthusiasts do not necessarily know that most of these apparatuses are made in Ningjin, a small county in Dezhou City, Shandong Province, specialized in manufacturing high-, medium-, and low-end commercial and household fitness equipment that comes in more than a dozen series and 300 varieties. Ningjin used to have nothing to do with the Chinese fitness industry. In less than 20 years, however, it has become a commercial fitness equip-

ment manufacturing base well-known at home and abroad. Now it occupies more than 70 percent of the domestic market and 60 percent of the export market. In 2016, Ningjin’s fitness equipment industry achieved an annual output value of 30 billion yuan, making the county recognized as China’s Fitness Equipment Manufacturing Base. Ningjin is not just a fitness equipment research, development, and manufacturing base. The small workshops founded by local farmers have grown into large companies well-known at home and abroad. Of Ningjin’s 117 fitness equipment manufacturers, more than 19 are enterprises with annual sales revenue over five million yuan. For example, the early starters MBH and BDL are already national new- and

high-technology enterprises capable of manufacturing 600,000 sets of fitness equipment per year. Zhao Shilong, now chairman of MBH Fitness Co Ltd, is the first person to engage in fitness equipment manufacturing in Ningjin. Zhao had worked in a machinery factory for many years. In 2001, he designed Ningjin’s first piece of fitness equipment according to a fitness equipment catalog and spent two months with other workers turning the drawings into a real thing. Prices were the biggest advantage of their products, but Zhao has retained customers with technology. He would make any improvement as required by the customers. Finally, he and his co-workers created Ningjin’s first fitness equipment brand — Jiulong (now BDL) and expanded the market.

Later, fitness equipment factories of all sizes began to spring up like mushrooms in Ningjin. All of them followed the successful model of Jiulong — copying and acting as OEMs. After a few years, Ningjin’s fitness equipment industry went on the track of sound development, and BDL, MBH, and DHZ became leading fitness equipment manufacturers in the county. The Ningjin fitness equipment industry has taken off thanks to the rise of China’s sports and fitness industry. Today, Ningjin is expanding the market from commercial fitness equipment to household, competitive, and rehabilitation fitness equipment, as well as smart products such as monitoring and wearable devices. (Blue Whale Finance, iqilu.com, and dezhoudaily.com)

IN-PICS



Edible wild mushrooms hit market in Yunnan

With the onset of the rainy season, edible wild mushrooms recently hit the market in large quantities in Yunnan, ushering in an exciting season for their connoisseurs. Known as a kingdom of wild mushrooms, Yunnan is home to about 900 species of edible wild mushrooms. (Xinhua)



STORY

Ecuadorian young man falls in love with Yunnan music

Angelo Castagneto is a music teacher from Ecuador. He came to China in 2009 and married a Chinese girl. In March this year, when he came to Cangyuan Wa Autonomous County in Yunnan Province to teach local children music at an invitation, he was deeply impressed by Yunnan’s ethnic songs and dances. In the Guomen Primary School of Cangyuan County, local teachers and children took Angelo on a tour of the arts teaching building. Seeing the children swinging their ebony black hair and dancing a cheerful and passionate Wa ethnic dance while the teachers played the drums, Angelo felt as if he had come home. In Ecuador, there is a similar folk dance. Angelo introduced Ecu-

dor to the children and taught them the Spanish language and Latin dances. All the children listened attentively and were eager to learn everything. Although Angelo and the children are from different countries and ethnic groups, their cultural exchanges went on smoothly. Angelo said, “Our body is a musical instrument. Every emotion and sound we produce can have an effect on others. We are music in a sense.” During his stay in Cangyuan, Angelo felt his duty as a musician and a cultural messenger. He set up a music troupe with local musicians to conduct in-depth China-Ecuador cultural exchanges and help the local community preserve and carry forward the traditional ethnic culture. (Mo Yingyi)