

OPINION 6
REFORM DIPLOMACY TO
MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE

WORLD 8
SUNAK SORRY FOR HISTORIC
LGBT BAN IN UK ARMED FORCES

MONEY 10
MARKETS SEE BULL RUN FOR
FIFTH DAY IN A ROW

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JULY 20, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Parl set for stormy Monsoon session

Opp to raise Manipur, Delhi ordinance, ED/CBI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Monsoon session of Parliament is set to commence on Thursday, with the Opposition gearing up to challenge the Government on crucial matters. Dominating the session's agenda will be the pressing issues of ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur and the contentious Delhi services ordinance.

This session marks the first Parliamentary gathering since 26 Opposition parties joined forces to form the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), aimed at countering the Modi Government's policies.

During the all-party meeting convened by the Government on Wednesday, Opposition parties raised concerns about the Manipur violence, atrocities against Dalits and women, and alleged misuse of Central probe agencies like the ED and CBI. The Congress is planning to move an adjournment motion to discuss the situation in Manipur.

"We want to bring an adjournment motion for discussion tomorrow as the situation in Manipur is deteriorating," Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury asserted.



He also raised concerns about India-China border tensions, floods in parts of north India, and the Balasore train accident, demanding debates on these matters as well.

Chowdhury questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the Manipur violence and urged him to address the issue in Parliament. Unemployment, rising prices, and concerns over attacks on the federal structure were among the other issues highlighted by Congress during the meeting.

The Delhi services ordi-

nance, brought by the Centre in May, is expected to trigger a showdown between the Government and the Opposition. Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) strongly opposes the ordinance, as it undermines a Supreme Court verdict that granted the elected Government in Delhi control over service matters.

The ordinance aims to establish a National Capital Civil Service Authority, altering the transfer and disciplinary proceedings of Group-A officers from the DANICS cadre. Previously, all officer transfers

and postings in the Delhi Government were under the executive control of the Lieutenant Governor until the Supreme Court's ruling on May 11.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh also attended the all-party meeting and expressed strong opposition to the ordinance, viewing it as a threat to India's federal structure.

"The most unfortunate thing is that the bill which destroys the federal structure of India is at the top. We will strongly oppose the black ordinance," he said.

Maya distances BSP from INDIA, NDA

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Chief Mayawati declared on Wednesday that her party would independently contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in 2024, as well as the State Legislative Assembly polls.

This decision firmly distances the BSP from both the recently-formed Opposition alliance, INDIA, and the BJP-led NDA, as Mayawati emphasised that the BSP would pursue its agenda without any alliances.

Mayawati's statement puts an end to speculations about a potential alliance between her party and the Congress in Uttar Pradesh for the next parliamentary elections.

In a video statement, the 67-year-old leader asserted that the BSP's preparations for the elections were in full swing, and they were determined to contest alone. She also expressed openness to collaborating with regional parties in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and



others, where such arrangements align with the party's interests.

Mayawati launched a scathing attack on the Congress and its rebranding of the UPA as "INDIA." She accused the Congress of forging alliances with casteist and capitalist parties solely to gain power.

Accusing the Congress of neglecting the interests of oppressed classes, she said, "Had the Congress kept aside its casteist and capitalist mindset, worked towards the welfare of the poor and the oppressed,

and followed the principles of B R Ambedkar, the need to form the BSP would not have arisen."

Similarly, she expressed her view that there was no substantial difference between the BJP and the Congress, asserting that both alliances were making empty promises and implementing policies that disregarded the welfare of the underprivileged, Dalits, and Muslims.

Mayawati's discontent with the current political landscape was evident as she highlighted

her exclusion from the recent meeting of opposition parties in Bengaluru.

Her party has been actively strategising for the 2024 general elections, conducting meetings with units in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh to discuss preparations and strategies.

Mayawati also stated that the BSP is open to tie-ups with regional parties in Punjab and Haryana, provided they have no affiliations with the ruling NDA alliance or the newly-formed opposition coalition 'INDIA.'

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BSP formed an alliance with the SP in Uttar Pradesh, securing 10 seats with 19.43 per cent of the votes, while the SP won five seats. However, in the 2022 UP Assembly elections, the BSP received only one seat and 12.88 per cent of the votes. The party is now focusing on building a Dalit-OBC-Muslim alliance in an effort to regain lost ground and make an impact in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

SC grants bail to Teesta in roits evidence framing cases



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted regular bail to activist Teesta Setalvad in a case related to the alleged fabrication of evidence in the 2002 post-Godhra riots cases.

The apex court deemed the findings of the Gujarat High Court "perverse to say the least" and set aside its order rejecting her plea for regular bail. The three-judge bench of Justices BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, and Dipankar Datta made this decision.

The top court clarified that Setalvad has already faced a chargesheet in the case, and her custodial interrogation is unnecessary.

"The appellant has already surrendered her passport, which will remain in the custody of the sessions court. The appellant shall not make any attempt to influence witnesses and shall maintain a distance from them," the bench said.

The SC allowed the Gujarat Police to approach the apex court directly if any attempt is made to influence witnesses in the case.

Continued on Page 2

Jeetega Bharat: Opp war cry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After 26 Opposition parties formed an alliance in Bengaluru on Tuesday and named it INDIA, they quickly unveiled their campaign tagline as "Jeetega Bharat" (India will win) to take on the BJP-led Government under Narendra Modi. This strategic move came amid speculations that the BJP or the NDA alliance might consider using a similar word or phrase to counter the Opposition campaign.

The Hindi tagline "Jeetega Bharat" is likely to be echoed in various regional languages, according to sources.

The Congress, from its official Twitter handle, shared the tagline with the message, "Judega Bharat, Jeetega India."

During the meeting in Bengaluru on Tuesday, several leaders emphasised the inclusion of the word "Bharat" in the name or tagline of the alliance.



As a result, it was collectively decided to incorporate it in the tagline, as confirmed by a senior leader.

The coinage of the tagline was a collaborative effort by multiple leaders, according to insider sources.

On Tuesday, the 26 Opposition parties came together to form a coalition named "Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA)," aiming to collectively contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls against the ruling NDA.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh expressed the essence of the Bharat Jodo Yatra with the message, "Judega

Bharat. The essential message of the Bengaluru conclave of 26 political parties: Jeetega INDIA."

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor also took to Twitter with a rhyming tweet in Hindi on 'INDIA,' stating, "NDA ki lagegi lanka, bajege ab INDIA ka danka. Jeetega India."

Addressing the Press conference in Bengaluru after an extensive four-hour-long meeting of the 26 parties, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge confidently asserted, "We'll fight the 2024 Lok Sabha elections unitedly, and we will emerge victorious."

Kharge said a committee of 11 members would be formed for coordination, and a convener would be selected during the meeting in Mumbai. Additionally, a secretariat in Delhi will be established to manage the alliance's campaign, and specific committees will be formed to address various issues.

Officer dies in bid to save jawans from Siachen fire

PNS ■ JAMMU

An Army officer succumbed to his burn injuries while trying to save his jawans from fire in Siachen glacier on Wednesday around 3:00 am, Army officials said.

Three soldiers were injured in a fire incident. They have been air evacuated for treatment. The condition of the injured is reported to be stable.

According to a Leh-based Defence Spokesman Lt-Col PS Sidhu, a fire incident occurred at Siachen Glacier on July 19, 2023, at around 0300 hrs.

"Capt Anshuman Singh, Regimental Medical Officer, succumbed to serious burn injuries sustained during the unfortunate incident. Three other personnel suffered smoke inhalation and second-degree burns. They have been safely air evacuated for further treatment. The condition of the injured personnel is reported to be stable," he said.

Continued on Page 2

16 electrocuted to death in Chamoli

PNS ■ DEHRADUN/CHAMOLI

In a tragic incident on Wednesday, 16 people died and 11 sustained injuries after getting electrocuted at a Namami Gange project site located on the banks of the Alaknanda river in the Chamoli district.

Most of the deceased include people involved in the Namami Gange project, some villagers besides a police sub-inspector and three home guards. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has expressed condolences over the tragic incident and ordered a magisterial inquiry into it.

The incident happened around 11:35 am in which a total of 26 people were electrocuted. Out of them, 16 died and the remaining sustained injuries. Six victims with critical conditions were airlifted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh for treatment while the remaining were admitted to the Government hospital in Gopeshwar, Chamoli.

The police had sent all



bodies for post-mortem till Wednesday evening. The deceased include sub-inspector, police Pradeep Singh Rawat, homeguards Deepak Kumar, Gopal Singh Bastwal and Sobat Lal, and in-charge of Namami Gange Sewage Treatment plant Yogendra Singh.

The district magistrate Himanshu Khurana, superintendent of police Pramendra Dobhal along with the officials of the health department, State Disaster Response Force and other departments rushed to the spot to oversee the rescue and relief operation.

Dobhal said the caretaker of the project site Ganesh Lal

had died on Tuesday evening reportedly by getting electrocuted and a police team, along with some villagers, had gone to the site on Wednesday morning to carry out the process of Panchnama when this tragic incident happened.

The additional director general of police (Crime, Law and Order) V Murugesan said, "As per the information received by district police, the side railing of the river dam had an electric current that reportedly spread on Wednesday morning. The district police have been ordered to investigate the matter."

Continued on Page 2

Pilot, hubby thrashed for torturing 10-yr-old girl help in Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman pilot and her husband, a ground staffer, were assaulted by a mob for employing and torturing a 10-year-old girl as a domestic help in Delhi's Dwarka on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Kaushik Bagchi and his wife Poornima, were arrested, and the police rescued the minor, sending her back to her parents' home.



the mob's anger. Shocking visuals showed the mob beating the pilot and her husband, who tried to intervene. Poornima was heard apologising in the video while Kaushik was seen shielding her from the mob saying that "she would die...Leave her...". An elderly man intervened and then the crowd dispersed.

Detailed report on P3

Delicious aloo poori journeys back onto platform

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The mouthwatering aloo puri has made a grand comeback on the railway station platforms as the Indian Railways announced the provision of affordable meals and packaged water especially designed for general coach passengers. According to the railway's statement, dedicated counters or trolleys are being placed on platforms, perfectly aligned with the general coaches.

The meals would be divided into two categories. The type one offered seven "pooris" with dry "aaloo" and pickle at a price of Rs 20.

On the other hand, the type two meal, priced at Rs 50, will treat passengers to a delectable assortment of South

Indian food, including rice, rajma, chhole, khichdi kulche, bhature, pao-bhaji, and masala dosa. The Railway Board has issued instructions to officials concerned to make provisions of economy meals and affordable packaged drinking water through counters placed near GS coaches.

GS coaches referred to the general seating coach. Almost every train, including mail/express trains, has at least two GS coaches - one near the locomotive and the other at the end of the train. Anyone with a General/Unreserved ticket bought from the counter could travel in those compartments.

The meals will be supplied from the kitchen units (Refreshment Rooms - RRs and Jan Ahaars - JAs) of IRCTC, the order stated.

The location of these coun-



ters will be decided by railway zones to align with the location of GS coaches on platforms.

The provision of these extended service counters at the platforms is being done on an experimental basis for a

period of six months.

As of then, the provision has been implemented at 51 stations, and it was available at 13 more from Thursday. Officials said efforts were being made to provide drinking water

glasses of 200 ml at these counters.

The initiative was introduced for passenger convenience, especially in those coaches that were often overcrowded.

Railways to start affordable travel for low-income

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is set to introduce a dedicated service to facilitate affordable travel for low-income passengers between two long-distance destinations or regions. This move comes as a result of a detailed study conducted by the railways, analyzing the load factor and waitlisted patterns on various routes. The aim is to cater to a significant number of labourers who frequently travel from States like Bihar and Jharkhand to southern regions like Chennai, Mumbai, Surat, Punjab, and others.

Tension in Manipur after gangrape video surfaces

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Tension mounted in the hills of Manipur after a May 4 video surfaced on Wednesday showing two women from one of the warring communities being paraded naked by a few men from the other side, officials said here on Wednesday. The video was doing the rounds on the eve of a planned protest march announced by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) on Thursday to highlight their plight. Police said a case of abduction, gangrape and murder has been registered at Nongpok Sekmai police station in Thoubal district against unknown armed miscreants. In a statement, they said an all-out effort is on to arrest the culprits at the earliest. According to a spokesperson of ITLF, the "despicable scene, which happened on May 4 in Kangpokpi district, shows men constantly molesting the helpless women, who cry and plead



with their captors. "The horrifying ordeal suffered by these innocent women is amplified by the perpetrators' decision to share the video, which shows the identity of the victims, on social media." While condemning the "sickening act", the spokesperson in a statement demanded that the central and state governments, National Commission for Women and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes take cogni-

sance of the offence and bring the culprits before the law. The Kuki-Zo tribals are planning to raise this issue as well during a proposed protest march in Churchedpur on Thursday. Manipur state has been witnessing ethnic clashes since May 3 between majority the Meiteis, concentrated in Imphal valley, and the Kukis, occupying the hills. Over 160 people have been killed in the violence so far.

Rain causes landslides in J&K, killing eight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Eight persons including five children were killed in landslides and flash floods in rain-battered J&K, while Tawi, Ujh, and Chenab rivers were in spate prompting the local authorities to prepare an emergency evacuation plan to ensure the safety of residents living in the low-lying areas in the close vicinity of these rivers. According to police, "Two houses collapsed in the Surjan village of Bani in Kathua district, trapping five inmates. The bodies of Mohd Asif and Nazia Bano, both siblings were recovered by the rescue workers while the bodies of three family members, including a mother and two children could not be recovered till late evening. The dead bodies of three other civilians were recovered by the rescue teams in the region after they were washed away in flash floods. Meanwhile, vehicular traffic also remained dis-



rupted along the Jammu Srinagar National Highway near Ramban and on the busy Jammu-Pathankot National Highway as a bridge on the Tarnah Nallah suffered damages due to heavy rains. The traffic was diverted through the nearby border road. Due to incessant rains in and around Katra new track to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine was also closed for pilgrims in view of the landslide threat. However, the pilgrims were allowed to proceed along the old route. Chopper service to the shrine remained suspended due to inclement weather

conditions. Across the Jammu region, Katra received 315.4 mm of rain in 24 hours, the highest in the past 43 years. "This is the heaviest rainfall since 1980. On July 31, 2019, Katra received 292.4 mm of rain," an official of the weather department said. "Yatra has been suspended on the new track due to the threat of landslides. However, the yatra is going on the old track," Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Shri Mata Vaishnodevi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), Anshul Garg said.

Why Rahul, Didi in one frame: Angry Bengal Cong, LF men ask

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Fresh from the INDIA meeting at Bengaluru, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that she had "no doubts" that the new Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance will bring about the downfall of the Narendra Modi Government. Speaking to the media she said that the BJP had been winning elections not by merit but by dividing the votes and creating hatred. "Their only work is to divide the people of the country, create hatred amongst them, ignite violence and cause bloodshed and miseries... in order to win elections and remain in power... but this time the people have understood their cunning and they will take revenge for their misdeeds," Banerjee said. "The people will take revenge on the BJP politically by bringing their government down," she said. When asked to

comet on the Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari's claim that his party had resolved to topple the TMC Government in another few months' time Banerjee said "the BJP does not have the capacity to topple a bucket let alone the TMC government which has the popular verdict behind it," adding INDIA was "united in its endeavor to oust BJP from power." Notwithstanding Banerjee's "united INDIA claim" the Bengal units of the Congress and the CPI(M) looked vehemently opposed to their central leaderships' hobnobbing with the TMC supremo. "Whatever be the central line, in Bengal there is no question of any alliance with the TMC... The Congress will not leave a single seat to the TMC and the fight with Mamata Banerjee will continue as vehemently as it was before the panchayat elections," a Pradesh Congress leader said.

Two foreign terrorists neutralised in Kupwara

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Two foreign terrorists were neutralised in a successful joint operation by the security forces in the Macchal Sector of Kupwara early Wednesday morning. The operation was based on specific and credible intelligence developed by the intelligence wing of the Border Security Force. So far eight terrorists have been killed by the security forces in three separate operations in the last three days. Two terrorists were killed in the Krishnaghati sector on Monday, while four foreign terrorists were killed in the Surankote area of Poonch on Tuesday. In a statement, a BSF spokesman said, "During the operation, multiple ambushes along the likely routes of infiltration were laid by the joint teams of the Border Security Force (BSF), Indian Army and Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP). During the night of July 18/19, at about 11.00 p.m, a suspicious movement along the Line of Control was detected by alert troops, and the terrorists' movements were continuously tracked. Contact was established with the terrorists at around 4.55 a.m, leading to an intense exchange of fire. As a result, two for-



eight terrorists were neutralized by the joint teams". Significant quantities of arms and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists, including four AK series rifles, nine AK magazines, 175 AK rounds, six hand grenades, one UBGL (Under Barrel Grenade Launcher), five UBGL grenades, and two tactical vests. The identity of the terrorists is being ascertained. IG BSF Kashmir Frontier Ashok Yadav stated that the operation was a result of exemplary synergy among different security forces engaged in countering infiltration bids by the terrorists. He further applauded the tireless efforts of BSF in setting up in developing credible inputs and praised the clinical operation executed by troops on the ground.

Official sources said that Somaia had offered to join the investigations as and when he was asked to do so. "Since this is a complicated probe, we will be requisitioning the help of the technical and cyber crime experts. We will be sending the incriminating video clips for forensic analysis to ascertain the authenticity of the video footage," a senior police officer said. It may be recalled that leader of the Opposition in the

Mumbai sleuths probe ex-MP Somaia's sleazy video

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Upper House Ambadas Danve of the Shiv Serna (UBT), who had raised the issue in the Upper House and demanded a probe into the sex video clips - had on Tuesday handed over a pen drive containing eight hours of video footage that purportedly featured Somaia, to Maharashtra Legislative Council's Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe. While Fadnavis had directed Mumbai Police Commissioner Vivek Phansalkar to set up a team to investigate the sex video scam, Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) Chairperson Rupali Chakankar had also written to the Mumbai police chief to conduct an in-depth probe and submit its report at the earliest. Gorhe and the MSCW chairperson had urged the victim women to come forward and filed complaints with the police. In a related development, Danve demanded to know as to why the BJP, which called itself as a "party with as difference", had not taken any disciplinary action against Somaia. "Had the person involved in the obscene video clip scam been an ordinary party worker, the BJP would have expelled the party worker by now. Why has the BJP not taken any action against Somaia?," the Opposition Shiv Serna (UBT) leader asked.

The Union Health Ministry has eased Covid-19 guidelines for international travellers, removing the previous requirement for RT-PCR testing of a random 2 per cent of visitors to India. The new guidelines shall come into effect from midnight of July 20. It said in a statement that the guidelines have been eased after taking note of the prevalent coronavirus situation and the significant achievements made in the vaccination coverage across the globe. However, precautionary measures, such as in-flight announcements and isolation of symptomatic passengers as per protocol, shall still be followed. A statement from the Ministry said that all travellers are advised to preferentially receive full vaccination as per their country's primary schedule and self-monitor their health post-arrival. Also, any passenger having symptoms of COVID-19 during travel shall be isolated as per standard protocol i.e. the said passenger should be wearing a mask, isolated and segregated from other passengers in flight/travel and shifted to an isolation facility subsequently for follow up treatment. All travellers should self-monitor their health post arrival and also shall report to their nearest health facility or call national helpline number (1075) State Helpline Number in case they have any symptoms suggestive of Covid, as per the guidelines.

Health Min eases Covid guidelines for travellers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Wednesday witnessed chaotic and unruly scenes as angry BJP legislators tore copies of bills and the agenda, and threw them at the Deputy Speaker, who was presiding, following which Speaker U T Khader suspended 10 of them for the remainder of the session. In turn, MLAs of the opposition BJP and JD(S) gave notice of no confidence against Speaker Khader to the Assembly Secretary. The turn of events unfolded following both the opposition parties staging a protest in the assembly against the Congress government for allegedly "misusing" IAS officers to work for the meeting of leaders of 26 opposition parties, which was held in Bengaluru in the past two days. The 10 BJP legislators who have been suspended for the reminder of the session for their "indecent and disrespectful conduct" in

the House are -- C N Ashwath Narayan, V Sunil Kumar, R Ashoka, Araga Jnanendra (all former ministers), D Vedavyasa Kamath, Yashpal Suvarna, Dheeraj Muniraj, A Umanath Kotian, Arvind Bellad and Y Bharath Shetty. They were suspended after the House adopted a motion to this effect. The assembly session began on July 3 and is slated to end on July 21. A few of the suspended BJP MLAs were forcibly taken out of the assembly chambers by marshals. BJP legislators staged a protest against the Speaker's decision to suspend the 10 party MLAs, first outside his office and then at the Vidhana Soudha west gate. They were shortly joined by JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy. Senior BJP member Basanagouda Patil Yatnal was taken to hospital after he fell ill during the protest. "He is stable and doing fine," BJP MLA Ashwath Narayan said after visiting him in hospital.

10 BJP MLAs suspended; K'taka Assembly witnesses chaotic scenes

10 BJP MLAs suspended; K'taka Assembly witnesses chaotic scenes

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय
मध्य प्रदेश भोपाल
क्रमांक - विशा./स्टोर/2022-25 (203), दिनांक 14.07.2023
निविदा सूचना का शुद्धि पत्र
(Corrigendum)
विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय की निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SBI/Store/2023-25 (177), Bhopal, Dated 15.06.2023 द्वारा Bullet Resistance Vehicle के ब्रॉड हेतु हेतु निविदा सूचना जारी की गई है। उपरोक्त आमंत्रित निविदा अंतिम निर्धारित समय-समयों एवं तकनीकी मानक/ड में किये गये परिवर्तनों के संबंध में "शुद्धि पत्र" (Corrigendum) जारी किया गया है जो website <https://mptenders.gov.in/nicceppapp> पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाइट www.mppolice.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।
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दूरभाष क्रं.-0755-2443654
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PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Chander Kala W/o Sh. Ashok Kumar Taak, R/o EG-7, 1st Floor, Indrapuri, Delhi-110012 had entered into a MOU for property bearing Kharsa No. 1323 Kha, Plot No. 34 (New) Village Pondra, Tehsil Vikas Nagar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand measuring about 180 sq. yds with Sh. Sanjay Kumar S/O Sh. M.P. Singh R/o Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh around February, 2018 with a token amount and balance consideration was to be paid to me within 7 months. Since Mr. Sanjay has failed to pay the balance consideration as per the MOU for the aforesaid property and has neither contacted me since February, 2018. The MOU entered stands terminated and I am now free to use or negotiate this property with another buyer.
Chander Kala

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110007
PUBLIC NOTICE: Builder Cancellation
This is to bring to your notice that MOUMITA BAGCHI/ MANOJ KUMAR (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBDEL00004858033 located at UNIT NO. E 204, THE ROSELIA, 2ND FLOOR, TOWER-E, SECTOR 95A, HARYANA, GURGAON. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated April 03, 2023 informing that FOREVER BUILDTech PRIVATE LIMITED has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication. Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.
Dated: July 20, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited
Place: Delhi/ NCR Sd-

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Jasmeet Rana D/O Shri Savinder Singh Kalsi (wife of Mr. Deepak Rana) R/O A-38, Dayanand Colony, Lajpat Nagar-4, New Delhi-110024 have changed my name to JASMEET KAUR for all future purposes.
PD(101)C

16 electrocuted...

From Page 1
On the question of why no step was taken after a man was already electrocuted to death a day before, authorities stated that action will be taken in the matter on the basis of investigation report. The Governor of Uttarakhand, Lieutenant General (Retd) Gurmit Singh Singh Rawat also reached Gopeshwar to meet the victims and assured them of providing all possible help to them. He also said action against the responsible persons will be taken on the basis of the investigation report. The Governor of Uttarakhand, Lieutenant General (Retd) Gurmit Singh Singh Dhami have expressed

grief. In his message the Governor expressed deep sorrow in the deaths in the accident. He also wished speedy recovery for the injured. The CM who promptly ordered a magisterial inquiry and visited the accident site said that relief and rescue operations are being done on a major scale.

Officer dies in bid to save jawans...

From Page 1
Capt Anshuman Singh was married earlier this year in the month of February. He hailed from Lucknow. Paying tributes Lt-Gen (Retd) Satish Dua tweeted, "In a fire accident at Siachen glacier, Capt Anshuman, a medical officer, lost his life while trying to save his soldiers. Such is the bravery of young leaders His father, Subedar RP Singh said that despite his loss, he was proud that his son was a Braveheart".

variation of the learned judge are to be accepted, no application for bail can be accepted unless the accused files an application for quashing the proceedings...To say the least, the findings are totally perverse." Setalvad was taken into custody on June 25 last year along with former Gujarat Director General of Police RB Sreekumar and ex-IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt in a case registered by the Ahmedabad crime branch police for allegedly fabricating evidence to frame innocent people in the post-Godhra riots cases. Earlier, on July 30, 2022, an Ahmedabad sessions court had rejected the bail applications of Setalvad and

SC grants bail to Teesta in roils evidence...

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (PMAY)
हाऊसिंग फॉर ऑल प्रकोष्ठ (HFA CELL)
नृतीय तल, आई.एस.बी.टी. भवन, होशंगाबाद रोड, हबीबगंज, भोपाल-462023
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
N.I.T. No. 27/HFA/BMC/2023 Bhopal, Dated 19.07.2023
Online percentage rate bids for the following work are invited from contractors and firms fulfilling registration criteria:
Sr. No. Online Tender Id Name of Work Probable Amount of Contract (In lakhs) Earnest Money Deposit (In Lakhs) Cost of Bid Document (In Rupees) Period of Completion (In Months)
1. 2023_UAD_292331_1 Balance Works of Construction of Houses and Development of Infrastructure for Identified Slum Localities in Bhopal, M.P. under PMAY at 12 no. Stop Slum Cluster, Bhopal without External Electrification. 8439.32 4219659/- 50000.00 18 months (Including Rainy Season)
1. The interested bidders may view the Detailed Notice Inviting Tender on website <http://mpeproc.gov.in> from 21.07.2023
Superintendent Engineer
Bhopal Municipal Corporation
T.N. 694/023/024

From Page 1
During the hearing, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal argued that the Gujarat High Court had denied bail to Setalvad on the ground that she did not file a plea under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) for quashing the case. Sibal expressed that rejecting a bail plea on such grounds would be contrary to established jurisprudence. Sibal highlighted that the Supreme Court's judgment in June 2022 did not contain any findings on the fabrication of evidence. "Judgment of this court was rendered on June 24, 2022. It has no finding on the fabrication of any evidence. The SIT never argued that it

is the State of Gujarat who made a submission before the court that these are tutored witnesses," he said. Sibal questioned the haste with which Setalvad was arrested immediately after the top court's judgment and claimed that she was not given an opportunity to be heard after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta questioned her locus. The bench said, "We are at pains to say that the order passed by the learned judge makes an interesting reading. On one hand, the learned judge has spent pages to observe as to how it is not necessary rather nor permissible at the stage of bail to consider whether a prima facie case

is made out or not. Learned judge interestingly observed that since the petitioner has neither challenged the FIR or chargesheet in proceedings under Section 482 CrPC or Articles 226 or 32 of the Constitution, it is not permissible for her to say that a prima facie case is not made out. The limited understanding of law we have is that the considerations which are required to be taken into consideration for grant of bail are (1) prima facie case, (2) the possibility of the accused tampering with the evidence or influencing the witness, (3) fleeing away from the justice. The other considerations are the gravity and seriousness of the offence. If the obser-

vation of the learned judge are to be accepted, no application for bail can be accepted unless the accused files an application for quashing the proceedings...To say the least, the findings are totally perverse." Setalvad was taken into custody on June 25 last year along with former Gujarat Director General of Police RB Sreekumar and ex-IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt in a case registered by the Ahmedabad crime branch police for allegedly fabricating evidence to frame innocent people in the post-Godhra riots cases. Earlier, on July 30, 2022, an Ahmedabad sessions court had rejected the bail applications of Setalvad and

Dwarka mob beats pilot, hubby for abusing minor help

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman pilot and her husband were thrashed by a mob in Delhi's Dwarka for allegedly employing a 10-year-old girl as a domestic help and torturing her.

According to the police, the accused have been identified as Kaushik Bagchi, 36, and his wife Poornima, 33. While Poornima is a pilot, Kaushik works as ground staff for another airline. They have been arrested and a case has been registered against them, said the police, adding the minor has been rescued and sent back to her parent's home.

After the incident came to light, the couple was confronted by the victim's relatives who also manhandled them. The minor was employed at the couple's house through the victim's relative who also works in a nearby house, police added. Shocking visuals from spot showed a group of women grabbing the pilot by hair and beating her while she was still



in uniform. When her husband, who is also an airline staff, attempted to rescue her, he too was beaten up. One man is heard screaming, "She will die." Poornima was heard apologising in the video while Kaushik was seen shielding

her from the agitated mob saying that "she would die...Leave her." An elderly man intervened and then the crowd dispersed.

The couple hired a 10-year-old girl for domestic chores about two months back.



The physical abuse came to light when a relative of the girl spotted injury marks on her arms and informed the police. Local says the girl was assaulted on the suspicion of theft.

As they saw the marks of injury on the girl's arms and under her eyes, a mob gathered outside the couple's residence in Dwarka at around 9 am and attacked the couple before the

police could arrive. Employing children as domestic help is prohibited in India, but this rule is repeatedly violated by many.

The relative who spotted the girl being beaten up claimed that on Wednesday morning, when she was passing by the street for her work, she saw Poornima beating the minor girl while she was working in the balcony. On spotting this, she along with others went to the couple's house but they did not come out and only after creating a ruckus, they opened the door and let the child come out, the relative alleged.

The child then narrated her ordeal to the relative and said she was asked to clean the balcony. According to the minor, while she was doing her work, the woman started scolding and thrashing her saying she was not cleaning the balcony properly, the victim's relative said. Police said the victim's parents belong to a village in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar

and that the minor girl was allegedly beaten for not doing household work properly. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) M Harsha Vardhan said that around 9 am, information was received at Dwarka South police station regarding the mistreatment of a child who worked as a domestic help.

It was found that a 10-year-old girl has been working at the couple's house for the last two months. The minor was beaten up by the duo on Wednesday and her relative witnessed this. After the matter came to notice, a crowd gathered outside the couple's residence. They confronted the couple and also manhandled them, the DCP said.

The minor girl was medically examined and counselled by a counsellor, he added. According to police, the victim has injuries on her eyes and also has burn marks on her body. "We have registered a case under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 324

(voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 342 (wrongful confinement) and 370 (buying or disposing of any person as a slave) of the Indian Penal Code, Child Labour Act and section 75 Juvenile Justice Act," the DCP said. No allegations of sexual harassment have been levelled by the victim, police said.

When asked if an action would be taken against those who manhandled the couple, the officer said that the action will be taken as per the complaint.

Amid social media uproar over the incident, the airline has derostered the woman pilot. Without specifically mentioning the case, the airline said it is aware of a video circulating on social media that allegedly involves an individual employed by the airline. "We are currently investigating the matter. Meanwhile, the employee has been derostered from official duties," the spokesperson said in a statement.

FIR filed against 26 pol parties over usage of word INDIA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A police complaint was registered against 26 Opposition parties at Barakhamba Police Station in Delhi for alleged improper use of the name of INDIA and use of the said name for the undue influence and personation during elections. The complaint, filed by Dr. Avinish Mishra, a resident of Delhi, calls for necessary action to be taken against these political parties.

Expressing objection to the name of the alliance, the complainant urged necessary action against the parties as the term 'INDIA' is being used for the undue personation at elections that has hurt the sentiments of the people. "26 political parties have misused the name of the country," the complainant read.

Mishra has alleged that the 26 opposition parties including Congress, TMC, DMK, NCP, PDP, RLD among others, have been exploiting the name of India for their political advantage, potentially misleading voters and engaging in activities that could compromise the integrity of the electoral process.

In his complaint, Mishra stated that the 26 political parties formed an alliance and decided to name it 'INDIA,' claiming that the abbreviation stood for 'Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance.'

Mishra further points out that the Emblems and Names (Prevention of improper use) Act, 1950, prohibits the use of certain names specified in its schedule. "Notably, Point 6 of the schedule lists the name of the Union of India, making the use of the name 'INDIA' prohibited," he stated in his complaint.

The complaint also highlights that Section 2(c) of the Emblems Act defines "name" to include any abbreviation of a name.

Water level of Yamuna reaches danger mark once again

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The water level at the Old Railway Bridge was recorded at 205.6 metres on Wednesday morning, breaching the 'danger' mark once again, less than 12 hours after it dropped below the threshold, amid rains in the national capital and the upper reaches of the river.

The Central Water Commission's data showed the water level reached 205.48 metres at 8 am and 205.60 metres an hour later. It is expected to rise to 205.72 metres. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted intermittent rain in the city over the next four to five days.

The flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage saw a marginal rise on Tuesday afternoon, oscillating between 50,000 and 60,000 cusecs. It dropped to around 39,000 cusecs by 7 am on Wednesday. One cusec is equivalent to 28.32 litres per second.

Though the water has receded from prominent areas across the city, low-lying areas are still submerged. Due to floods in the Yamuna, several areas, including Rajghat-Shantivan, ITO, and Ring Road have been affected by waterlogging. To address this, various agencies of the central government, Delhi government and MCD are working together on a war footing. Waterlogging near ITO Flyover has almost been resolved, and the road has been opened for traffic.

The work to remove the mud caused by the floods is also progressing rapidly. Agencies are cleaning the roads through pressure pipes to ensure no inconvenience is caused to the commuters.

The Delhi government said that there is a problem of waterlogging in Rajghat and other nearby monuments after the floods. The 250-acre premises of Rajghat has been severely impacted, and immediate efforts are being made to drain out the stagnant water on priority. Rajghat is a place of national importance and attracts visitors from all over the world. Therefore, all agencies are working together to drain out the water as soon as possible. The water level in the



Photo by Ranjan Dilmri

river had dropped below the danger mark of 205.33 metres by 8 pm on Tuesday, after flowing above the threshold for eight days.

It receded to 205.22 metres at 5 am on Wednesday before it started rising again. The increase in the water level could slow down the rehabilitation of affected families in the inundated low-lying areas of the capital and they may have to stay longer in relief camps.

Experts attribute the unprecedented flooding in Delhi to encroachment on floodplains, extreme rainfall occurring within shorter durations, and silt accumulation that raised the riverbed.

A study on "Urban Flooding and its Management" by the Irrigation and Flood Control Department identifies east Delhi under the floodplain region and highly vulnerable to floods. Despite this, encroachment and development have occurred at a rapid pace in the ecologically sensitive region over the years.

Letters exchanged between the Delhi Forest Department and the primary land-owning agency in the city, Delhi Development Authority, show that 2,480 hectares of land in the Yamuna floodplains have been encroached upon or developed since 2009. The IMD data shows the national capital has recorded 331.3 mm of rainfall against a normal of 208.8 mm in July so far. On average, the city receives 195.8 mm of rainfall in entire month.

Delhi recorded above-normal rainfall in last four months -- 53.2 mm against a normal of 17.4 mm in March, 20.1 mm against an average of 16.3 mm in April, 111 mm against a normal of 30.7 mm in May and 101.7 mm against a normal of 74.1 mm in June.

Atishi orders fumigation of flood-hit areas



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Revenue Minister Atishi has directed the divisional commissioner to ensure disinfection and fumigation are done on a war footing in all the flood-affected areas.

In an official communication, she directed that a daily report of disinfected and fumigated areas be submitted to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar and her for the next seven days starting Wednesday.

"With the receding water levels in the Yamuna, many of those evacuated have started going back to their residences. Now the most important priority is prevention of water-borne and vector borne diseases.

Divisional Commissioner is directed to ensure that disinfection and fumigation happens on a war-footing in all flood affected areas," read communication. It also said all the officers deployed by chief secretary as Incharges of different districts and sub-divisions should personally carry on-ground monitoring of all disinfection and fumigation.

Yamuna not cleaned for last 8 yrs: Bidhuri

Delhi Govt denies BJP allegations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Holding Arving Kejriwal Government responsible for Delhi's flood, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged the Yamuna has not been cleaned for the past eight years, leading to a silt buildup of over 6 feet. The silt can be observed by inspecting the pillars of the bridges or flyovers built over the Yamuna.

Bidhuri further accused the Kejriwal government for non-payment of Rs 47 lakh to Haryana's Irrigation and Flood Control department which maintains ITO barrage. The BJP leader further alleged that the



Delhi government had stopped payment of electricity to ITO Barrage, leading to the disconnection of the same on August 9, 2022, by the BSEI.

Delhi government had stopped payment of electricity to ITO Barrage, leading to the disconnection of the same on August 9, 2022, by the BSEI. Addressing a press conference, Bidhuri said the river Yamuna has not been cleaned for the past eight years leading to a silt buildup of over 6 feet. "This is further substantiated by the fact that in 1978, around 7,09,000 cusecs of water were released into the Yamuna, resulting in a record water level of 205.49 meters.

However, in 2023, the water level rose to 208.67 meters with the release of only 3,59,000

cusecs of water. Before this, in 2013, 8,06,000 cusecs of water were released, but the water level remained lower than that of 1978," he said.

He said the cause of the recent flood in the Yamuna was the ITO Yamuna Barrage. "Although the maintenance of these barrages is carried out by the Haryana government and the expenses are borne by the Delhi government.

Surprisingly, the Delhi government discontinued paying for the maintenance in 2018. Instead of resolving the issue of maintenance, the Delhi Government now blames Haryana, even though Haryana Government requested to clear the payment of Rs. 47,83,504 as outstanding dues for operation and maintenance in a letter dated July 26, 2022. However, the Delhi government did not make the payment," he said. Bidhuri

said the Delhi government also stopped paying for the electricity connection to the ITO Yamuna Barrage, leading to the disconnection of the same on August 9, 2022, by the BSEI. The AAP government had denied the allegations saying the thermal power plants had an agreement of using water from ITO barrage and giving them some money to Haryana Govt. But these thermal plants got decommissioned in 2009 and they had no reason to pay any money.

"The IPGCL also stopped using water from ITO barrage, instead was using water from Delhi Gate STP of DJB. Haryana Government knows all these facts and they have been informed about this 4 years back in 2019. They have been written letters by Delhi Govt in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022 many times to hand over this ITO barrage to Delhi Govt.

DIAL introduces business class lounge at IGIA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

International travellers may not have a harrowing time at Delhi Airport's terminal 3, where long queues and seat shortage had been a common issue for the past few months due to a crippling shortage of lounges. Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), has introduced "Encalm Privé," a world-class business class lounge at the Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 3. Now, there are three lounges at the airport.



square feet, making it the biggest lounge facility in India. The lounge can accommodate around 550 guests and provides a host of premium services and facilities," DIAL said in a release. This state-of-the-art facility aims to optimize

lounge space and provide a luxurious and relaxing environment for business and first-class travelers. With its elegant design, extensive amenities, and exceptional services, this niche lounge facility seeks to enhance the overall travel



experience for esteemed guests. The amenities at Encalm Privé include a bar, a multi-cuisine buffet area, live food counters, a kids' play area, a library, and a business centre with workstations and meeting rooms. DIAL said facilities planned for

within the lounge premises. "With this new lounge, Delhi Airport has significantly enhanced its lounge capacity and the quality of services and facilities.

This world-class lounge facility aims to provide a premium travel experience, ensuring that every guest enjoys a seamless journey in the tranquil and exclusive setting of the lounge," said Videh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO, DIAL. The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) is the operator of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital. The lounge, which is for business and first class passengers, will be operated by Encalm Hospitality Pvt Ltd.

BJP distributes relief material to Pak refugees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



The man was identified as Ajay, who had rented the stall to the woman, Kiran. Later this led to a dispute between the two.

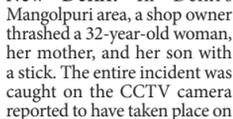
The BJP on Wednesday distributed a month's ration to refugee families from Pakistan suffering hardship due to the floods in Delhi. Virendra Sachdeva, the BJP's Delhi unit president, and MP Manoj Tiwari distributed the ration to around 300 refugee families living for years at Majnu Ka Tila, it said in a statement.

"The Delhi government has taken no measure to help the Hindu refugees from Pakistan living here at Majnu Ka Tila for the last seven-eight years. It is very regrettable that even today the camp of refugees is flooded," Sachdeva said.

Workers from the Mahila Morcha, led by its Delhi unit chief Yogita Singh, distributed sarees and sanitary pads to a large number of women and girls at a flood-relief camp in Mayur Vihar, the statement said. Sachdeva said the BJP's relief operations are continuing and many leaders, including MPs Harsh Vardhan, Gautam Gambhir, Ramesh Bidhuri and Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma and MLAs Ajay Mahawar and Mohan Singh Bisht, are distributing ration among the affected people.

Shop owner beats woman, her mother and son with a stick in Mangolpuri Area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



The man was identified as Ajay, who had rented the stall to the woman, Kiran. Later this led to a dispute between the two.

New Delhi: In Delhi's Mangolpuri area, a shop owner thrashed a 32-year-old woman, her mother, and her son with a stick. The entire incident was caught on the CCTV camera reported to have taken place on July 16.

The man was identified as Ajay, who had rented the stall to the woman, Kiran. Later this led to a dispute between the two. DCP (Outer) Harendra Singh said the incident took place on July 16. Kiran, a tenant of Ajay Bhatia, received seven to eight simple bruises in the attack. She was taken to the Sanjay Gandhi Hospital. "The scuffle took place between the tenant lady and the landlord over the placing of a momo cart in the area...the woman ran a momo stall which was rented to her by the landlord and there was a scuffle between them over the cart's rent," said the DCP.

In the video, the woman along with her son is seen walking towards Ajay to talk to him, when he approaches them and slaps Kiran at least twice. When her son tries to intervene, Ajay slaps the son as well following which the woman tries to retaliate but Ajay keeps repeatedly delivering blows on her.

The woman in the footage is seen picking up a concrete slab to defend herself as Ajay now armed with a wooden stick continues hitting her. Another woman who tries to stop Ajay from beating up Kiran is also hit in the meantime. Staff Reporter

Advertisement for Utktech.ac.in, featuring a logo and text in Hindi and English. The text mentions 'Uttarakhand Technical University' and 'Utktech.ac.in'.

Mamata sees Rahul as everyone's favourite

DEEPAK JHA ■ NEW DELHI /BENGALURU

The handling of media and social media platforms emerged as a major focal point during the Bengaluru Opposition meeting even as West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hailed senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as "everyone's favourite." During the meeting, various leaders shared their perspectives on the matter.

It is believed that after former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and TMC supremo West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee advocated for restraint in public statements by the group members, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah raised the idea of a common active social media platform.

SP leader Akhilesh Yadav and RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav are understood to have agreed with him following which Congress leader Rahul Gandhi expressed his desire that his team could give valued training to the social media handlers.

Many leaders like Supriya Sule of NCP remarked that the former Congress chief's social media is now drawing more attention and attraction as com-

pared to the big names in the Government. Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, too, complimented Rahul on this and said "Maybe it was due to the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' effect. "It was only when this discussion was under-



way that Mamta Banerjee referred to Rahul Gandhi as everyone's favourite," said a leader requesting anonymity to avoid any controversy at this moment.

RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav also made an oblique reference to some leaders of opposition parties making comments in public against each other and stressed that this needs to be

avoided at all costs. In between Lalu proposed the name of his friend turned foe turned friend Nitish Kumar as convener of the new coalition. The other issue that came around was to start working on

NDA plans to ride on 'strong leader' for 'developing nation'

"state-specific alliances" to a later stage. According to leaders who attended the 38 alliance partners' meeting, the region-wise poll strategy and seat-sharing were left for the NDA meeting at a later stage. "In between BJP president JP Nadda and his team would coordinate and implement suggestions of joint campaigning in the Lok Sabha seats," sources said.

As of now state-specific strategies, alliances, or seat adjustments were not deliberated in the meeting which took an "over-arching view of the national political situation and strengths of the NDA vis-a-vis the emerging opposition", they said.

"There was no discussion on state-specific politics during the NDA meeting in Delhi rather it focused on the overall political situation in the country," said Jan Sena Party leader Pawan Kalyan who attended the meeting. The over-three-hour meeting

emphasized the importance of "strong leadership in times of difficulty, drawing parallels to the experience after the terrorist attack on the Parliament."

Other leaders said the meeting primarily focused on "how the NDA alliance plans to take India forward in the future, economic policies aimed at improving the standard of living and achieving development for the people."

The focus of the meeting addressed by the Prime Minister remained on national politics and future vision and strategies.

According to BJP's national spokesperson Syed Zafar Islam, ground-level strategies and more specifically seat-sharing process in the NDA will come up for discussion at a much later stage. Meanwhile, it is understood that the BJP has almost dropped Shiromani Akal Dal (SAD) from its list as it finds Akali Dal (Dhindsa) as a "better alternative" in NDA to SAD.

We remain united, despite BJP's bid to create rift: Opp

New Delhi/Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Congress leaders have firmly dismissed reports suggesting his dissatisfaction with the opposition conclave held in Bengaluru. They affirmed that the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) remains united, and despite the BJP's attempts to create a rift within the alliance, it will not succeed.

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said that all the members of the alliance stand together and that INDIA remains united. He further criticized the BJP's tactics and rhetoric, expressing confidence in the alliance's strength.

Responding to BJP leader Sushil Modi's claims that Nitish Kumar was upset over not being made the convener of the alliance, both Nitish Kumar and his party chief Lallan Singh denied any dissatisfaction. Nitish Kumar clarified that he



had to return to Patna after the meeting, which was the reason for his absence at the press conference. Addressing the media, the Bihar CM emphasized that the alliance's meeting was fruitful, and they are pleased with the outcomes.

He asserted his commitment to unite all opposition parties ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and expressed confidence that the BJP will face defeat in the upcoming elections. Nitish Kumar further explained, "My effort is to unite all opposition parties ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls... And now things are taking shape." PNS

NITI Aayog calls for survey to find health, nutrition outcomes

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

NITI Aayog, the premier think tank of the Government, has asked the Union ministries of Agriculture and health why the increase in per capita food availability by 50 per cent between 2004-05 and 2020-21 has not been reflected in the nutrition and health outcomes, especially in the case of child and woman which has remained low.

It has called for a country-wide survey to ascertain the true status of health and nutrition, as well as the role of food availability, food distribution, awareness about nutrition, eating habits and preferences, hygiene, and food diversity in determining nutrition intake and health outcomes.

"The fact that the percentage of women who are overweight doubled between 2005-06 and 2020-21 raises serious questions about the low availability of food as the reason for undernutrition and anaemia," says the working paper authored by NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand and consultant Jaspal Singh.

Citing the data from the National Family Health Survey 6, the document "From Green Revolution to Amrit Kaal: Lessons and Way Forward for Indian Agriculture," notes that the incidence of stunted and underweight children as well as the prevalence of anaemia among children and women remains high.

Malnutrition in children can manifest as 'stunting' (low height in relation to age) or 'wasting' (low weight in relation to height) or both and underweight or obesity among women. Other nutritional indicators show that India lags behind, with high levels of anaemia in women of repro-

ductive age. These are the most serious health risks in India, accounting for 15% of the country's total disease burden. The NITI Aayog document has now urged the Union ministries of Agriculture and Health to 'reconcile' this contradiction between high growth in food availability and slow improvement in nutrition and health indicators.

There is a need for a country-wide survey to ascertain the true status of health and nutrition, as well as the role of food availability, food distribution, awareness about nutrition, eating habits and preferences, hygiene, and food diversity in determining nutrition intake and health outcomes.

It emphasizes that as the country has moved from a situation of food shortages to that of food surplus and focus of production should be on nutritive and healthy food.

At the same time, it points out that India has achieved a very high increase in per capita net intake of all types of foods, except cereals, which include fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs, meat, and fish after 2005-06.

The report recommends the bio-fortification of major foods and increased dietary diversity. "The promotion of millets and green and leafy vegetables is very important in order to improve the nutrition and health of all age groups," it says.

For India to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as well as economic and social reforms, it is essential to empower and safeguard the 67.7 percent of women and children in the country by ensuring their healthy development in a safe and secure environment, as per health activists.

Admission woes: SC asks HC to hear Stephen's plea urgently

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Delhi High Court to give "requisite urgency" to a plea filed by St. Stephen's College challenging a High Court order related to its admission policy.

Last year, on September 12, the Delhi High Court instructed the Christian minority institution to adhere to Delhi University's admission policy, which grants 100% weightage to the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-2022 score for non-minority students seeking admission to its undergraduate courses.

The High Court's ruling explicitly stated that the college should not conduct interviews for non-minority category students, and admissions should be solely based on the CUET score. The SC bench comprising Justices BR Gavai and JB Pardiwala clarified that the High Court has the jurisdiction to hear the case. "We clarify



that the High Court will be at liberty to proceed further with the hearing of the writ petition pertaining to admissions under the minority quota. It is needless to state that since the matter pertains to admissions for the present academic year, the high court would consider the same with requisite urgency" the judges said.

During the hearing, the counsel representing St. Stephen's College informed the court that the High Court had postponed the plea's hearing, taking into account the Supreme Court's involvement. They sought clarification on whether the High Court can proceed with hearing the plea concerning admissions from

the minority category. Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for Delhi University, assured that the varsity has no objections to the matter being heard either by the apex court or the High Court. In response, Justice Gavai remarked, "Let the Delhi High Court decide then." The Supreme Court had previously declined to stay the Delhi High Court's order, which had directed St. Stephen's College to adhere to Delhi University's prescribed admission policy.

In its order last year, the Delhi High Court also clarified that the constitutional rights accorded to a minority institution do not extend to non-minority candidates.

While the college retains the authority to conduct interviews for admitting Christian students, non-minority candidates should not be compelled to appear for additional interviews apart from their CUET scores.

ED seizes Maha ex-Min Parab's beach resort, land under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has taken possession of 'Sai Resort NX' constructed over land falling under Coastal Regulation Zone (No Development Zone) in Ratnagiri in connection with a money laundering probe against former Maharashtra Minister Anil Parab, Sai Resort NX and others.

"The action has been initiated after the Adjudicating Authority for PMLA, confirmed the provisional attachment of assets worth approximately Rs10.20 crore vide order dated.01.06.2023," the ED said in a statement.

The ED had initiated the investigation on the basis of a complaint filed by the Ministry of Environmental Forest and Climate Change against Anil Dattatray Parab, the then Minister in Government of Maharashtra, Sai Resort, Sea Conch Resort, and others before Judicial Magistrate First



Class, Dapoli for violation of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. At a later stage, an FIR was also registered by Dapoli Police Station under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). During the investigation of the FIR, Dapoli Police also found various other crimes related to offences under various sections of IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act which were also included in the case.

"ED Investigation has revealed that Anil Parab and his close associate Sadanand Kadam, hatched a conspiracy and obtained illegal permission from Revenue Department

Authorities, State of Maharashtra, through forgery and misdeclaration for construction of Twin Bungalow (Ground + 1 Floor) over a piece of agricultural land falling under "No Development Zone" and subsequently constructed illegal resort named 'Sai Resort NX' having Ground + 2 Floors in blatant disregard of CRZ-III rules and regulations," the ED said in a statement.

The permission for the construction of twin bungalows was obtained in the name of the earlier owner without his knowledge. Despite knowing that any construction is prohibited over the said piece of agricultural land, the revenue department granted permission because of undue pressure and influence, the ED alleged.

Thereafter, the Gram Panchayat was deceived, misled, cheated and pressurized to transfer the said land along with the building in the name of Anil Parab to legitimize the illegal construction of 'Sai Resort NX,' it said.

Mediation Bill OK'd

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the Mediation Bill including reducing the maximum timeline for completing mediation proceedings from 360 to 180 days. The official amendments to the law ministry bill are likely to be tabled in the Monsoon session of Parliament beginning Thursday.

The Mediation Bill, 2021 was introduced in Rajya Sabha in December 2021. Later it was referred to parliamentary committee on law and personnel which gave its report. The official amendments cleared by the Cabinet are based largely on recommendations made by parliamentary panel. Under the other key recommendation of panel accepted by government, pre-lit-

igation mediation has been made voluntary instead of mandatory. According to the bill pending in upper house, compulsory pre-litigation mediation in matters of civil or commercial disputes has been provided for before parties approach a court or tribunals.

In case of exceptional circumstances, a party can seek interim relief from court or tribunal not only before commencement of mediation proceedings but also during continuation of proceedings. Disputes, other than commercial disputes, in which central government and state government are a party, cannot be mediated unless nature of disputes which can be referred to mediation are notified. PNS

Fresh FIR filed against Railway ADRM in DA case by CBI

New Delhi: The CBI has filed a fresh case against a suspended Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) for allegedly amassing disproportionate assets worth about Rs 2.30 crore in the last six years of his service.

The agency had arrested 1997-batch Indian Railways Services Officer Jitender Pal Singh, who was posted at Maligaon in Guwahati, on January 14 in an alleged bribery case of Rs 1.5 crore. The fresh FIR has accused Singh of allegedly accumulating about Rs 2.30 crore worth of illicit assets during his six-year tenure as

ADRM in Maligaon, Guwahati, according to the FIR. The agency had arrested him on January 14 while he was allegedly receiving Rs 50 lakh as part of the total bribe amount. The CBI investigation revealed that Singh had allegedly received illegal gratifications totalling to Rs 1.5 crore, which were found to be parked with a contractor named Bishnu Gupta.

Gupta had allegedly documented some figures related to the bribe amount in a diary. During the searches at Singh's premises and those of his associates, the agency discovered various documents detailing

his income, expenditures and assets acquired, along with a significant amount of cash.

Further scrutiny of the documents and investigation led to the allegation that Singh possessed illicit assets that were approximately twice (197 per cent) the amount of his known income sources, according to the contents of the FIR. The agency alleged that he intentionally accumulated the illicit assets from January 1, 2017 to January 14, 2023. Apart from Singh and his wife, Bishnu Gupta, the contractor, has also been named in the fresh FIR by the agency. PNS

India, Russia review their Defence ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Russia reviewed their defence ties especially defence production here during the two-day third meeting of the Working Group on Military Co-operation ending Wednesday. It is part of the Indian-Russian International Commission on Military and Military Technical Co-operation.

The discussions focused on extending the ongoing defence engagements between the two sides and mulled new initiatives under the ambit of the existing bilateral defence corporation mechanism, defence ministry officials said.

The Working Group meeting is a forum established to progress defence cooperation between both countries through regular talks at the strategic and operational levels between Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff, and the Main Directorate of International Military Cooperation of the Ministry of Defence, Russian Federation.

The meeting was co-chaired by Lt. Gen Johnson P Mathew, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), HQ - IDS, and Lt. Gen Delyevsky Igor Nikolaevich, Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The meeting was conducted in a friendly warm and cordial atmosphere.

NIA attaches two properties of heroin smuggler Zaidi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday attached two properties of notorious heroin smuggler, Razi Haider Zaidi of Okhla Vihar, Jamia Nagar here in a case relating to the seizure of over 102 kg heroin smuggled from Afghanistan via the Attari border in Amritsar, Punjab.

The immovable properties attached under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act include a residential plot/land measuring 121.35 square metres in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, which the accused Razi Haider Zaidi had purchased in his own name for Rs 4,00,000. The other property is a residential two storied building at Okhla Vihar, Jamia Nagar, Delhi, pur-

chased for Rs 24.5 lakh in name of Zaidi's wife. Both properties were acquired by the accused Razi Haider Zaidi from the sale proceeds of heroin, the NIA said.

Prime accused in the case Razi Haider Zaidi, was arrested by NIA on August 24 last year and a charge sheet against him, along with three other co-accused persons, was filed on December 16 under various sections of NDPS Act.

The drug consignment of a total of 102.784 kg heroin was seized by the customs department on April 24 and 26, 2022. The narcotics, which had reached Integrated Check Post (ICP) Attari on April 22, 2022, were found concealed in a consignment of licorice roots (mulethi). The NIA investigations revealed that the accused

Zaidi was the receiver of this consignment of licorice roots in which heroin was concealed.

As per the NIA investigations, on the directions of Dubai-based absconding co-accused Shahid Ahmed, around 103 kg heroin concealed in the consignment of licorice roots had been sent by Afghan-based heroin smuggler Nazir Ahmed Qani, a resident of Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, and it was supposed to be delivered to Zaidi who had handed over Rs 11 lakh in cash to another accused as advance payment of the said consignment.

Further investigations revealed that Shahid Ahmed alias Qazi Abdul Wadood had directed Zaidi to collect and deliver heroin consignments from various places in India.

Russia withdraws from Black Sea Grain initiative

India expresses concern, backs UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

As Russia has withdrawn from the United Nations (UN) initiated deal allowing the export of grain from Ukraine during the ongoing conflict, India has voiced support for the UN's efforts in continuing the Black Sea Grain initiative and expressed hope for an early resolution to the present impasse.

This assertion by India late Tuesday came a day after Russia announced it was terminating the implementation of the UN-brokered deal that allowed export of grain and related foodstuffs and fertilisers from Ukrainian ports. Moscow on Monday said it was terminating the imple-

mentation of the Black Sea Initiative—a UN-brokered deal that allowed food exports from Ukraine amid the ongoing conflict with Russia— including the withdrawal of Russian security guarantees for navigation in the North-Western part of the Black Sea.

Addressing the UN General Assembly's annual debate on the 'Situation in the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine,' India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador, Ruchira Kamboj, said New Delhi is concerned about the recent developments in the region, which have not helped in securing the larger cause of peace and stability.

"India has supported the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative and hopes for an early resolution to the present impasse," Kamboj said. "India continues to remain concerned

over the situation in Ukraine.

The conflict has resulted in the loss of lives and misery for its people, particularly for the women, children and elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries," she said. Kamboj asserted that India's approach to the Ukrainian conflict will continue to be people-centric.

"We are providing both humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and economic support to some of our neighbours in the Global South under economic distress, even as they stare at the escalating cost of food, of fuel and of fertilisers — which has been a consequential fall out of the ongoing conflict," she said. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced deep regret over Moscow's termination of the implementation of the Black Sea Initiative decision, saying the initiative ensured the safe passage

of over 32 million metric tonnes of food commodities from Ukrainian ports.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has shipped more than 725,000 tonnes to support humanitarian operations — relieving hunger in some of the hardest-hit corners of the world, including Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, and Yemen, Guterres said.

He added that the Black Sea Initiative and Memorandum of Understanding on facilitating exports of Russian food products and fertilisers have been a "lifeline" for global food security and a beacon of hope in a troubled world.

"At a time when the production and availability of food are being disrupted by conflict, climate change, energy prices and more, these agreements have helped to reduce food prices by over 23 per cent since March last year," he said.

Minister asks officers to get survey for metro carried out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Registration Fees Ravindra Jaiswal instructed the local district administration officers to get a survey for metro rail service in the city. He categorically denied the views of many that metro rail service would not be possible in Varanasi on the basis of a survey done earlier. Holding a meeting with officials at the Circuit House here Wednesday, Jaiswal said that the metro would be 110 per cent successful in Varanasi and laid a special emphasis on getting the Detailed Project Report (DPR) by an agency.



UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal holding a meeting of officers in Varanasi on Wednesday.

ways to help the people get rid of the traffic jams.

“Working in Kashi is like a religious pilgrimage,” he said, asking the officers to acquire 200 metres of land on both sides of the Ring Road for a permanent solution to the traffic jam in the city, along with building a Greenland, service lanes and big malls there. He also stressed the need for proper development of foodgrain, vegetable and jewellery markets in the middle of the city apart from zone-wise development of business establishments. Emphasising on the deteriorating identity of Kashi due to multi-storey buildings being built in the mid of the city, he

said that such big buildings should be constructed on the Ring Road.

During the review of the drinking water scheme, he raised the question of connecting 56,000 houses to the drinking water pipeline under the Amrit Yojana in the Varunapar (Trans-Varuna) area. In the meeting, District Magistrate S Rajalingam said that effective action would be taken against encroachments.

For this, a joint team of SDM Sadar, PWD, Municipal Corporation and other departments has been formed. Additional District Officer (City) was directed to take effective action on the

encroachment.

In the meeting, Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain, Vice Chairman of Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) Abhishek Goyal, Municipal Commissioner Shipu Giri and other departmental officers and others were also present. After the meeting, Jaiswal, along with the CP and DM, did a site inspection of the construction of about two and a half feet high construction on the Pandeypur-Daulatpur road by the PWD.

He said that as a result of which about 35 nearby colonies are facing the problem of water logging now.

Police coordinating with traders to set up CCTVs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With a view to maintain strict vigil on streets, Prayagraj police are coordinating with traders, coaching centres and other prominent establishments to set up CCTVs on their premises that will help cops to keep an eye on law-breakers in case of any incident or mishap.

The measure is being initiated under ‘Operation Drishti’ under which cops are seeking active participation from the masses. Officials claimed that with majority of units/shops and other establishments have

CCTV installations, cops could maximise its utility in an organised way.

Sangam city already has over 1,100 CCTV network under the Smart City and Integrated Traffic Management system (ITMS) for better traffic management and effective crime control measures, the installation and positioning of CCTVs at private/public establishments/shops/units in an organised manner could yield better results.

Senior police authorities are planning to connect selected CCTVs network with the Integrated Command & Control Centre (ICCC). A

senior cop said under Operation Drishti cops aim to ensure maximum utilisation of installed CCTV sets which will not only help police crackdown on crime incidents but also ensure a secure feeling among residents. He added “If an incident takes place, the CCTV footage will help cops to ascertain the identities of law breakers.”

“The department has taken up an extensive campaign to reach out to elite class of the city apprising them about the importance of CCTV sets and ensure installation of gadgets will surely be developing secure feeling among citizens partic-

ularly women,” he further said.

Officials said CCTV footages have always been helpful to crackdown on crime incidents. Cops have also appealed citizens to install quality CCTV sets and connect it with videowall (multi-display setups comprising of multiple monitors, TVs or displays that are tied together to create one large display).

Police have also prepared a list of prominent and static locations, including public places, crossings and tri-sections as well as sensitive spots, where CCTV sets have to be installed with the help of citizens.

Property dispute claims two lives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Property dispute claimed two lives in Barah Market area of Kareli on Wednesday. The killer was Arif, younger son of Mohammad Kadir who attacked his father, mother and sister with a chopper. While the mother and sister died instantly seriously injured father was rushed to a hospital. Two unidentified persons were with

Arif who even attacked police with stones and acid bottle, besides setting the house on fire.

According to the elder son of Mohammad Kadir, his younger brother wanted to grab the property. He had created ugly scenes in the past also but on Wednesday afternoon, he lost his temper and attacked family members with chopper killing mother Anisha Begum

and sister Nahid. Father Mohammad Kadir also sustained serious injuries. The other members of the family saved their lives by shutting the door of the rooms.

Police were informed immediately and on the arrival of police force, Arif set the LPG cylinder on fire and pelted acid bottle and stones to prevent them from entering the house.

Fire brigade reached the spot.

After bringing flames under control, the police entered the house and arrested Arif. Other members of the family were taken out safely.

The elder brother said children had gone to school, otherwise Arif would have killed some more members of the family.

AD (Health) reviews progress of Dastak campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Additional Director (Medical and Health), Varanasi Division, Dr Manjula Singh held a virtual meeting with Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), Nodal Officers of Communicable Disease Control Campaign and District Malaria Officers of all the districts of the division including Varanasi, Chandauli, Ghazipur and Jaunpur here on Wednesday. She also reviewed the progress of the Dastak campaign and directed the concerned Health department officers that daily monitoring and weekly meetings of the campaign should be held. Reporting of the entire campaign should be done on the e-Kavach portal, she added. She also visited different areas to see the progress of the campaign.



AD (Health) Dr Manjula Singh seeing progress of Dastak Abhiyan in Varanasi on Wednesday.

should be completed on time.

Dr Manjula said that this campaign is an ambitious programme of the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and recently, the Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak had taken a review meeting in Varanasi and inquired about the Communicable Disease Control and Dastak Abhiyan. Along with this, she directed the district level officers to conduct physical inspection.

Joint Director and Divisional Nodal Officer of Communicable Diseases Dr GC Dwivedi said that in pre-

identified hot spot (high risk) areas of rural and urban areas, intensive supervision of anti-larvicide spraying and fogging as well as cleanliness is being done. He asked the vector surveillance teams to continuously monitor mosquito borne sources. “If a positive patient is found in an area, the Rapid Response Team should go there and do proper treatment. In case of serious condition, the patient should be referred to nearby CHCs/ PHCs.

Earlier, Dr Manjula Singh visited Tarna and Bhagatpur of Shivpur urban area and

Bhelkha, Ganeshpur and Wajidpur of rural area in Harhua block and saw the arrangements for water logging, garbage collection, cleanliness, drainage etc. She directed the Panchayati Raj and Urban Development departments that appropriate action should be taken for garbage disposal, cleaning of drains, source destruction etc. On this occasion, District Malaria Officer Sharat Chand Pandey, Biologist and Zonal Entomologist Dr Amit Kumar Singh and ASHA workers were also present.

Plans afoot to set up 103 relief camps

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Even as the twin rivers – Ganga and Yamuna are flowing six metres below the danger mark, the authorities of Flood Control department have taken an extensive exercise to identify relief camps across the district. Plans are afoot to set up around 103 relief camps, including 12 in city and rest across the district in case of floods.

Officials of Flood Control department, however, claimed that alarm bells will be ringing for district authorities once the water level of both rivers crosses 82.10 metre mark. On Wednesday the water level of

Ganga at Phaphamau and Chhatnaag recorded 78.51 and 75.58 metres respectively while the level of Yamuna at Naini was 76.04 metres. Officials said water level of Ganga and Yamuna is rising on slow pace in the city and both the rivers are yet flowing six metres below the danger mark. The danger mark is 84.73 metres for twin rivers.

The water level of Ganga and Yamuna, as recorded at 12 noon by the Irrigation department on Wednesday showed a rising trend at Phaphamau, Chhatnaag and Naini. A senior official of Flood Control department said district authorities will be activating

flood relief camp in the city once the river crosses 84 metre mark. When water level of Ganga crosses 82.10 metre mark, then flood water will enter low-lying areas like Baghara, Chhota Baghara and adjoining areas.

He, however, claimed as there was poor monsoon in eastern UP district and rivers seem to be empty as per their capacity, the flood water coming from different barrages are passing easily. If there is adequate rain in eastern UP parts and rivers gets overflowed then only there will be a possibility of floods.

Meanwhile, residents living in low-lying areas are quite

anxious after seeing flood situation in Delhi and Uttarakhand. These residents have even started looking for alternative arrangements in safer areas if the flood-like situation arises in city. Baghara resident Rajeev Tripathi said, “In the current scenario, river Ganga is very far from our house and if the water level rises constantly in coming 10 days and crosses 82.10 metre mark, we would have to think to shift to safer places.” A resident of Rajapur said, “Residents living in low-lying areas always remain apprehensive and plan to shift to safer place whenever they receive news of flood”.

DA case against head constable

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Anti-Corruption Organisation (ACO) of UP Police registered a disproportionate assets (DA) case against head constable Ajay Kumar Singh, who was earlier gunner of former Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP) chief Narendra Giri.

Singh acquired assets worth ₹95.79 lakh in a fixed period and had also spent ₹1.22 crore in the same period, through various sources of

income disproportionate to his known sources.

Inspector (Anti-corruption organisation, Prayagraj unit) Thakur Das has lodged an FIR at the Colonelganj police station under Section 13 (1) b and 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act against Ajay Kumar Singh of Kodai village (Ballia) and currently residing at Allahapur (Georgetown) and found him guilty in disproportionate assets case after conducting a detailed probe against him.

In the FIR, inspector Das mentioned that the Home department had on December 27, 2022, ordered a probe against the accused head constable and probe began in January 10. He also claimed the head constable had earned ₹95,79,591 through various sources in a fixed period and had spent ₹1,22,58,251 in the same period.

The FIR alleged the head constable had spent around 28 per cent more money than his known sources

of income.

The FIR also stated that Singh had failed to answer many questions during the investigations, following which he was found guilty prima facie.

Police sources, meanwhile, said Singh, who was recruited in police in 2005 on the post of constable, remained police gunner of ABAP chief Narendra Giri for a long time and after the latter's death, he was transferred to Kaushambi from Prayagraj.

AU student leaders for better medical facilities on campus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The student leaders of Allahabad University (AU) on Wednesday submitted a memorandum addressed to Vice-Chancellor Prof Sangita Srivastava demanding better medical facilities on the campus in view of the death of a student of Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) on

July 11. The students demanded that despite being one of the central universities of the country, AU lacks proper medical facilities on the main campus.

The medical clinic of the women's hostel also needs refurbishment. The students submitted a memorandum to the V-C through registrar. The memorandum said lack of primary medical facilities at a university where

around 36,000 students are studying and thousands of employees and teachers are working shows callous attitude of the administration.

They also lambasted the AU administration and said the ‘policies’ of the varsity are responsible for chaos and anarchy as witnessed in the university recently. Former office bearers of AU student union alleged that those who talk

about rights on the campus are put behind the bars. They said students of this university, which has given eminent constitution experts, educationists, legal luminaries, bureaucrats and scientists to the country, are ‘struggling’ to express their feelings under the present administration. Sudhir Yadav, Manish Kumar, Anurag Yadav, Bhanu, Aditya Patel and others were present.

MLA inaugurates digital boards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

MLA from Varanasi Cantonment constituency Saurabh Srivastava inaugurated digital boards installed in the classrooms of Gopi Radha Primary School and Girls Inter College located in Ravindrappuri here on Wednesday, by writing wishes with a laser pen on a digital board. It is a step towards fulfilling the dreams of Digital India of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his own parliamentary constituency. It also marked the farewell to the traditional old black boards from the school as now in the primary wing classes, the teachers will teach the children by writing on the screen with finger and laser pen instead of chalk and using duster.



MLA Saurabh Srivastava inaugurating a digital board at a school in Ravindrappuri in Varanasi on Wednesday.

New Education Policy (NEP) has been made keeping in mind the all-round development of children and such digital boards would be extremely beneficial for compliance of this policy.

A free health check-up camp was also organised by the efforts of Dr Chaitanya Sah and Dr Neha Sah in which the people got their health check-up. Apart from this, a fair was organised by the children in

which counters of various food stalls, games, mehendi etc were set up by the children.

In the beginning, the guests were welcomed by the Chairman of the school Vivek Shah and Manager Dr Manoj Kumar Shah.

The vote of thanks was done by Director Dr Shalini Shah. Principal Niti Jaiswal felicitated Dr Anand Prabha Singh, Principal of Nivedita Shiksha Sadan, Sumedha

Singh, Principal of Guru Nanak Khalsa School, Dr Pratibha Yadav, Principal of Aryamahila Inter College as the guests of honour in the programme. Deputy Manager Abhinav Bhatt, Deputy Director Smriti Sah and Assistant Director Saloni Shah honoured the first student of the school Aarti Chatterjee and in-charge of Hindu Yuva Vahini (Varanasi Region) Ambarish Singh Bhola.

Investiture ceremony held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The investiture ceremony of newly-elected office-bearers of Tagore Public School (TPS), for the academic session 2023-24 was held in the school campus. Students of senior classes, faculty members of the school and members of management committee were present. Immaculately dressed, the chosen badge holders marched in unison with pride and a sense of accomplishment. Prof RK Tandon, Manager, TPS, and Archana Tewari, principal TPS invested the insignia of authority to the head boy Somya Pathak and head girl Sakshi Gupta.

Immaculately dressed, the chosen badge holders marched in unison with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Badges and sashes were conferred on the school prefects, vice-prefects, captains and vice-captains of four houses and Discipline Committee members. Udbhav Bajaj and Shreya Khanna were sworn in as Head Prefect Boy and Head Prefect Girl respectively.

Mohd Anas became the Captain of Gitanjali (Red) House while Nilesh Mishra took the captainship of Lipika (Green) House. Arnab

Jaiswal and Sanya Shiv Jaiswal were sworn in as the Captain of Varsha (Blue) House and Chitra (Yellow) House respectively. Syed Ahmad Asghar and Isha Dwivedi have been elected as sports captain of the school while Anjali Jaiswal and Rashika Yadav became cultural secretary. Arnab Mishra and Vignesh Singh were given the responsibility of Student Editor. Sourabh Malhotra, co-ordinator Senior wing

(Commerce) administered the oath of office to the Head Boy and Head Girl exhorting them to uphold the pride and dignity of the school. A total 104 of members were sworn in to make up this year's student council. Prof Tandon congratulated and motivated the students. He said in this 35th year of TPS they should try to take the institution to new heights and set milestones. Principal Archana Tewari also congratulated the office-bearers and said student council works as a bridge between students and school authorities. She encouraged them to perform their duties with loyalty, truth and honour.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Battle lines drawn

Old NDA and new I.N.D.I.A. take resolute positions in the battle of alliances for the 2024 polls

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) recently held a crucial meeting in New Delhi on the completion of 25 years of NDA, which undoubtedly set the tone for the 2024 general elections. This gathering, attended by 39 alliance partners and chaired by PM Modi, witnessed a unanimous resolution to fight under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. The NDA leaders also targeted the Opposition's unity efforts, saying that it is "facing an identity crisis and is beset by confusion and disorientation". The resolution, referring to the achievements of Modi government in the last nine years, also applauded its "hard work and selfless dedication towards the service of the country". The NDA meeting not only reiterated the commitment of the allies but also showcased the strength of the coalition. The presence of prominent leaders from regional parties underscored the broad-based support enjoyed by the alliance. This unity of purpose and convergence of ideologies among the NDA's diverse constituents augur well for its political strength.



One cannot overlook the fact that under Modi's leadership, the BJP has managed to galvanise the cadres and formed a well-oiled election machine that has steamrolled the Opposition. By reaffirming their commitment to fighting under Modi's leadership, the allies have conveyed a message of policy continuity.

It would be pertinent to note a major difference between the NDA and the new INDIA alliance (forged by the Opposition): One is led by Modi's decisive leadership while INDIA is still a guess work though its number has swelled to 26. The BJP is also keen to keep its allies together though 37 NDA partners notched up just 29 Lok Sabha seats in 2019. Nine of them didn't contest the 2019 LS polls, while 16 failed to win any seat. Yet, facing a possible unified Opposition in 2024, BJP is looking at smaller parties to help net more seats. In the past, the BJP did lose a number of allies which weakened its grip on several states. Shiv Sena and Akali Dal parted ways. Though the NDA meet was a gala event, there was an undercurrent of nervousness about the Opposition's unity. The PM himself took a jibe at it saying it was an association of corrupt parties. Though the NDA would have infrastructure development, digital empowerment, foreign policy initiatives and of course Modi's face to flaunt, it will be dealing with anti-incumbency and a host of economic and social issues. The Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh wins have given a lot of confidence to the Congress and the Opposition and if this run continues in the upcoming state elections the NDA would have a serious problem to deal with. The NDA meeting provided an opportunity for allies to deliberate on their collective vision for India's future. The focus on welfare schemes, rural development, job creation, healthcare, education and national security formed the core of discussions. Though NDA is an old war horse while the Opposition is yet to get its alliance into election mode, one thing is sure: 'INDIA' is a fragile association, NDA is strong and confident. Who wins remains to be seen.

PICTALK



Ponies take rest after dropping pilgrims near the holy cave shrine during Amarnath Yatra, J&K

Reform diplomacy to make it more effective



PRAFULL GORADIA

We need to rejig our diplomatic practices to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world which is undergoing a paradigm shift

The central government has, from time to time, stated that seventy-five years have passed since independence. A reform of India's diplomatic network is much needed. As far as is publicly known, foreign policy has been handled in the last nine years better than ever before. The diplomatic network, however, is indeed of up-gradation.

The nations our foreign policy and establishment engages with need to be divided into three categories. Those requiring continual contact, political as well as economic, would be about ten or twelve, which the US, Russia, China, the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Australia, etc., and possibly Brazil too, would figure. These may be designated as category 'X' countries.

Then there would be many countries that commercially have a lot of potential. For the moment though, these might require only occasional political or diplomatic attention like say, Taiwan, Vietnam, Mongolia, Spain, Argentina and some countries in Africa like Egypt. The interaction with such countries would have significant commercial potential, which would also include tourist inflow from these countries. They may, therefore, be categorized as belonging to 'Group A'. The rest of the countries, small or medium sized could be categorized under 'Group B'.

There could be a category 'C' that would include those countries with whom India presently does not have any significant diplomatic contact, but which in the foreseeable or medium-term future could turn important. While no immediate name comes to mind, countries like Moldova in Eastern Europe or a few in Africa could be cases in point. In the coming years, India should avoid being out of contact with any country. The Indian Diaspora in this context should be useful, if necessary, to represent New Delhi on an honorary basis. Indian representatives in category 'C' countries must be in telephonic contact with their counterparts in the neighbouring countries under the category 'C'.

The 'X' category states could



continue to be run as hitherto, with reinforcement with an officer familiar with making, exports, imports as well as tourism. It hardly needs to be emphasized that tourism is one sure way of earning foreign exchange. The government hardly needs to make any capital expenditure here. The sights to be seen by foreign visitors are aplenty; for example, the Taj Mahal at Agra or the Ajanta and Ellora Caves in Maharashtra are already there. The expenditure on infrastructural improvement would be financed mostly by the private sector.

What is needed to be done by the government is mostly promotion of the heritage and attractions, as well as the facilities, but the marketing function should ideally be handled by the respective marketing divisions of the embassies. Similarly, this division should remain in touch with the exports and imports of the country concerned as well as the local conventions and peculiarities of the country concerned. These would be a guide to aspiring traders from India. Information about the local traders keen to deal with India could be a useful guide for those in India who would be keen to exploit or import.

This implies that new entrants to the country's for-



WHAT IS NEEDED TO BE DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT IS MOSTLY PROMOTION OF THE HERITAGE AND ATTRactions, AS WELL AS THE FACILITIES, BUT THE MARKETING FUNCTION SHOULD IDEALLY BE HANDLED BY THE RESPECTIVE MARKETING DIVISIONS OF THE EMBASSIES

eign service should pick up a sufficient working knowledge of international trade and local conditions before they plunge into responsible work. Such officials would be better suited to head Indian missions in category 'A' countries as distinct from categories 'B' or 'C'. They need not be super-experts in international affairs, which is highly essential for the 'X' category countries.

We then come to the level of category 'B' countries, which need diplomats only at the level of charge d'affaires. But they should be in contact with senior ambassadors in the region, to report as well as obtain guidance. In short, our aim should be to remain in touch with the goings-on in nearly all countries in the world, especially to not miss out on commercial opportunities, however apparently small. The small countries, let us say in Group 'C', could have local citizens friendly with the Indian embassy or establishment, and they could be appointed as honorary envoys who would bear all the local costs.

Many earnest well-to-do individuals may be attracted to such appointments for the sake of local status, as well as the few privileges a diplomat would enjoy. Such envoys would likely be better

informed about local developments than the conventional diplomatic representatives, who in any case, would cost the country's exchequer quite a bit. Also, such informal appointees would know the local language (s) spontaneously.

My own experience has been that it is difficult to understand a person's mentality fully unless one knows his or her language. How many languages can a professional career diplomat learn? Not many. It is, therefore, food for thought whether every embassy should have an honorary member diplomat who is a local. However, it bears iteration here that knowledge of the languages of non-English speaking countries in category 'X' countries is a must, to accurately understand the milieu of those countries and to be able to gauge the ongoing developments and potential changes likely to happen in those countries, which are bound to cast a profound impact on India. The lack of such linguistic proficiency in the country's diplomatic core has cost us in the past.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ALL EYES ARE ON ASHWIN

Sir — Ravichandran Ashwin was at his best at Windsor Park, Roseau, Dominica where he smothered the West Indian batting with a 12-wicket haul. Although the 36-year-old master tweaker has nothing to prove having been in the international circuit for almost 13 years and having picked up 709 wickets in the three formats combined, omission from the Indian side in the ICC test final must have rankled with him. On his day, Ashwin is almost unplayable as the Windies batsmen must have fathomed. Ashwin's all-around ability and, of course, adaptability are stuff legends are made of. The amiable man from Chennai, who has won a record ten man of the series awards, also has the distinction of being the quickest Indian bowler to have reached the 50-wicket to 450-wicket mark in test cricket in terms of innings.

Ashwin has no peers in recent Indian bowling; it goes to his credit that he has consistently mesmerised the opposition batsmen with his trademark "carom balls" and "arm balls". But for the raw deal accorded to him, he could have closed in on his mentor Anil Kumble's record by now. Of course, he has every chance of overtaking Kumble's record as the highest wicket-taker for India though the number of tests played these days are few and far between. Be that as it may, all eyes are on whether he will reach the coveted 500-mark in tests during the second test against West Indies at the famous Port of Spain Trinidad beginning Wednesday.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

OPPOSITION CONCLAVE

Sir — INDIA, the name for the 26-member opposition party bloc set to take on BJP-led NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, stands for Indian Developmental Inclusive Alliance. The name was unanimously decided by the members of the alliance after extensive deliberations. INDIA was accompanied by other suggestions such as "India's Main Front (IMF)", "Indian People's Front", "Indian Progressive Front", "Indian Popular Front" and "We For

Debate rages on illegal migration



If the illegal migration of controversial Ms Seema Haider from Pakistan, can divide the Indian Debater of political trajectory. One can imagine the feelings of developed nations like Canada and the USA vis-a-vis Indians illegally migrating to their land.

It is stressing point of contention for the last few months, as repeated incidences of Indians illegally crossing the borders of some Western countries instead of a better

lifestyle. It is quite a troubling incident to highlight, but the truth of the story is that this is a harsh reality and is making India's global image a problematic reality.

Sometimes the Indians are caught by Canadian police illegally entering the nation and sometimes the report comes from UK or USA or even Australia and New Zealand as well. India, therefore, had to sign a Migration-related Agreement, to be accountable for these migrating individuals. The concern is not a bit of highlight, but it is a big problem for sure. If it was not halted it can come up with serious repercussions for India on many terms. Therefore the government of India must immediately check all this and must take a decisive stand to halt such individuals from defaming India as a migration basket of the world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

India'. The name was suggested by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Most leaders agreed on the name INDIA. Another prominent name, "India's Main Front" was suggested by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar while CPI-M leader Sitaram Yechury suggested, "We for India". As per the original suggestion, INDIA stood for "Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance". However the word "democratic" was replaced by "developmental" due to objections by Kumar and Yechury that it sounded too similar to the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) by BJP which should not be given any advantage.

Bhagwan Thadan | Mumbai

CONFLICT: OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Sir — Conflicts in relationships can be challenging, but they provide opportunities for growth and understanding. They can be compared to rainbows, as they add beautiful colours to our journey together. To effectively handle conflicts, it is important to take time to cool off and gain clar-

ity before addressing the issue. Scheduled discussions can help bring you closer and navigate challenging situations. Open and honest communication plays a crucial role in nourishing the relationship and fostering a deeper connection.

Finding a balance in conflict resolution requires a graceful dance of harmony. It involves embracing and respecting each other's unique perspectives, just as birds sing in harmony. Cherishing the joy of expressing opinions contributes to the richness of the relationship, much like an artist using different colours on their palette.

Approaching conflicts with a constructive mindset allows you to sculpt your love into a masterpiece. It is essential to embrace and appreciate healthy differences, as they contribute to the depth and strength of the relationship. Remember that conflicts can indeed be opportunities for growth and connection.

TKR Noori | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Scripting a success story for Indian startups

India's thriving tech startup ecosystem owes much of its success to the government's efforts in fostering an entrepreneurial culture



ARVIND KUMAR

Over the past three decades, India has firmly established itself as a thriving IT hub, propelled by a burgeoning startup ecosystem. Central to this success has been the Indian government's steadfast commitment to nurturing an entrepreneurial culture. Through a range of initiatives spanning funding, technical assistance, incentives, and training, the government has played a pivotal role in accelerating the growth of startups and entrepreneurs.

As a testament to these efforts, India now boasts the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, trailing only the United States and China, according to the Economic Survey 2023. The nation boasts over 99,000 recognized startups and 108 unicorns with a total valuation of \$345+ Bn. This growth highlights India's prominence in the global startup ecosystem.

The government's proactive measures, in collaboration with Industry, Academia and concerned stakeholders have fostered an environment conducive to startup



growth. Notably, the Digital India programme in 2015 and the Startup India mission, launched in 2016, have been instrumental in promoting and supporting startups across the country. These initiatives have enabled entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into successful businesses.

Recognizing the potential of the startups in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, which account for 45% of the country's startups, the government is actively working towards promoting entrepreneurship in these regions. The younger generation, driven by the desire to address society's pressing needs, is launching technology-based startups. This trend showcases the resilience and resourcefulness of India's youth.

India's vibrant startup culture is powered by the youth, who are at the forefront of driving innovation and solving local challenges in various sectors. Startups are leveraging technological interventions to expand their new base and transform Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, thereby contributing to the country's economic growth and development.

Examples of the remarkable impact of startups can be seen in sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and fintech. Healthcare startups, through telemedicine platforms and mobile apps, provide easy and low-cost access to medical services in rural areas.

Personalized learning experiences powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning are revolutionizing education, particularly in regions with limited access to quality education. Agriculture startups are enhancing productivity and profitability for small-scale farmers, bolstering the agriculture sector. Additionally, the fintech industry is empowering individuals and small businesses to partici-

pate in the digital economy.

To further foster youth development and entrepreneurship, the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) a premier organization under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), Government of India through the provision of world-class infrastructure and the implementation of numerous schemes and initiatives for the IT industry is playing a significant role in transforming India into a leading IT destination.

The government has been supporting the startup ecosystem through various funding schemes. India's thriving tech startup ecosystem owes much of its success to the government's efforts in fostering an entrepreneurial culture. As India's tech startup culture continues to flourish, fueled by the ingenuity and enthusiasm of its young entrepreneurs, the nation is poised for equitable growth & development. This will help the country to become a software product nation in times to come.

(The writer is Director General, Software Technology Parks of India)

FIRST COLUMN

HIGHER PLEASURE IS MUST FOR TRUE HAPPINESS

One will be truly blissful, when he reaches the topmost level of sukha



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, this is a reality. Lower levels of pleasure are not sufficient in themselves to give us happiness; we have to go to higher levels. When I mean different levels of pleasure, I am referring to pleasures of the senses, of the mind, of the intelligence and of the soul. And they are in this order only, with the pleasures of the senses at the bottom of the ladder and pleasures of the soul at the apex. We need to climb to the top.

I will begin with pleasures of the senses, which almost everyone is aware of. Eating pleasure is the most common because eating is a necessity also. Our tongues play a major role in this. They dominate to such an extent that one is ready to sacrifice one's health for tasty foods. The next pleasure is of eyes. We spend a lot of time pursuing this pleasure by watching television and now getting addicted to our cell phones. The third pleasure is of hearing music, appreciation, etc.

Talking is similarly pleasant if we can talk intelligently and convince others of our points of view. Comforts also give good feelings, as does smelling nice perfumes, etc. Playing games, especially if one is good at them gives a lot of joy. Meaningful work makes one feel good. And lastly, the sexual pleasures attract mostly everyone. Unfortunately, all these pleasures only give a semblance of happiness. Pleasures of the mind occupy the next level. The first one, which comes to my mind, is self-control or more specifically mental strength. I felt good whenever I was able to deal with a tough situation without losing my poise. Accomplishments naturally occupy the next position. All successes please especially big ones. One gets a feeling of satisfaction, which in turn makes me momentarily peaceful. I have found that purity of emotions also gives me satisfaction, as does simplicity. All these give a taste of the real thing, which is 'sukha', described as bliss in English. The next level of pleasure is intelligence. The capacity to learn well and quickly is highly pleasing; one gets the feel-



ing of being superior. Then comes the ability of problem-solving. I get very excited when a problem comes and I can find solutions thanks to my Lord. The same is true about value judgement in different situations as stated in the Geeta verse # 18.30, "Intelligence by which one knows attachment and relinquishment; and what is worth doing and what is not; what is to be feared and not be feared; what is bondage and liberation." One makes intelligent choices, and the direction of life is right. Isn't the direction all-important in any journey, especially the biggest of our lives?

Still, our pleasures are not at the highest level; they are there but not quite there. For this, we have to reach the level of soul and God. It is a steep climb beginning with becoming good in all respects. Lord Krishna has guided the Geeta on how this can be effectively done. Simultaneously, the purification of the self must go on. This relates to body, mind and words. We have to be extra careful in what we do, think or say. Yogis practice this throughout their lives. (5.11) We must serve others; this creation has been designed this way. Now we are in a good position to approach God for everything desirable. This can be easily done by doing spiritual practices, which suit our natures. God takes notice of all of them. He begins responding when He feels that we are serious in our attempts. Such responses may come as intuitions, minor miracles, fulfillment of our desires, etc. Sometimes, God communicates in our dreams. Such responses show support of the Almighty, which in turn gives us a sense of security. This otherwise is impossible to gain no matter how many material objects we may accumulate. We will begin to become quite hopeful about our future because God has taken note of us. Peace will descend, which is pleasant and lasting. One will become increasingly blissful, that is really 'sukhi'. One will have reached the topmost level of sukha, which is required to be happy, yes, very happy.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher)

Challenges AI poses for the legal system

Legal professionals must navigate the challenges of accountability, bias, transparency, privacy, and ethics when integrating AI systems into their practice.



AASHISH SHETTY



SATYA SABHARWAL

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various industries, and the legal field is no exception. AI technologies, such as natural language processing, machine learning, and predictive analytics, offer promising opportunities to streamline legal processes and improve efficiency. However, the growing reliance on AI in the legal sector also raises significant concerns and perils. This article explores the potential risks associated with using AI in the legal field and emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that considers both innovation and ethical considerations.

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

One of the primary perils of AI in the legal field is the lack of accountability and transparency. AI systems often make decisions based on complex algorithms that are not easily interpretable by human users. This opacity can create significant challenges, particularly in legal proceedings where the right to an explanation is fundamental. If an AI system recommends a particular legal strategy or predicts the outcome of a case, it becomes crucial to understand the underlying reasoning behind these recommendations. Without transparency, legal professionals may struggle to defend or question the outputs of AI systems, leading to a loss of trust in their reliability.

BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

AI algorithms are trained on historical data, and if this data contains biases, it can perpetuate and amplify them. In the legal field, biased AI systems can have severe consequences, as they may disproportionately impact marginalized communities. For example, if an AI-powered tool is used to predict recidivism rates, it may inadvertently perpetuate racial or socioeconomic biases present in historical data. Similarly, in the legal decision-making process, AI systems can inadvertently discriminate based on protected characteristics, such as race or gender, leading to unjust outcomes. Ensuring that AI algorithms are fair and unbiased requires careful attention to data selection, training methodologies, and ongoing monitoring to mitigate these risks.

DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY CONCERNS

The use of AI in the legal field involves processing vast amounts of sensitive data, including personal information, financial records, and confidential legal documents. This reliance on AI raises concerns about data privacy and security. Legal professionals must grapple with how AI systems handle and store data, the potential for data breaches, and the risk of unauthorized access. The consequences of a data breach can be severe, undermining client trust, compromising legal strategies, and violating privacy regulations. Striking a balance between leveraging AI capabilities and safeguarding sensitive information is crucial to prevent legal professionals from inadvertently breaching their ethical and legal obligations.

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Lawyers have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of their clients, upholding ethical standards and maintaining pro-



WHILE AI PRESENTS IMMENSE POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCING EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE LEGAL FIELD, IT IS CRUCIAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS THE ASSOCIATED PERILS

(Aashish is a senior technologist and currently pursuing his doctorate in AI and Satya is an author, columnist and Advocate)

fessional responsibility. The introduction of AI in the legal field complicates these obligations. When utilizing AI systems, lawyers must ensure they exercise reasonable care and supervision over the technology. They must also take precautions to prevent biases, inaccuracies, or system failures that may harm their clients' interests. However, the fast-paced nature of technological advancements can make it challenging for legal professionals to keep up with the ethical implications of AI use. There is a need for ongoing education and training to enable lawyers to understand the risks associated with AI and make informed decisions that align with their ethical obligations.

FEW EXAMPLES WHERE AI HAS CAUSED ISSUES IN THE LEGAL FIELD

Incorrect Legal Advice: AI systems that provide legal advice or generate legal documents may sometimes provide inaccurate or misleading information. These systems heavily rely on algorithms and machine learning, which are trained on historical data. If the training data contains errors or outdated information, the AI system may provide flawed advice, potentially leading to unfavourable outcomes for clients.

Bias in Sentencing and Parole Decisions: AI algorithms used in predicting sentencing or parole decisions have been found to exhibit bias. These algorithms are trained on historical data, which may reflect systemic biases present in the criminal justice system. As a result, the predictions made by AI systems may disproportionately impact certain demographics, leading to biased outcomes and perpetuating societal inequalities.

Privacy Breaches: The legal field deals with sensitive and confidential information. When AI systems are used to process and store this data, there is an increased risk of privacy breaches. If the AI system is not adequately secured, it can be vulnerable to hacking or unauthorized access, potentially exposing sensitive client information and undermining trust in the legal profession.

Discovery Challenges: AI is often employed in e-discovery, which involves sifting through large volumes of electronic data for legal proceedings. While AI can assist in automating the process and identifying relevant documents, there have been instances where AI systems have failed to accurately classify documents or have missed crucial evidence, leading to incomplete or flawed discovery processes.

Lack of Explainability: AI algorithms often work as "black boxes," making decisions without clear explanations. This lack of transparency and interpretability can be problematic in the legal field, where the right to an explanation is fundamental. Lawyers and judges may struggle to understand and challenge the reasoning behind an AI-generated recommendation or decision, hindering the ability to ensure a fair and just legal process.

Ethical Concerns in Autonomous Vehicles and Legal Liability: With the rise of autonomous vehicles, legal questions arise regarding liability in accidents involving self-driving cars. AI algorithms play a crucial role in the decision-making process of these vehicles. Determining who is responsible when an accident occurs, whether

it is the vehicle manufacturer, software developer, or the vehicle owner, becomes complex and raises ethical and legal challenges. These examples illustrate the potential issues and challenges that arise when AI is used in the legal field. It emphasizes the need for careful consideration, oversight, and ongoing evaluation of AI systems to ensure their reliability, fairness, and adherence to legal and ethical standards.

While AI presents immense potential for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the legal field, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the associated perils. Legal professionals must navigate the challenges of accountability, transparency, bias, privacy, and ethical considerations when integrating AI systems into their practice. Striking a delicate balance between innovation and ethical concerns will be essential in leveraging AI to its fullest potential without compromising the fairness, integrity, and values that underpin the legal system. By embracing transparency, proactively addressing biases, strengthening data privacy, and ensuring ethical and professional responsibility, the legal field can harness AI's capabilities while safeguarding the principles that are central to the pursuit of justice.

Currently, India has no codified laws, statutory rules or regulations, or even government-issued guidelines, that regulate AI per se. The obligations on this subject are set out in the Information Technology Act 2000, and the rules and regulations framed thereunder. With huge volumes of data and events, AI systems can render correct results and/or positives. But getting inaccurate data from unreliable sources can even backfire.

The problems widows face despite social welfare schemes

Due to the lack of support, many widows are denied their inheritance, leaving them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence

The 2011 census states that there are 5.6 crore widowed persons in India. Women outnumber men accounting for nearly 78% of the total widowed population. The majority of widows in India are elderly, with approximately 58 per cent of them being 60 years or older. The remarriage rate among widows in India is generally low, with only 15 per cent of widows aged 60 and above having remarried due to cultural or social factors, as per the 2011 census. Many widows in the country struggle with economic difficulties and find themselves living below the poverty line. Due to limited access to education and other opportunities, women face significant financial challenges after the death of their hus-



DEVENDRA RAJ SUTHAR

(The author is an independent writer from Rajasthan) Charkha Features

bands, who were solely responsible for supporting the household. Due to the lack of supportive property rights in India, many female widows are denied their inheritance, leaving them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence. Consequently, widows endure lifelong financial difficulties, compelling them to send their children to work instead of providing them with an education. Seeta Devi, a resident of Bagra village in Jalore district, Rajasthan, has been facing similar challenging circumstances along with other widows in the area. Ten years ago, she tragically lost her husband in a road accident, leaving her with the responsibility of raising their children who were only five and six years old at the time. Due to the sudden

loss of her husband, she had to cancel her son's school admission and involve him in ancestral duties. Talking about government schemes aimed at supporting widows and the benefits, she expressed, "I only receive a widow's pension of 750 rupees from the government. Unfortunately, apart from this, I don't receive any other kind of assistance. It's extremely challenging to manage a household with just 750 rupees. Consequently, I had no choice but to withdraw my elder son from school and have him work, while I myself engage in manual labor. Our lack of literacy prevents us from accessing information about government schemes for widows' welfare, and unfortunately, no one informs us about them either." Similarly,

Savita Devi, another woman from the village, faced a tragic loss last year when her husband passed away in a fatal road accident. This unfortunate event left her with the sole responsibility of supporting her family. To meet their daily needs, she had no choice but to send her 13-year-old son to work in the city, depriving him of education. When asked about burdening a young child with household responsibilities at such a tender age, thus depriving him of education, Savita Devi expressed her reluctance by saying, "We don't want our son to work at such a young age instead of studying, but circumstances leave us with no choice." She explained, "We have two older daughters at home and a young son as well,

making a total of five people whose daily needs must be met. Our daughters are older, so we cannot send them to work, and our youngest son is still attending school." According to Dilip Singh, a social worker in the region, the main challenge widows face in the district is a financial crisis. In rural areas, husbands are typically responsible for the household and supporting the entire family, as women were not educated and are limited to the household. While society is offering some assistance to widows, they often decline the support provided. "Their fear of appearing helpless and inferior in the society," Dilip shared. He also mentioned that the social status of widows has improved over time as remarriage for widows

is now accepted, and societal restrictions on them are decreasing. Talking about several schemes available in the country, Praveen Kumar, an E-Mitra operator from the region shared that, "There are several government programs and social initiatives in place in the country and states to provide economic assistance to widows. These include schemes such as the National Widow Pension Scheme, Swadhar Greh Yojana, Prime Minister Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), assistance programs for women's training and employment, the National Family Benefit Scheme, the Annapurna Scheme, and more." Highlighting how government schemes aimed at the welfare of widows are not

reaching the widows in rural areas, Pavani Devi says, "Due to illiteracy, we are unaware of government schemes and the benefits we can receive from them," she added. Despite the existence of multiple widow empowerment initiatives, widows continue to encounter obstacles in accessing their rightful benefits, necessitating enhanced accessibility measures for these programs. Effective implementation demands a well-coordinated awareness campaign targeting widows in their local vernacular, coupled with streamlined procedural modifications to accommodate illiterate widows. Only then can the observance of International Widows Day on June 23rd attain its true significance.

Sunak apologises for historic LGBT ban in UK armed forces

PTI ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday apologised on behalf of the UK government for the treatment of LGBT veterans, saying a previous ban on their deployment in the armed forces was an "appalling failure" of the British state. Sunak's apology in the House of Commons came as an independent review concluded that pre-2000 investigations into an individual's sexuality were intrusive and invasive, and for some caused long-lasting and severe impacts on the lives of veterans and their families. "The ban on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people serving in our military until the year 2000 was an appalling failure of the British state - decades behind the law of this land," said Sunak.

"As today's report makes clear, in that period many endured the most horrific sexual abuse and violence, homophobic bullying and harass-



ment while bravely serving this country.

"Today, on behalf of the British state, I apologise, and I hope all those affected will be able to feel part of the proud veteran community that has done so much to keep our country safe," he said.

The independent review, chaired by Lord Terence Etherton and co-commissioned by the UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Office for Veterans Affairs, examined the experiences of personnel

between 1967-2000 who were impacted by the ban on homosexuality in the armed forces.

The government has previously accepted that the treatment of LGBT armed forces personnel and veterans prior to the year 2000 was completely unacceptable and highly regrettable.

"I am pleased that this review has shone a much-needed light on a shameful and unacceptable historical chapter in our armed forces history," said UK Defence Secretary

Ben Wallace.

"It is heartbreaking that the very tolerance and values that we expected our soldiers, sailors and aviators to fight for, were denied to many of them. I am pleased we now have the opportunity to right those historic wrongs so that LGBT veterans can once again take pride in their service," he said.

The scope of Lord Etherton's review focused on three main areas, with the primary one being the effect the historic policy may have had on those impacted by the ban, including the consequences for their future lives.

It also looked at the accessibility of veterans' services for LGBT people and how to ensure that LGBT veterans are recognised and fully accepted as members of the armed forces.

"The apology today is an important part of addressing the historic hurt that many LGBT veterans feel," said Johnny Mercer, Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

UK Conservatives face reckoning with voters in 3 special elections

AP ■ LONDON

Bad things may come in threes for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whose Conservative Party faces a trio of unwanted verdicts from voters this week. The UK is holding three special elections for House of Commons seats on Thursday that will let a broad cross-section of voters — in northern England, southwest England and on London's suburban fringe — deliver a verdict on the party that has governed Britain since 2010.

The Tories are bracing for the worst. "Midterm by-elections for incumbent governments are always difficult," Sunak said Monday. "I don't expect these to be any different from that." It could be different, or at least rare, if the Conservatives lose all three seats. The last time a governing party lost three by-elections in one day was in 1968 under Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

The three elections are part of the still-rippling shockwaves from the turbulent term of ex-leader Boris Johnson. He quit as a lawmaker last month, almost a year after resigning as prime minister, when a standards watchdog concluded he'd lied to Parliament about lawbreaking parties in his office during the coronavirus pandemic.

An ally followed Johnson out the door, and another lawmaker has resigned amid

sex and drugs allegations, triggering the three by-elections.

Labour hopes to win Johnson's old seat of Uxbridge and South Ruislip in suburban London, as well as the mixed urban-rural Selby and Ainsty constituency vacated by Johnson ally Nigel Adams in northern England. The centrist Liberal Democrats are favored to win in southwest England's Somerton and Frome, whose Conservative legislator, David Warburton, quit over allegations of cocaine use and sexual misconduct.

A trio of Conservative defeats would increase grumbles that Sunak is failing to turn the party's fortunes around after the mayhem caused by the scandal-plagued Johnson.

Conservative lawmaker Steve Brine — one of almost 50 Tory parliamentarians who say they'll step down before the next national election, due by the end of 2024 — quipped this week that the party's dol-drums were the result of "Long Boris," the political equivalent of Long COVID.

Sunak also took over an economy reeling from the brief term of ex-Prime Minister Liz Truss, who quit in October after six weeks in office when her tax-cutting economic plans drove up the cost of government borrowing and hammered the pound. That worsened a cost-of-living crisis that has left 1 in 20 people running

short of food each month, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Three opinion polls this week gave Labour a lead of at least 15 points over the Conservatives nationwide.

Hannah Bunting, a University of Exeter politics lecturer and Sky News election analyst, said the Conservatives are facing electoral challenges in "three different types of battlegrounds" on Thursday — and to lose all of them would be ominous.

"If you are losing where (the number of people with) mortgages is high like in Selby and Ainsty, and you're losing in the outer belt of London... and you're losing in the southwest, which is usually a Conservative heartland, then there's not going to be too many seats where you can guarantee a Conservative (lawmaker) returned at the next general election," she said. The Bank of England has hiked its central interest rate at 13 consecutive meetings, to 5%, in a bid to tame inflation that stood at 8.7% in May. Four in 10 renters say they are struggling to pay the rent and millions of homeowners face steep increases in their mortgage payments as a result of persistently high inflation. The soaring cost of living has driven hundreds of thousands of public sector workers, including doctors and nurses, out on strike, worsening pressure on the overstretched public health care system.

North Korea fires two short-range missiles into sea

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into its eastern sea early Wednesday in what appeared to be a statement of defiance as the United States deploys a nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea for the first time in decades. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said that from 3.30 to 3.46 am North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area near capital Pyongyang that flew about 550 kilometers before landing in waters east of the Korean Peninsula. Those flight details were similar to the assessment of the Japanese military, which said the missiles landed outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone and that there were no immediate reports of damage from ships or aircraft in affected areas.

The flight distance of the North Korean missiles roughly matched the distance between Pyongyang and the South Korean port city of Busan, where the USS Kentucky arrived Tuesday afternoon in the first visit by a US nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s.

Japanese Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada told reporters that the North Korean missiles travelled on a low trajectory, with their maximum altitude reaching about 50 kilometers, and possibly demonstrated "irregular maneuver" in flight. Japan has previously used similar language to describe the flight characteristics of a North Korean weapon modelled after Russia's Iskander missile, which travels at low altitudes and is designed to be maneuverable in flight to improve its chances of evading missile defences.

Wednesday's launches marked the North's first ballistic activity since July 12, when it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile that demonstrated potential range to reach deep into the US mainland. That launch was supervised by Kim Jong Un, which he blamed for worsening the security environment on the Korean Peninsula.

Netanyahu says his speech highlights an 'unbreakable bond' despite US unease

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Israel's president speaks to Congress on Wednesday in an appearance aimed at demonstrating what he calls the "unbreakable bond" between Israel and the United States, despite US concerns over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial overhaul and settlement construction in the occupied West Bank. Isaac Herzog becomes the second Israeli president, after his father, Chaim Herzog, to address Congress. His speech will mark modern Israel's celebration of its 75th year.

But the visit by Israel's figurehead president also is exposing the difficulties that Democrats face in balancing longstanding US support for ally Israel with disapproval of some actions by Netanyahu's government, a coalition of ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties. The House on Tuesday passed



a Republican-led resolution reaffirming its support for Israel with strong bipartisan approval — an implicit rebuke of a leading Democrat who over the weekend called the country a "racist state" but later apologized.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. August Pfluger, R-Texas, passed with more than 400 lawmakers backing the measure. It did not mention Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., by name but

was clearly a response to her recent remarks about Israel. The measure was drafted soon after she criticised Israel and its treatment of Palestinians at a conference on Saturday.

Jayapal, the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, walked back the comments the next day, insisting her comments were aimed at Netanyahu and not at Israel.

"I do not believe the idea of Israel as a nation is racist," Jayapal said in a statement.

"I do, however, believe that Netanyahu's extreme right-wing government has engaged in discriminatory and outright racist policies and that there are extreme racists driving that policy within the leadership of the current government."

The GOP-led effort highlighted the divide among House Democrats over Israel, with younger progressives adopting a more critical stance toward the

longtime US ally than party leaders.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., the only Palestinian-American in Congress, is boycotting Herzog's speech Wednesday and criticized the resolution as normalising violence against those living in the occupied West Bank, given the Netanyahu government's approval of expanded Jewish settlements there.

"We're here again reaffirming Congress' support for apartheid," Tlaib said during floor debate Tuesday on the Republican measure. "Policing the words of women of colour who dare to speak up about truths, about oppression." Over at the White House on Tuesday, Herzog sought to assure Biden that Israel remains committed to democracy amid deepening US concerns over Netanyahu's plans to overhaul his country's judicial system.

Trump's target letter suggests 2020 polls probe is zeroing in on him

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A target letter sent to Donald Trump suggests that a sprawling Justice Department investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election is zeroing in on him after more than a year of interviews with top aides to the former president and state officials from across the country.

Federal prosecutors have cast a wide net, asking witnesses in recent months about a chaotic White House meeting that included discussion of seizing voting machines and about lawyers' involvement in plans to block the transfer of power, according to people familiar with the probe. They've discussed with witnesses schemes by Trump associates to enlist states of Republican fake electors in battleground states won by Democrat Joe Biden and interviewed state election officials



who faced a pressure campaign over the election results in the days before the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

It is unclear how much longer special counsel Jack Smith's investigation will last, but its gravity was evident Tuesday when Trump disclosed that he had received a letter from the Justice Department advising him that he was a target of the probe. Such letters often precede criminal charges;

Trump received one ahead of his indictment last month on charges that he illegally hoarded classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago property in Florida.

Though it's not known what charges Trump or anyone else might face in the election probe, the scope of the inquiry stands in stark contrast to Smith's much narrower classified documents investigation. The vast range of witnesses is a reminder of the tumultuous two months between Trump's election loss and the insurrection at the Capitol, when some lawyers and advisers aided his futile efforts to remain president while many others implored him to move on or were relentlessly badgered to help alter results.

A spokesperson for Smith declined to comment about the target letter or the interviews that prosecutors have conducted.

China looks to Kissinger meeting to mend strained relations with US

Beijing (AP): Amid a steep downturn in relations with the United States, China has looked to a meeting with former US national security adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to revive positive momentum.

The 100-year-old Kissinger met Wednesday with the ruling Communist Party's diplomat Wang Yi, who said it was "impossible" to transform, encircle or contain China, reiterating top Chinese leaders' statements on what they say the US is trying to do based on differences over trade, technology, Taiwan and China's human rights record.

On Tuesday, Kissinger held talks with Defence Minister Li Shangfu, who is barred from visiting the US over arms sales he oversaw with Russia.

'China will work with US on climate as long as political conditions are met'

AP ■ BEIJING

China is willing to work with Washington on reducing global warming as long as its political demands are met, the country's vice president told US climate envoy John Kerry on Wednesday. The official Xinhua News Agency quoted Vice President Han Zheng as telling Kerry that addressing climate change was "an important aspect of China-U.S. cooperation," but was predicated on mutual respect. He said it must proceed "on the basis of U.S. attendance to core issues that concern both parties, fully engaging and exchanging ideas." During this week's visit, Kerry has told China's top diplomat Wang Yi that President Joe Biden's administration is "very committed" to stabilizing relations



between the world's two biggest economies as they seek to restart high-level contacts. Ties between the countries have hit a historic low amid disputes over tariffs, access to technology, human rights, China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and threats against self-governing Taiwan. China broke off contacts on a range of

issues with the Biden administration last August, including over climate change, in a show of pique over then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan. China claims the island as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, threatening to draw the U.S. into a major conflict in a region crucial to the global economy.

Contacts have only slowly been restored and China continues to refuse to restart dialogue between the People's Liberation Army, the party's military branch, and the US Department of Defense.

Kerry is the third senior Biden administration official in recent weeks to travel to China for meetings with their counterparts following Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. No top-

ranking Chinese officials have visited the U.S. since the late 2019 outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in China and the accompanying deterioration in dialogue, particularly on the military and political levels. Kerry earlier paid a courtesy call on Premier Li Qiang, the party's second-ranking official, who told him China and the U.S. should cooperate more closely on the "extremely large challenge" posed by global warming.

Kerry responded that "working and showing the rest of the world how we can cooperate and begin to address this with the urgency it requires is incredible." No meeting has been announced with China's paramount leader Xi Jinping, and China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang has been absent from public sight for three weeks.

Gucci's President stepping down

London (AP): The president and CEO of Gucci is stepping down later this year, the latest shakeup to the luxury fashion brand and coming as part of a series of changes to its parent company, the French conglomerate Kering.

Marco Bizzarri will depart the Italian design house in September after eight years at the helm, with Kering saying on Tuesday that he "masterminded the execution of Gucci's outstanding growth strategy since 2015". He was part of Kering's leadership for 18 years.

Bizzarri will be replaced by Jean-Francois Palus, who is now Kering's managing director. Palus will be "tasked with strengthening Gucci's teams and operations" as the brand "rebuilds influence and momentum", according to the

company's statement. Historically, Gucci accounted for most of Kering's profits, but it has been under some scrutiny after underperforming rivals.

Kering also said it was promoting Yves Saint Laurent President and CEO Francesca Bellettini as deputy CEO for brand development, managing all of its fashion houses, which also include Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen and Bottega Veneta.

Kering Chief Financial Officer Jean-Marc Duplax will be another deputy CEO, handling operations and finance.

"We are building a more robust organization to fully capture the growth of the global luxury market," billionaire Kering Chairman and CEO Francois-Henri Pinault said in a statement.

UK rolls out first passports in name of King Charles III

AP ■ LONDON

For the first time in 70 years, British passports bearing the title of "His Majesty" will start being issued this week in the name of King Charles III. UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman unveiled the new design update on Tuesday evening which changes the passport salutation from "Her Majesty" following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year. As is customary, the 74-year-old King himself does not carry a passport as it is a document issued in his name.

"For 70 years, Her Majesty has appeared on British passports and many of us will not remember a time when she did not feature. Today marks a

significant moment in UK history, as the first British passports since 1952 start featuring the title of His Majesty, the King," said Braverman.

"As HM Passport Office enters a new era in its history, it is delivering an exceptional service and I am extremely grateful for their outstanding accomplishments and the unwavering dedication of the whole team to meet the needs of the British public. While vast improvements have been made, I continue to urge the public to make sure they apply for passports in good time," she said.

The earliest recorded British passport can be traced back to the reign of Henry V in 1414 and documents were known as safe conducts. It was not until 1915 that the first modern-style British

passports, including a photograph and signature were first issued.

The first security feature, a special watermark, was introduced in passports in 1972. Since then, a large number of security features have been incorporated into British passports, from watermarks, holograms, elaborately printed patterns, to the polycarbonate page.

This is intended as reassurance to British nationals that there is only one issue of their unique document.

The first burgundy-coloured machine-readable passports were issued in 1988 and over 30 years later, in 2020, the distinctive blue cover was re-introduced following the departure of the UK from the European Union (EU).

36 years later, Met Police apologises to family of murdered investigator

London (AP): London's Metropolitan Police apologised Wednesday to the family of private investigator Daniel Morgan, who was killed with an axe in a pub car park 36 years ago, for the force's failure to bring those responsible to justice.

The Met, which has been embroiled in a series of scandals over many years that have led to it being labelled racists, misogynistic and homophobic, admitted that its investigation had been "marred by a cycle of corruption, professional incompetence and defensiveness". I unequivocally and unreservedly apologise for the failure of the Metropolitan Police Service to bring those

responsible for the murder of Daniel Morgan to justice," said Met Police Commissioner Mark Rowley.

In addition to the apology, the Met agreed a "mutually satisfactory settlement" with Morgan's family, who brought a civil suit against the force.

No financial details were disclosed, but the payout is believed to be around 2 million pounds (\$2.6 million), according to British media.

Morgan was killed with an axe in the car park of the Golden Lion pub in southeast London on March 10, 1987.

5 Indian students shortlisted for Global Student Prize 2023

PTI ■ LONDON

Five students studying in India have made it to the top 50 shortlist for the USD 100,000 Chegg.org Global Student Prize 2023, selected from 3,851 applications from across 122 countries. The annual award goes to one exceptional student who has made a real impact on learning, the lives of their peers and on society beyond.

In the running from India this year will be: Namy Joshi, a 16-year-old student at Sat Paul Mittal School, Ludhiana, Punjab; Vinisha Umashankar, a 16-year-old student at SKP Vanitha International School, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu; Gladson Vaghela, a 25-year-old medical student at Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society Medical

College, Gandhinagar, Gujarat; Padmaksh Khandelwal, a 17-year-old computer science student at Sir Padampat Singhania School, Kota, Rajasthan; and Ravinder Bishnoi, a 20-year-old information technology student at Chandigarh Engineering College, Landran, Mohali, Punjab.

"Chegg not only celebrates your achievements but also the endless possibilities that exist when young minds are driven by a passion for change," said Heather Hatlo Porter, Head of Chegg.org and Chief Communications Officer of Chegg.

The top 50 Global Student Prize finalists deserve the opportunity to have their stories told and have their voices heard. Their dreams, wisdom, and inventive spirit will illuminate a more hopeful future for

everyone," she said. Joshi, acclaimed as the "Top Tech Savvy Student in India" and a global teacher at the age of 16, got hooked on Minecraft, realising that it can also be used as an education tool. She went on to create a virtual library of lessons in Minecraft, now numbering around 500 which are available on her YouTube channel and website. Umashankar is an artist, TEDx speaker, innovator, and environmentalist whose favourite subjects in school are math and science.

Her innovation journey of inventing the award-winning "Solar Ironing Cart" and a power-saving "Smart Ceiling Fan" began when she was 12 years old, and she has since participated in many science and innovation competitions, winning international, national, and state awards.

Thai Parl denies Pita's renomination as PM | SL Parl approves new anti-graft law

AP ■ BANGKOK

The bitter battle to name Thailand's next prime minister took a major turn on Wednesday as Parliament voted to deny Pita Limjaroenrat, whose progressive Move Forward Party won a surprise victory in May's election, a second chance to be confirmed for the post. Pita had assembled a coalition of parties holding a majority in the House of Representatives. But his nomination for prime minister was defeated in a joint vote of the House and Senate last week, with conservative military-appointed senators mostly rejecting his support.



A joint session debated on Wednesday whether Pita could be nominated for a second time, and House Speaker Wan Muhamad Noor Matha then put the question to a vote. A motion to deny him a second chance was passed by a vote of 395 to 312 with eight abstentions, dashing the hopes of Pita's millions of supporters. The meeting of Parliament was then adjourned with no immediate indication of when it would vote again on a new

prime minister. Thai politics experts said Pita's fall was virtually preordained by the 2017 constitution, enacted under military rule and designed to undermine challenges to the established royalist order with measures such as giving the non-elected senators a role in confirming prime ministers. The charter's specific target was the political machine of billionaire populist Thaksin Shinawatra, whom the army ousted in a 2006 coup, but the rules can be used against any threat.

stitution by running for office while holding shares in a media company, a charge he has denied.

The court's announcement would have still allowed Pita's nomination and selection as prime minister. That is now ruled out by Parliament's action, and Pita remains in legal jeopardy, subject to a possible jail term if the court rules against him.

"The key issue here is that Thailand's conservative establishment is unable to win power by competing in elections," said Petra Alderman, a research fellow at England's University of Birmingham and author of a book about the military's authoritarian politics.

The junta that took power after a coup in 2014 "created a highly undemocratic political system that is designed to prevent the wrong party — in the eyes of the conservative establishment — from taking power."

"To cover all your grounds, you further empower unelected and highly unaccountable watchdog institutions — namely the Election Commission and the Constitutional Court

— to make it easier for them to disqualify and/or ban popular politicians and dissolve popular political parties," Alderman said in an email interview.

Pita, during the debate on whether he could legally be renominated, said he would comply with the court's order to step down from his parliamentary post.

"I think Thailand has changed, and will never be the same, since May 14," said Pita, referring to his party's election victory.

"The people have won half the way. There's another half left. Although I still won't get to perform my duty, I'd like to ask all members to help take care of the people from now on."

"Thank you very much," he said before leaving the chamber to the applause of his supporters. Pita's chances of being named prime minister had already looked slim. He was rebuffed by all but 13 members of the appointed Senate, which along with the military and courts represents the country's traditional conservative ruling class. His party has

SL Parl approves new anti-graft law

AP ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Parliament on Wednesday approved an anti-corruption legislation as the island nation attempts to overcome an unprecedented economic crisis. The legislation is part of the prerequisites of an International Monetary Fund bailout package approved in March, under which nearly USD 3 billion in government budgetary support will be disbursed in stages to the bankrupt nation. The bailout is due for its first review in September.

The bill was passed without opposition in the 225-member parliament.

The IMF — which described Sri Lanka's debt as unsustainable — has stressed that anti-corruption and governance reforms are imperative in order to enable the Sri Lankans to benefit from the current economic reforms. The development lender had said previously it was conducting — for the first time in an Asian country — an "in-depth governance

diagnostic exercise" to assess corruption and vulnerabilities and "provide prioritized and sequenced recommendations."

The IMF Governance Diagnostic Report is set to be published in September.

The new legislation aims at preventing and eradicating bribery and corruption, and enhancing transparency while increasing accountability and enhancing public confidence in Sri Lankan administration, according to the bill.

Sri Lanka has been grappling with an unprecedented economic crisis since 2022, after suspending repayment of foreign loans because of a severe foreign currency crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, excessive borrowing by the government, and efforts by the central bank to stabilise the Sri Lankan rupee with scarce foreign reserves.

Sri Lanka's total debt has exceeded USD 83 billion of which USD 41.5 billion is foreign and USD 42.1 billion is domestic.

'Pak facing 'high' risks, needs another IMF programme'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan needs another IMF programme and support from other multilateral lenders beyond the coming election cycle and the ongoing standby arrangement, according to the Washington-based global lender.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the International Monetary Fund said this in a 120-page report released on Tuesday, which analysed cash-strapped Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook.

The report is based on the Memorandum of Economic and Fiscal Policies (MEFP) signed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed.

"Resolving Pakistan's structural challenges, including long-term BOP [balance of payments] pressures, will require continued adjustment and creditor support beyond the current programme period," the Fund said.

The IMF last week gave a final nod to the USD 3 billion bailout programme for Pakistan to support the government's efforts to stabilise the country's ailing economy.

"A possible successor arrangement could help anchor the policy adjustment needed to restore Pakistan's medium-term viability and capacity to repay," the report said. The IMF assessment noted that Pakistan's economic challenges were complex and multifaceted, and risks were exceptionally high.

"Addressing them requires steadfast implementation of agreed policies, as well as continued financial support from external partners. Consistent and decisive implementation of programme agreements will be essential to reduce risks and maintain macroeconomic stability," it said.

On its part, according to the report, the government has given an international undertaking for immediately notifying about a Rs 5 per unit increase in electricity rates and an over 40 per cent increase in gas rates, as the gas sector circular debt is now competing with power sector losses.

It has committed to addressing drivers of circular debt flow in the power sector by notifying recent tariff increases determined by Nepra (National Electric Power Regulatory Authority) with effect from July 1, and notification of quarterly and monthly tariff adjustments without delays stand ready to take quick additional measures in case set revenue targets are missed.

The government has also promised renegotiation of power-purchase agreements with remaining power producers (including Chinese) or prolonging their debt servicing tenors.

In the gas sector, the government has committed to immediate notification of gas tariff adjustments determined by Ogra, besides merging the gas rates for both local and

imported natural gas through a weighted average tariff.

The government has also given an undertaking to ringfence fiscal programme as envisaged in the recent budget and other commitments with the IMF.

For this, the government will not allow supplementary grants for any additional unbudgeted spending over the parliamentary approved level in the current fiscal year, at least until the formation of a new government after the elections (except in case of a severe natural disaster).

The government has also given a "commitment not to launch any new tax amnesties or grant further any new tax exemptions in 2023-24 including through the budget or statutory regulatory orders without prior (assembly) approval".

The government has also provided agreements with each province on their commitment to achieving an end-FY24 fiscal position consistent with the fiscal year's general government primary balance goal of Rs 401 billion and continuing focus on critically urgent energy sector policies, including not to introduce any fuel subsidy, or cross-subsidy scheme, in FY23 and beyond.

In addition, the government has committed to ensuring monetary and financial stability by returning to a market-determined exchange rate, lowering inflation toward the target, and rebuilding foreign exchange reserves.

Ex-Pakistan PM apologises again for threatening female judge

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan on Wednesday again apologised for his controversial remarks against a female judge, saying he was sorry if he crossed the line.

Just months after his ouster in April 2023, Khan in a fiery speech threatened Islamabad's top police officials and judge Zeba Chaudhry and said he would not "spare" them and file cases against them for "torturing" his party leader Shahbaz Gill.

Khan, 70, Wednesday issued an apology, again, in the district and sessions court in connection with the case, Geo News reported.

Khan's apology came during his appearance at the court of Judicial Magistrate Islamabad, Malik Aman, during the hearing of the case.

Khan earlier too expressed readiness to apologise for his controversial remarks.

During the hearing, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman maintained that he was apologetic when he visited the said judge's courtroom earlier.

"I went to the court of the female judge and said that if my statement offended anyone, I apologise," Khan told Judge Aman. Over a month after making the threats, the PTI chairman went to the judge's courtroom to offer an apology. But the police closed the room of the female judge and told him that she was on leave.

Five European countries to extend ban on Ukrainian grain

AP ■ WARSAW

Five European Union countries will extend their ban on Ukrainian grain to protect their farmers' interests, their agriculture ministers said Wednesday, but food can still move through their land to parts of the world in need after Russia pulled out of a deal allowing Black Sea shipments.

The ministers of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania signed a joint declaration in Warsaw ahead of EU discussions on the matter planned next week in Brussels. The declaration said they support continuing to allow

Ukraine's grain to move through their countries by road, rail and river to destinations where it is needed but will keep the import ban to their countries through 2023.

"This coalition is not against anyone, not against Ukraine or the EU, it is in the interest of our farmers," Polish Agriculture Minister Robert Telus said after meeting with his counterparts and deciding to push the ban beyond a Sept 15 deadline.

Except for Bulgaria, all the countries border Ukraine, which faced a major blow Monday when Russia pulled out of a breakthrough accord

brokered by the UN and Turkey to allow food shipments through the Black Sea to countries where millions are going hungry. Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, barley, vegetable oil and corn.

The five agricultural ministers and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who met with them, said Ukrainian grain previously got stuck in their countries, leading to a glut that drove down prices for their farmers, and they don't want to see that happen again. Now, the grain moves through the countries to other markets in sealed and guarded transports.

'Spies using AI to disrupt weapons flow to Russia'

Prague (AP): British spies are already using artificial intelligence to hamper the supply of weapons to Russia, the head of Britain's M16 agency said Wednesday, predicting that Western spies will increasingly have to focus on tracking the malign use of AI by hostile states.

In a rare public speech, Richard Moore also urged Russians who oppose the invasion of Ukraine to spy for Britain, saying others had already done so since the war began. "Our door is always open," he said. In a speech that depicted artificial intelligence as both a huge potential asset and a major threat, Moore said his staff at Britain's foreign intelligence agency "are combining their skills with AI and bulk data to identify and disrupt the flow of weapons to Russia for use against Ukraine."

Calling China the "single most important strategic focus" for his agency, Moore said, "we will increasingly be tasked with obtaining intelligence on how hostile states are using AI in damaging, reckless and unethical ways. Moore, who has previously warned that the West was falling behind rivals in the AI race, said his service "together with our allies, intends to win the race to master the ethical and safe use of AI." But he said AI would not replace the need for human spies, arguing that the "human factor" will remain crucial in an era of rapidly evolving machine learning.

Putin won't attend BRICS summit next month: Ramaphosa

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Vladimir Putin will not personally attend the BRICS summit here next month, sending his Foreign Minister instead, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Wednesday, ending weeks of speculation whether the Russian president would be arrested under an International Court of Justice (ICC) warrant for alleged war crimes in Ukraine. South Africa is the

current chair of the BRICS — a grouping of heavyweights that also includes Brazil, Russia, India and China. The BRICS summit will take place between August 22 and 24 in Johannesburg.

The ICC has indicted Putin for war crimes over accusations that Russia unlawfully deported Ukrainian children. As a member of the ICC, South Africa is expected to arrest Putin if he sets foot in the country. The South African govern-

ment has been under great pressure to arrest Putin and take sides in the Ukraine-Russia war, which it has steadfastly refused to do.

"By mutual agreement between all BRICS member states, President Putin will not be attending the summit. However, Russia will be represented by its Foreign Minister, Mr Sergey Lavrov," President Ramaphosa's office said in a statement. The president's office confirmed that Ramaphosa has for sev-

eral months now held several consultations on South Africa's hosting of the BRICS Summit, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the leaders of Brazil, China and South Africa.

Putin's decision of not attending the BRICS summit has ended South Africa's quandary about complying with the ICC warrant. Ever since he was indicted for war crimes, Putin has not travelled to any country that is a signatory to the ICC treaty.

Taliban use tasers to break up Af women protesting salon ban

AP ■ KABUL

Dozens of Afghan women protested a beauty salon ban on Wednesday after the Taliban ordered their closure nationwide. Security forces used fire hoses, tasers and shot their guns into the air to break up the protest.



The Taliban said earlier this month they were giving all salons in Afghanistan one month to wind down their businesses and close shop, drawing concern from international officials worried about the impact on female entrepreneurs.

The Taliban say they are outlawing salons allegedly because they offer services

makeup artists gathered in the capital of Kabul to protest the ban.

"We are here for justice," said one protester who identified herself as Farzana.

"We want work, food and freedom." The Taliban sprayed the women with water and shot their rifles into the air to disperse the gathering.

Farzana later said the women were going to the UN mission in Afghanistan, urging protesters to stay together.

One protester told The Associated Press the demonstration started at around 10 am in the Shar-e-Naw area of the capital.

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited that Mr. Kanwar Bhan Dhirga intends to mortgage the Plot No. 17-18, admeasuring 400 Sq. Yds., Kharsa No. 27, situated at Village Kadipur, Tehsil & District Gurgaon (Haryana), with our client against the financial assistance. Whereas, Mr. Gopi Chand had acquired the Said Property by way of Sale Deed dt. 17-07-1986 and after his death, Mr. Kanwar Bhan Dhirga got the rights of the Said Property on the basis of regd. Will dt. 31-01-2005 of Mr. Gopi Chand. Now, he intends to mortgage the same to Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited. If any person(s) having objection with regard to ownership/mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 07 days from date hereof, our Client i.e. Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited will proceed with the mortgage process.

DEEPIYOT SINGH, ADVOCATE
A-13, LGF, South Extn-II,
New Delhi-49 #011-40587824

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public at large that Original Allotment Letter of Flat No. 151, Sargodha Vihar C.G.H.S. Ltd. (Known as Sargodha Apartment) Plot No. 13, Sector 7, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075, has been lost/misplaced by my client i.e. Subhash Chander Kapil S/o. Shri Shanker Das and an NCR/FIR has been registered/issued by online portal of Delhi Police File No. 670289/2023 dated 18/07/2023. The said flat is free from all encumbrances. Founder/claimant please inform/claim in writing to the concern society/owner within 15 days starting from the date of publication of this notice and thereafter the user/holder of lost/misplaced/missing documents/article shall be responsible for the use of the same.

PREM PRAKASH (ADVOCATE)
Legal Practitioner, Lawyers LLP
207, Ploch-1, M.U. Sector-10, Dwarka,
New Delhi - 110075 (Ph: 9872683993)

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform General Public Notice that Mr. Anand Mohan Rastogi acquired 50% Undivided share in the basic medicines Floor vide Gift Deed dated 18-08-2023 executed by Mr. Manmohan Rastogi in his favour. Registered as Doc No-0114. Col. Vijay Prakash Rastogi got 50% Undivided share in the said floor vide Registered will executed by Mr. Rastogi in his favour. The above-mentioned persons are owners of Second Floor (Without Roof Rights) 'Said Floor' Property Bearing No. 2, Land area measuring 272 Sq. Yds. 16 227/49 Sq. Mts. Block EA, Situated at Model Town, Delhi-110009. Now, Mr. Anand Mohan Rastogi & Col. Vijay Prakash Rastogi are joint owners of the said floor. Mr. Gaurav Gulati and further Mr. Gaurav Gulati has agreed to create mortgage in respect of the said floor in favour of our client i.e. Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. person, body, individual, institution having any claim, title, interest and/or objection in respect of or against or relating to or touching upon said property or part of the property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, usufruct, etc. are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claims of such person shall be considered to have been waived and our client i.e. Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited will proceed with the mortgage process.

DEEPIYOT SINGH, ADVOCATE
A-13, LGF, South Extn-II,
New Delhi-49 #011-40587824

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PREM PRAKASH (ADVOCATE)
Legal Practitioner, Lawyers LLP
207, Ploch-1, M.U. Sector-10, Dwarka,
New Delhi - 110075 (Ph: 9872683993)

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY MARINE DEPARTMENT

No. MD/ACCTS/WK-R-11/2023/322
Date: 14/07/2023
Name of the Work: "Manning, Maintenance and commercial operation of Port Craft MPV Pushpagri on payment of License fee for a period of 03 years (1098) Days". Estimated cost put to tender price: Approx. ₹1,74,48,006/- plus GST as applicable for 3 years. Last date of submission of tender through on-line bidding is 17.00 hours on 28.08.2023. Technical Bids shall be opened at 15:00 hours on 28.08.2023.
For details, please log on to the website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>
By: Conservator, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/36/2023-24 Dt. 18/07/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, SHRI RAKESH MALHOTRA S/O SHRI BHARAN DEVI MALHOTRA R/O FLAT NO-D-4/4156, VASANT KINI, NEW DELHI-110070, is the owner of DDA SFS FLAT NO.4156, ON FIRST FLOOR ALONGWITH SCOOTER GARAGE, SECTOR-D, POCKET-4, GATEWAY-II, SITUATED AT VASANT KINI, NEW DELHI-110070, WIDE DDA FILE NO.128177418/SFS/III. The original documents i.e. Original POSSESSION LETTER and NOC FOR WATER & ELECTRICITY CONNECTION of the above said property have been lost or misplaced by our client and is not traceable despite of his best efforts. An FIR/NCR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No.67171/2023 dated 19.07.2023). Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can generally inform or write to Deputy Director (L&S Housing), SFS or Director (Housing), Vikas Sacan, New Delhi.
Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)
Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 116 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

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STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	(Rs. in Lacs except EPS)		
		Quarter Ended	Year Ended	Year Ended
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022	31.03.2023
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1.	Total income from operations (Net)	2466.80	3489.55	13103.02
2.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extra ordinary items)	50.85	89.04	223.97
3.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	41.45	75.15	165.71
4.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	41.45	75.15	165.71
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after Tax))	329.00	329.00	329
6.	Paid-Up Equity share capital (Face value Rs. 10/- each)	878.39	746.37	836.94
7.	Other Equity (Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves))	1.26	2.28	5.04
8.	Earnings per share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)			
	a) Basic			
	b) Diluted			

Notes:
1. The above results were reviewed by an Audit Committee and thereafter taken on record by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 19.07.2023 after review by an Audit Committee.
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly & year to date 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 quarterly & year to date financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.mse.in) and the company's website (www.parijatpapermills.com).

For and on behalf of Parijat Paper Mills Limited
Sd/-
Amit Mittal (Whole Time Director)
DIN:00754471
Date: 19.07.2023
Place: Muzaffarnagar

Markets see bull run for fifth day in a row

Sensex ends at record high above 67,000-mark

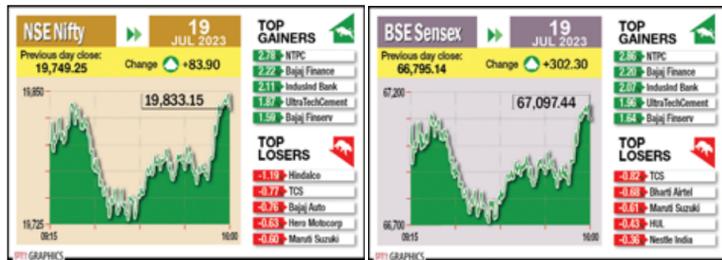
PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty continued their upward movement on Wednesday, ending at fresh record high levels, driven by foreign fund inflows and optimism in the global markets.

Buying in index majors Reliance Industries and ITC also helped the markets maintain their winning momentum.

Rallying for the fifth day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 302.30 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at its new record closing high of 67,097.44. During the day, it rallied 376.24 points or 0.56 per cent to reach its all-time intra-day peak of 67,171.38.

The NSE Nifty gained 83.90 points or 0.42 per cent to end at its lifetime closing high of



19,833.15. During the day, it climbed 102.45 points or 0.51 per cent to hit a fresh record intra-day peak of 19,851.70.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, State Bank of India, Tata Motors, ITC, Power Grid and Larsen & Toubro were the biggest gainers.

IndusInd Bank climbed 2 per cent after the company on Tuesday reported a 30 per cent jump in consolidated net profit in April-June quarter at Rs 2,124.50 crore, helped by core income growth and lower bad loan provisions.

Tata Consultancy Services, Bharti Airtel, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Nestle and ICICI Bank

were among the laggards.

"Markets remained range bound but finally ended around the day's high, in continuation of the prevailing uptrend. Meanwhile, a mixed trend on the sectoral front kept the traders busy. Besides, the broader indices showed resilience and gained over half a per cent each. The supportive US mar-

kets combined with noticeable buying interest across sectors are helping the index to inch higher with every passing day," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.63 per cent and smallcap index jumped 0.61 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities rallied 1.22 per cent, telecommunication jumped 1.05 per cent, industrials (0.83 per cent), power (0.81 per cent), consumer durables (0.66 per cent), financial services (0.60 per cent) and energy (0.55 per cent). Teck emerged as the only laggard.

A total of 1,998 stocks advanced while 1,413 declined and 126 remained unchanged. Foreign Institutional

Investors (FIIs) continued their buying activity on Tuesday as they bought equities worth Rs 2,115.84 crore, according to exchange data.

"Despite the current high levels, domestic investors have hardly lost confidence in the Indian economy. It is experiencing a broad based rally strengthened by encouraging domestic macroeconomic data and sustained inflows from FIIs.

"Although there was some initial profit booking today, the market confidently recovered, with buying observed in all major sectors except auto and IT. Additionally, the global market is providing comfort to the rally, in anticipation of moderation in global inflation," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.



RBI likely to maintain status quo in upcoming monetary policy review meeting: SBI Chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State Bank of India (SBI) Chairman Dinesh Khara on Wednesday said he expects the Reserve Bank of India to maintain status quo in the monetary policy review meeting next month.

"When it comes to MPC, there are multiple data points to look into. The broad data of course is inflation... What we have seen in last few months, it could be perceived that it is trending down. 'As a bank, we don't expect any cut. May be a status quo is something which we expect," he said at an event organised by industry body CII here.

The next meeting of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to be from August 8-10.

In its policy review meeting last month, the RBI left the key interest rate unchanged for a second straight time but signalled that it wants to see inflation moderate more. Currently, the repo rate is 6.5 per cent.

Asked about private capital expenditure (capex), Khara said robust retail demand drives the need for investment in capacity expansion by the corporate sector.

Consumption is picking up and and corporate sector has started talking about capex, he said.

"We are seeing right traction and in the right direction as far as private capex is concerned," he said.

With regard to financial inclusion, he said, it has emerged as a key foundation for socio-economic empowerment and a critical enabler for inclusive and holistic growth of the people.

The government has rightly recognised the potential of financial inclusion and spearheaded several notable initiatives and policies to include the unbanked in the financial ecosystem, he said.

He noted that the introduction of the game-changing Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana in 2014, social security schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana, and UPI, among others, have contributed immensely towards financial inclusion.

Cabinet nod to Mediation Bill amendments

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the Mediation Bill including reducing the maximum timeline for completing mediation proceedings from 360 to 180 days.

The official amendments to the law ministry bill are likely to be tabled in the Monsoon session of Parliament beginning Thursday.

The Mediation Bill, 2021 was introduced in Rajya Sabha in December 2021. Later it was referred to the parliamentary committee on law and personnel which gave its report.

The official amendments cleared by the cabinet are based largely on the recommendations made by the parliamentary panel, sources said.

Under the other key recommendation of the panel accepted by the government, pre-litigation mediation has been made voluntary instead of mandatory.

According to the bill pending in the upper house, compulsory pre-litigation mediation in matters of civil or commercial disputes has been provided for before parties approach a court or tribunals.

In case of exceptional circumstances, a party can seek interim relief from the court or tribunal not only before the commencement of mediation



proceedings but also during the continuation of proceedings.

Disputes, other than commercial disputes, in which the central government and state government are a party, cannot be mediated unless the nature of disputes which can be referred to mediation are notified.

Nivruti Rai appointed as MD and CEO of Invest India

New Delhi, Jul 19 (PTI) Former Intel India country head Nivruti Rai has joined as the Managing Director and CEO of Invest India on July 12, an official statement said on Wednesday.

She has taken over the charge from Manmeet K Nanda, Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), who had assumed this additional charge of MD in March.

Rai joins Invest India after a 29 years of stint at Intel as a global business and technology leader.

MDBs need to provide \$260 bn more annually to fund sustainable infra projects: G20 expert group

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) need to provide an additional USD 260 billion annually to fund sustainable infrastructure and help nations achieve SDG targets, a G20 expert group report said.

According to the report titled 'Strengthening MDBs: The Triple Agenda', additional spending of some USD 3 trillion per year is needed by 2030, of which USD 1.8 trillion represents additional investments in

climate action, mostly in sustainable infrastructure, and USD 1.2 trillion in additional spending to attain other sustainable development goals (SDGs).

"MDBs should provide an incremental USD 260 billion of the additional annual official financing, of which USD 200 billion in non-concessional lending, and help mobilise and catalyse most of the associated private finance," the report said.

The major MDBs are World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), Asian

Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and African Development Bank (AfDB).

The report further said that the international development finance system should be designed to support this spending by providing USD 500 billion in additional annual official external financing by 2030, of which one-third in concessional funds and non-debt-creating financing and two-thirds in the

form of non-concessional official lending. It should also help mobilise and catalyse an equivalent amount of private capital, implying a total additional external financing package of USD 1 trillion, it added.

The G20 finance ministers had constituted an 11-member expert group to suggest measures to strengthen MDBs. Noted economist Lawrence Summers and 15th Finance Commission Chairman N K Singh are co-convenors of the group.

Sebi extends framework for restricting trading by Designated Persons by freezing PAN to all listed companies in phases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Wednesday extended the framework for restricting trading by Designated Persons (DPs) during the "trading window closure" by freezing PAN at security level to all listed companies in a phased manner beginning October.

At present, the framework is applicable to listed companies that are part of benchmark indices -- Nifty 50 and Sensex.

To ensure smooth implementation of the framework, the regulator prescribed a glide path, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

Under this, the new rules will be applicable for top 1,000 companies in terms of BSE market capitalisation from

October 1; next 1,000 firms from January 1, 2024; and remaining companies listed on BSE, NSE and MSEI from April 1, 2024.

For those companies making debut on stock exchanges after issuance of this circular, the rule will apply from the first day of the second quarter from the quarter in which the company gets listed.

Considering the satisfactory implementation of the framework for the listed companies forming part of benchmark indices and the consultations

held with the stock exchanges and depositories, the framework has been extended to all the listed companies, Sebi said.

The Sebi PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) rules prohibit trading by a DP when the trading window is closed.

In August 2022, the regulator laid down a framework for developing a system, wherein permanent account numbers (PANs) of a company's designated persons are frozen for a specific period to curb inadvertent trades during the trading window closure.



Initially, the framework was applicable to declaration of financial results of listed compa-

nies that are part of Nifty 50 and Sensex.

The restriction on trading is for on-market transactions, off-market transfers and creation of pledge in equity shares and equity derivatives contracts (Futures and Options) of such listed companies.

Under the process for implementation of the system, the DP is required to provide access to a listed company on a portal for specifying the trading window closure period. The portal auto-populates details of DPs like PAN and name. The

listed company updates PAN of DPs to be frozen and "start and end date" of trading window closure period.

Further, the company selects or de-selects PANs of DPs at least two trading days prior to start of the trading window closure period.

Subsequently, the designated depository provides relevant data to stock exchanges and other depositories by next trading day -- T-1 day -- and on a daily basis for any updation in DPs during trading window closure period.

Tata Group to set up battery gigafactory in UK, to invest over 4 bn pounds

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian conglomerate Tata Group on Wednesday announced plans to set up a global battery cell gigafactory in the UK at an investment of over 4 billion pounds, aimed to help power the automotive sector's transition to electric mobility.

The UK government, which hailed the group's plans for the 40GW battery cell gigafactory -- one of the largest in Europe, for EVs, said it will create thousands of jobs across the supply chain.

Tata Motors and its British subsidiary Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) will be anchor customers

of the plant, the group said in a statement.

Production at the new gigafactory is due to start in 2026 and is pitched as a key driver behind British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's priority to grow the UK economy.

Sunak hailed Tata Group's announcement as an "incredibly proud" moment for the country's automotive industry and described it as a testament to the strength of the UK car manufacturing industry and its skilled workers.

"Tata Group's multi-billion-pound investment in a new battery factory in the UK is a testament to the strength of our car



manufacturing industry and its skilled workers," he said.

Sunak further said, "With the global transition to zero-emission vehicles well underway, this will help grow our economy by driving forward our lead

in battery technology whilst creating as many as 4,000 jobs, and thousands more in the supply chain," he said.

"We can be incredibly proud that Britain has been chosen as home to Tata Group's first gigafactory outside India, securing our place as one of the most attractive places to build electric vehicles," the British prime minister said.

Later in the day in a tweet, Sunak, "The new gigafactory will provide almost half of the car battery production needed in the UK by 2030. And it will mean the UK is perfectly positioned to be a global leader in battery technology."

IOC signs \$7-9 bn LNG import deal with UAE's ADNOC Gas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil firm IOC has signed a USD 7-9 billion deal to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the UAE's ADNOC Gas plc for 14 years beginning 2026, the UAE company said.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed the deal as also a similar pact with TotalEnergies of France during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France and the UAE last week.

In a statement, ADNOC Gas said the agreement with IOC for the export of up to 1.2 million tonne per annum

(mmtpa) of LNG is "valued in the range of USD 7 billion to USD 9 billion over its 14-year term, signifies a major step forward in the partnership between the two industry leaders."

The deal with TotalEnergies Gas and Power Ltd (TotalEnergies) is for the import of 0.8 million tonne a year of LNG for 10 years starting 2026.

This is the first long-term deal TotalEnergies has signed with an Indian company. Also, this is the first time an Indian company has signed a long-term LNG import deal with Adnoc. TotalEnergies is the third

largest LNG supplier in the world and would be supplying LNG to IOC from their diversified portfolio across the world.

The landmark deal marks another significant milestone for ADNOC Gas as it expands its global reach, reinforcing its position as a global LNG export partner of choice, and reaffirming IOC as its key strategic partner in the LNG market," the statement said.

Commenting on the agreement, Ahmed Alebri, Chief Executive Officer of ADNOC Gas, said the long-term LNG sale deal further strengthens the longstanding partnership with IOC.

India should target 100% electrification of 2 and 3-wheelers by 2030, says Kant

PTI ■ PANAJI

India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Wednesday said the country should target 100 per cent electrification of two and three-wheelers by 2030.

He also said India should target that 65 per cent of its state public transport should be electric by 2030.

India requires a clear policy framework to achieve these goals of electric mobility, Kant said.

He was addressing a side event organised by the NITI Aayog on "Policy support and Enablers to Accelerate India's Electric Mobility during the ongoing fourth Energy Transitions Working Group meeting under India's G20 Presidency in Panaji.

US investment firm GQG Partners buys 5.96% stake in Patanjali Foods via OFS route

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

US-based investment firm GQG Partners has bought a 5.96 per cent stake in edible oil firm Patanjali Foods, which is promoted by Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved.

GQG Partners has bought 2,15,64,517 equity shares of Patanjali Foods through Offer For Sale (OFS) route, according to a regulatory filing. This translates into a 5.96 per cent stake in Patanjali Foods.

Patanjali Foods share price closed at Rs 1,332.75 a piece on Wednesday, up 4.64 per cent from Tuesday.

The market cap of Patanjali Foods stood at Rs 48,245 crore. At current valuation, GQG Partners' shareholding in Patanjali Foods is worth nearly Rs 2,900 crore.

Last week, Patanjali Foods announced that its promoter



Patanjali Ayurved will sell up to 2.53 crore shares of the company through OFS in a bid to increase public float. The floor price was kept at Rs 1,000.

The two-day Offer For Sale (OFS) was launched on July 13-14 by promoter entity Patanjali Ayurved to pare its total stake in Patanjali Foods by around 7 per cent to meet the minimum public shareholding requirement.

Patanjali Ayurved's sale of shares of Patanjali Foods got oversubscribed more than two times at the end of the two-day offer on Friday.

The offer received bids for 76,34,567 shares from retail investors as against 25,33,964 shares on offer, translating into three times subscription on Friday.

On Thursday, 2.28 crore shares were offered for non-retail investors and cumulative bids for over 4.56 crore shares were received, reflecting two times subscriptions.

After the OFS, Patanjali Foods Ltd on Saturday said that the shareholding of its promoters has come down to 73.82 per cent from 80.82 per cent earlier.

In June, GQG Partners and other foreign investors bought close to USD 1 billion of additional stakes in Adani group companies.

Cars24 sells vehicles worth ₹1,800 cr in Apr-Jun

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Pre-owned vehicle sale, purchase and financing platform CARS24 on Wednesday said vehicles worth over Rs 1,800 crore were sold in the April-June quarter through its platform with as many as 30 vehicles getting sold at every hour during the quarter.

Hatchback models dominated the total sales with 62 per cent share during the June quarter of 2023 while the sedans made a stylish comeback. Also, non-metro cities challenged the dominance of metros in car purchases, as Pune and Ahmedabad experienced a surge in pre-owned car sales, it said.

The April-June quarter witnessed a remarkable surge in demand for pre-owned vehicles across the country. CARS24, in particular, achieved a substantial sales increase during this period, with an impressive 87 per cent leap compared to the same period in 2022, it said.



Also significant was the individuals selling cars worth Rs 1,800 crore to CARS24, reflecting the paradigm shift in Indian buyers trusting innovative car-buying and selling, the company stated.

The growing preference for affordability and value among customers, alongside the availability of flexible financing options and extended warranties, has established used cars as a practical alternative,

according to CARS24.

Moreover, the convenience of online marketplaces and digital platforms for buying and selling pre-owned vehicles has significantly improved the overall experience, it stated.

"It is exciting to witness such a remarkable surge in transactions within the used car market. In fact, during this quarter alone, people sold 30 cars every 60 minutes on our platform. Several key factors

have contributed to this rapid growth, including evolving consumer preferences, the availability of expanded inventory levels, the desire to upgrade to new-generation vehicles, among others," said Gajendra Jangid, Co-founder, CARS24.

With the ease of purchasing a car online, complete with financing and delivery options, the process has become more convenient than ever before, CARS24 said.

According to the platform, while hatchbacks continue to reign supreme, sedans have been quietly plotting their resurgence in the market.

In the second quarter, sedans experienced a notable uptick in sales, accounting for 19 per cent of total sales on the platform, it said.

Delhi tops as job hub, Kolkata lags behind

New Delhi: Key Indian cities witnessed significant job growth in 2022-2023, according to the data analysed by leading blue collar recruitment platform WorkIndia.

Delhi recorded 64 per cent more jobs and 45 per cent increased openings, Bengaluru displays 71 per cent job growth and 90 per cent total openings surge, while Kolkata lags with 43 per cent job growth and 8 per cent increased openings. Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Pune also experience notable employment growth.

Our findings shed light on the diverse demands across various sectors, said Nilesh Dunganwar, CEO and co-founder of WorkIndia.

India and China in race for top position in junior shooting worlds



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India were locked in a fight for the top position with toppers China on the third day of the ISSF Junior World Championships, with four golds in their kitty in Changwon, Korea on Tuesday. China has four gold medals, five and three bronze, while India has won four gold, three and three bronze medals. China bagged gold in the

women's 10m air rifle team event with a junior world record tally of 1892 by the trio of Wang Zifei, Fan Xinyi & Zhang Jiale. India won silver in the event as Gautami Bhanot, Sonam Maskar and Swati Chowdhury tallied 1886.8. Norway won bronze. Earlier in the day, Parth Mane, Abhinav Shaw and Dhanush Srikanth combined in the men's 10m air rifle team event to win India's only gold of the day.

The squad also picked up a silver through Raiza Dhillon in the women's skeet and a bronze through Umamahesh Madineni in the men's 10m air rifle individual competition. There are still six more competition days left in the tournament. The trio of Parth, Abhinav and Dhanush shot a combined total of 1886.7 in the men's 10m air rifle team event, to leave China behind

in second place, whose shooters managed a total of 1883.5. **KOREA WON BRONZE** This was also Abhinav's second gold of the tournament, given he had combined with Gautami Bhanot on Monday to win the 10m air rifle mixed team competition. In the men's 10m air rifle individual competition, besides Umamahesh, Abhinav and Dhanush also made the final top eight.

Abhinav, in fact, topped the 64-strong field with a score of 631.4, while Dhanush was third with 629.9. Umamahesh qualified in seventh position with a score of 627.9, but shot a brilliant final to claim bronze, ending after the 22nd shot with a tally of 229.0. He was 0.6 behind silver winning Chinese Wang Honghao at that stage and did not shoot a single score in the 9s. Romain Aufrere of France won gold. Abhinav finished fourth, while Dhanush finished sixth. In the women's 10m air rifle, Sonam Maskar was the only Indian finalist, finishing seventh eventually. In the women's skeet, Raiza just about bagged the sixth and final qualifying spot with a score of 110 after five rounds. She was, then, the slowest to start, missing four of her first seven targets, but came back brilliantly with 16 straight hits and missing just one of the next 27 targets to catch up with the leader. In the final, she missed a double, but rallied brilliantly yet again to miss just one of the next 22 to tie with leader Miroslava Hockova of Slovakia at 51 hits a piece after the stipulated 60-shots. In the resulting shoot-off, she missed her second target as Hockova struck both, for a deserving silver. In the men's skeet, Harmehar Laly shot 119, to be the lone Indian finalist among six, but eventually had to settle for fifth position.



Rory McIlroy is laying low ahead of the British Open as he tries to end his major drought

AP ■ HOYLAKE (ENGLAND)

The most telling comment from Rory McIlroy about this British Open, and his hopes of ending an astonishing nine-year drought in the majors, is that he said nothing at all. For the second straight major, McIlroy removed himself from the lineup of pre-tournament news conferences, instead offering a few vague quotes through the R&A and random interviews. The attention on him is greater than ever, on and off the golf course. He has been the strongest voice for the PGA Tour in its battle with LIV Golf, now shockingly a proposed partnership. Inside the ropes, he is coming off a win at the Scottish Open and now returns to Royal Liverpool, where he won wire-to-wire the last time the Open was here in 2014. Rain fell on the already green links of Hoylake on Tuesday, conditions that suited McIlroy in his previous four major titles, all of which led Pdraig Harrington to refer to McIlroy as a "person of interest" this week. "Everything seems to be setting up nicely," Harrington said. The question now is whether McIlroy is like other multiple major champions who collected all their trophies in a short period of time, or whether this nine-year drought is a long aberration. Harrington was one of those players, collecting his three titles in a span of six majors. Jordan Spieth won three legs of Grand Slam over three years. Nick Price won three out of nine majors at the height of his game and never got another. McIlroy won his four majors from the 2011 U.S. Open through the 2014 PGA Championship, and

he looked to just be getting started. He is 34, considered the prime years for a golfer, though he also is in his 16th full year as a pro. "Patience - it's a horrible thing for Rory," Harrington said. "Often times, you win your first, maybe they're two or three in there pretty quickly. From 10 years ago, there's more players around. It's not as free and easy, is it? It's not a foregone conclusion. "We keep seeing that - players come into the pomp of their career, they look unbeatable for a period of time, usually two seasons," he said. "Look, he can win any week and he's got to have good feelings going into Hoylake." Twenty-four players have won majors since McIlroy captured his last one at rain-soaked Valhalla in the 2014 PGA Championship, some multiple times - Brooks Koepka with five, Spieth with three, Jon Rahm, Collin Morikawa, Justin Thomas and Dustin Johnson with two each. It's not getting any easier. McIlroy returned to No. 2 in the world with his victory in the Scottish Open. He said he would have arrived at Hoylake with confidence even without winning based on his consistent play the last few months - six consecutive finishes in the top 10, including his runner-up finish in the U.S. Open last month that ran his drought to 33 majors without winning. Rahm won the Masters in April, adding to his U.S. Open title two years ago. "I can understand how when you get on a roll like that and win one, next time you're in position you win another, well, it's only fair to believe that the next one you're going to be ready to handle the moment," he said.



Mikael Ymer banned for 18 months by CAS after missing 3 out-of-competition doping tests

AP ■ LAUSANNE

Swedish tennis player Mikael Ymer was banned for 18 months on Tuesday for missing three out-of-competition doping tests in a 12-month period. The decision came from the Court of Arbitration for Sport after it partially upheld an appeal from the International Tennis Federation. "Having already been cleared once, and wholeheartedly standing by the fact that I do not feel that the third offense was committed, I find their decision to try me again and subsequently find me guilty, unfair," Ymer wrote on Twitter. "On top of that, I find it difficult to comprehend that they found an 18-month suspension to be a just punishment." Ymer, who also stressed that he has "never... Used nor been accused of using banned substances," was initially charged by the ITF in January 2022 after his third whereabouts violation, at a Challenger tournament in

France the previous November. He accepted his first two whereabouts failures but argued that in the third instance he had changed hotel but his agent had not made the necessary update. That was upheld by an independent tribunal, which cleared the player in June 2022. The ITF appealed that decision the following month, requesting a two-year ban for Ymer, and CAS imposed a slightly lower sanction, finding that "the degree of fault of the player, a professional and experienced athlete, was high." "I understand that these rules have been put in place to protect the integrity of our sport, and that they are there for a reason," Ymer said. "However, I do not believe I broke those rules, and my conscience is clear with God as my witness." Ymer is currently ranked 51st - one below his career-high - and reached the third round of Wimbledon after coming back from two sets down to defeat No.

Draw out for junior boys and girls' national football championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The boys' and girls' national football championships will be held in September, with 16 teams participating in both competitions. According to a release issued by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Tuesday, the tier 1 of the junior boys' national championship for Dr BC Roy Trophy and the junior girls' national championship will be held in Bhubaneswar. The 16 teams will be divided into four groups in tier 1, with the group winners progressing to the semi-finals.



The boys' event will be held from September 5 to 15, while the girls' will kick off on September 20, and the final will take place on September 30. The 2023-24 edition will mark the return of the BC Roy Trophy for the first time since the pre-COVID 2019-20 tournament, which saw Mizoram clinch their second successive title after a 5-4 penalty shoot-out victory over Punjab in Shillong. Dadra and Nagar Haveli emerged champions of the previous edition of the junior girls' competition in 2022-23, edging Bihar 1-0 in the final in Guwahati.

Rahm sees no need for PGA Tour players to be compensated after deal with Saudis over LIV Golf

AP ■ HOYLAKE

Jon Rahm will take the PGA Tour money for staying loyal if they give it to him. He doesn't really think he deserves it, though. Rahm said on Tuesday ahead of the British Open that the players who stuck with the tour don't have to be compensated financially for not joining LIV Golf, saying they were not forced to stay. Rahm won the first major of the year at the Masters and is looking to capture the last one as well to become the first Spaniard to win the Open since Seve Ballesteros more than three decades ago. The possibility of compensation by the tour for those who stayed loyal and declined the huge amounts of money offered by LIV Golf gained

traction after the recent announcement of the proposal of a partnership between the PGA Tour and the Saudis who created the breakaway competition. "I understand the PGA Tour wanting to do something for those players who helped and stayed on the PGA Tour, but at the same time - and I'll be the first one to say - I wasn't forced into anything," Rahm said at a news conference at Royal Liverpool. "It was my choice to stay. I just stayed because I think it's the best choice for myself and for the golf I want to play. Now, with that said, if they want to do it, I'm not going to say no." Rahm has been one of the most vocal defenders of the tour since the battle with LIV Golf started, and continued to defend it after the surprise

announcement of the deal with the Saudis. "We all had the chance to go to LIV and take the money and we chose to stay at the PGA Tour for whatever reason we chose," he said. "I already make an amazing living doing what I do. I'm extremely thankful, and that all happened because of the platform the PGA Tour provided me. They've done enough for me, and their focus should be on improving the PGA Tour and the game of golf for the future generations." Rory McIlroy, the strongest voice for the tour in the dispute with the Saudis, said last month that the loyal players probably deserved to be compensated, though he acknowledged that it would be difficult to make that happen. Rahm said it remained a

"tricky" situation and a "game of waiting," but felt that punishment for the defectors should be considered. "I do believe that some punishment should be in order," Rahm said. "But I don't know what - I'm not a politician. That's not my job. That's for the disciplinary board and other people that are paid to do that. My job is to hit the golf ball and try to do the best I can." Rahm, the world No. 3 who leads the tour with four wins this season, came to Royal Liverpool off a break after missing the cut at the Travelers Championship nearly a month ago. He acknowledged he hasn't played as consistent as he might have wanted recently, but the break was already planned in advance.



Messi takes to practice field for 1st time since signing with Inter Miami

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA)

Lionel Messi jogged a lap with his new teammates, took part in a warmup drill of players making short passes in a tight circle and before long tapped his left foot at a ball that wound up in the back of an open net. Inter Miami's new star wasted no time fitting right in. The World Cup winner and seven-time Ballon d'Or recipient as the world's best player took part in a training session with his new Major League Soccer club for the first time on Tuesday, three days after signing a 2 1/2 year contract that'll pay him between \$50 million and \$60 million a year. A helicopter hovered overhead, drones buzzed around the field and about 200 media members lined up toward the back of the complex to get a look at Messi. He, like newly signed Sergio Busquets - also a World Cup winner - went through a welcome tunnel as part of the first practice, which meant jogging past teammates as they lined up and clapped. Messi's first match is expected to be Friday, a Leagues Cup contest at home

against Cruz Azul. Some tickets are going for as little as \$275 or so on the secondary market; some of the very best seats are exceeding \$19,000. Prices have been fluctuating quite a bit and likely will continue doing so until game time. Then again, someone might get front-row tickets for \$1. Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, a Republican candidate for president, has asked backers to "consider making a \$1 donation" to get him on the debate stage - saying all such donors would be entered in a chance to be in the front row for Messi's debut game. Such is the power of Messi. Inter Miami hasn't won an MLS match in more than two months; it has gone 0-8-3 in MLS play since beating New England on May 13. Making the MLS playoffs are a long shot for Miami. But there is hope for other trophies, such as Leagues Cup - a tournament between teams from MLS and Mexico's Liga MX, with both leagues shutting down regular play for the competition - and the U.S. Open Cup. Inter Miami is in the semifinals of the U.S. Open Cup; it'll play Cincinnati in late August. The final of that tournament is in September.

Bengaluru FC sign English striker Curtis Main

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former Indian Super League champion Bengaluru FC, on Tuesday, announced the acquisition of English striker Curtis Main on a one-year deal. Main, who most recently turned out for St Mirren in the Scottish Premiership, began his youth career at Sunderland AFC, and is a product of the Darlington FC Academy. "I had a few conversations with the manager and I really liked how they went. He has a great reputation and has thus far done an excellent job at the club and hopefully I can come in and build on the success," said Main, after the completion of formalities on his deal. Born in South Shields, Main became the youngest player to represent Darlington when he came off the bench in a League

Two encounter against Peterborough at just 15 years and 318 days of age. Stints at Middlesbrough, Doncaster Rovers and Portsmouth followed with Main scoring five goals during his time at Fratton Park as Portsmouth gained promotion to League One in his first season. In 2018, Main made the move to Scotland with Motherwell. "He did very well last year for St Mirren and is a wholehearted striker who works extremely hard for his team, has good hold-up play and will be a valuable asset," said Blues' head Coach Simon Grayson. "He was desperate to come to India, despite having the opportunity to sign longer contracts in the UK as he wanted a new challenge."

It's going to be a hell of journey, says Sindhu welcoming new coach Hashim

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Double Olympic medalist P V Sindhu on Tuesday announced Malaysian Mohammad Hafiz Hashim as her new coach, saying he has all the traits, including the "pedigree" and "attacking instinct", that she was seeking ahead of next year's Paris Olympics. PTI had reported earlier that Sindhu had written to the Sports Authority of India (SAI), seeking its approval to train under the former All England champion Malaysian as part of the Sports Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). "HERE WE GO!! In typical Fabrizio style, I am thrilled to announce Hafiz Hashim as my new coach!!", Sindhu, who is currently in Yeosu for the Korea Open Super 500 tournament, wrote in a social media post. "After a long, drawn-out process, I am ecstatic to declare that I have chosen the incredible Hafiz Hashim as my coach. "Hafiz possesses all the traits I was seeking in a coach, including the height,



speed, and an attacking instinct. As a former All England champion in 2003, he sure has the pedigree as well. Having coach (Misbun) Sidek as his old coach, just adds this aura to him." Sindhu has been battling an inconsistent form and, with the Olympic qualification period for the 2024 Games having started from May 1, the Indian was looking for someone to guide her in her preparation for the Games, where she is eyeing the coveted gold. "I extend a warm welcome aboard,

Coach Hashim. Buckle up folks, it's going to be a hell of journey with captain Hafiz at the helm!!" Sindhu has looked off colour this season after returning from a five-month long injury layoff following a stress fracture on her ankle en route her Commonwealth Games gold in August last year. In February, the 28-year-old from Hyderabad parted ways with Korean coach Park Tae-Sang, who was instrumental in her winning the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. The highlight this season for her has been a final finish at the Madrid Spain Masters Super 300 and semifinal finishes at Malaysia Masters Super 500 and Canada Open Super 500. However, she made early exits from a series of events at the start of the year. The inconsistent run affected her ranking as Sindhu, the 2019 world champion, slipped out of the top 10 in April for the first time since 2016 and slumped to world number 17 on Tuesday in the latest BWF chart.

There won't be drastic changes in playing XI, says skipper Rohit

PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN

Indian captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday ruled out drastic changes in the winning combination ahead of the second Test against the West Indies but admitted that inclement weather hasn't helped in getting clarity about the Queens Park Oval track.

India won the first Test by an innings and 141 runs and unlike earlier times, the Indian skipper had made a refreshing change by announcing Yashasvi Jaiswal's debut and Shubman Gill's new batting position.

"In Dominica, we had a clear idea when we saw the pitch and knew the conditions. Here we don't have clarity as there is talk of rain, but I don't think there will be drastic changes. But whatever conditions are available, based on that, we will make that decision," Rohit said 48 hours before leading India to a historic 100th Test against the West Indies.

While the skipper didn't name anyone, the only weak link in the line-up is left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat, who didn't look as potent as Mohammed Siraj or Shardul Thakur in the opener.

As a new ball bowler, Rohit gave him only nine



overs across two innings of which only two overs were sent down by him in the second

innings. The Indian team management can't be blamed if

they have a third spinner in Axar Patel to make life miserable for the Caribbeans, or use

Mukesh Kumar's way more incisive swing bowling if conditions remain overcast.

The skipper, who got his 10th Test hundred in the first Test, was happy that youngsters like Jaiswal made full use of the opportunity by scoring 171 runs on debut.

Rohit believes that transition will happen in Indian cricket sooner than later but what role seniors play is important.

"Transition has to happen, whether today or tomorrow but I am happy that our boys who are coming in are doing well. And our role is important as we have to give them role clarity. Now it's up to them how they want to prepare and perform for the team."

"... And we rely on those individuals and obviously they are the future of Indian cricket and they will take Indian cricket to greater heights," Rohit said.

He also expects West Indies to bounce back in the landmark Test between the two countries.

"It's an honour to be taking the Indian team into this game and it doesn't happen every day. The two teams have so much history, so much of good cricket played."

"I will expect no different in this Test. I am sure they (Windies) will bounce back and it will be exciting for both teams."



Will NCA physios declare Bumrah 'fully fit' for Ireland tour?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Cricket Academy's sports science & medicine team is keeping no stone unturned to get Jasprit Bumrah back on the park ahead of the ODI World Cup but one can't say with certainty that he will be fully fit for next month's three-match T20-series against Ireland.

Even if the India pace spearhead goes to Ireland for the series beginning August 18, it is unlikely that the Gujarat speedster would play all three games, which will be held with a day's gap between each other.

Bumrah, 29, is recovering after a surgery to treat lower back stress fracture.

While the target is ODI comeback looking at the global event, the people in charge of overseeing Bumrah's 'RTP' or 'Return To Play' would want him to go through the paces starting with four-over spells.

However, it could be confirmed with some degree of certainty that the national selection panel led by Ajit Agarkar hasn't yet got a green light from physios and doctors that the Mumbai Indians man will be fit and available for the short Irish sojourn.

"There used to be an unwritten rule that if someone's coming back from a long lay-off due to an injury, he needs to play some domestic cricket to prove his fitness. I guess NCA and selection committee has made an exemption for him since he is not a part of West Zone squad for Deodhar Trophy games."

"Also it means that, till now, he is not match ready or else he would have played one Deodhar game," a BCCI source told PTI on condition of anonymity.

The squad for Ireland T20Is is likely to be announced few days later, giving Bumrah full chance at recovery.

"Before the Ireland selection meeting, the NCA physio will update Agarkar and Co with fitness report of all the players. If physio's report states that Bumrah, apart from bowling four overs, will also be able to field 16 overs and subsequently 40 overs (in ODIs) with full intensity, he will be selected."

"As per latest information, the panel hasn't received a green light from them," the source added.

"The selectors won't just see bowling fitness, they would also take into account if he is in a position to field in humid conditions in Sri Lanka during the Asia Cup. He might need to do a lot of work in the deep. So it is not just about 7-8 overs of bowling in the nets."

There has been reports that Bumrah has been bowling around 7 to 8 overs at the NCA but, unlike some of the other injured players, who have posted short videos of their return to skills training (batting bowling) on their social media handles, Bumrah has remained very guarded.

On Tuesday, there were a few still photographs of his bowling at the NCA but no videos, like one Shreyas Iyer posted of his batting and KL Rahul's knocking sessions.

The last video that Bumrah posted of his bowling full throttle was on December 16, 2022 at the NCA, when he was doing his previous rehab after missing the T20 World Cup.

Subsequently, he was named in the home series but had to pull out after not feeling hundred percent and was sent for a back surgery in New Zealand.

New book by former Indian cricket team manager Amrit Mathur gives glimpse of inner functioning of team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former administrative manager of the Indian cricket team Amrit Mathur has come up with his memoirs 'Pitchside: My Life in Indian Cricket', which gives an inner view of the workings of Indian cricket.

The new book will provide readers with a rare glimpse of the inner functioning of the team, where he relates interesting conversations, dressing room atmosphere, team meeting discussions, and on and off-the-pitch details of iconic moments.

Starting from the 1992 Friendship Tour in South Africa to the NatWest Series win in England in 2002, the book has details from the

ICC Cricket World Cup 2003 in South Africa, the India tour of Pakistan in 2004 to the inception of the Indian Premier League in 2008.

An experienced cricket administrator, Mathur was the manager of the India team on the historic tour of South Africa in 1992.

Later, he was part of PILCOM, the organising committee for the 1996 Cricket World Cup, also Chief Operating Officer of the Delhi Daredevils and General Manager of BCCI.

The book has been published by Westland Sports, an imprint of Westland Books.

The book is available in all major bookstores and online platforms from July 17 onward.

Struggling batters need to step up as India face embarrassing series loss

PTI ■ MIRPUR

Struggling Indian batters will need to find a way to play on a slow surface as they face Bangladesh in the second women's ODI in a bid to avoid an embarrassing series defeat here on Wednesday.

Spinners, especially leg-break bowlers, have troubled Indian batters through the Bangladesh tour and on Sunday they also found pacer Marufa Akter hard to negotiate as the fancied team suffered its first-ever loss to Bangladesh in ODIs.

Following that memorable victory and a win in the preceding final T20, Bangladesh now have the momentum and belief to script a famous series win over India.

India have a World Cup to play in Bangladesh next year and they need to learn how to accumulate runs on pitches where



the ball doesn't come on to the bat.

It has been a collective failure so far on the tour though India somehow managed to seal the T20 series.

Star batter Smriti Mandhana's showing has been a big disappointment and Priya Punia, who replaced Shafali Verma for the ODI series opener, too struggled in her comeback.

Both Yastika Bhatia and Jemimah Rodrigues have struggled to rotate strike and that has put them under extra pressure. In the absence of Richa Ghosh, no one has stepped up for the finisher's role with the team struggling to find boundaries.

Amanjot Kaur, who bowled well on Sunday, has a good opportunity to make an impact with the bat as well and give India a much needed finishing option.

Bowling coach Rajib Datta said there is no need to press the panic button.

"There is no need to be disappointed. The team did not execute its plans the way it wanted to. It is a team in transition phase and looking at combinations for the World Cup (next year)," he said.

India bowled 19 wides in the series opener and that should be a big area of concern.

"Extras are an issue. The girls are playing after four months. It is not a big issue, we will rectify," added Datta.

SQUADS

INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Harleen Deol, Devika Vaidya, Uma Chetry (wk), Amanjot Kaur, Priya Punia, Pooja Vastrakar, Meghna Singh, Anjali Sarvani, Monica Patel, Rashi Kanojia, Anusha Bareddy, Sneha Rana.

BANGLADESH: Nigar Sultana (C), Nahida Akter, Murshida Khatun, Fargana Hque, Sobhana Mostary, Shorna Akter, Ritu Moni, Lata Mondal, Disha Biswas, Marufa Akter, Sharmin Akhter, Sanjida Akter, Rabeya Khan, Sultana Khatun, Salma Khatun, Fahima Khatun, Shamima Sultana.

Ireland preparing for difficult debut in Women's WC opener against co-host Australia

AP ■ BRISBANE

Overwhelming demand for tickets meant co-host Australia's opening match at the Women's World Cup had to be shifted to the tournament's biggest stadium, where it's set to be played in front of an expected record crowd of 82,500.

Stepping into that cauldron to face the Matildas on Thursday is Ireland, on debut at the World Cup and playing in its first major global tournament.

"We feel like underdogs and we embrace it," Ireland forward Marissa Sheva said. "I think it gives us a little bit of energy and we know the pressure is not on us, it's on them for this game."

The match was initially scheduled for a smaller downtown stadium but had to be switched to Stadium Australia, at Sydney Olympic Park, which is also the venue for the Aug. 20 final.

"Ever since they moved stadiums we knew that it was going to be a massive crowd," Sheva said. "Having the opening game of the tournament against the hosts is an incredible opportunity."

The hype around Sam Kerr and the Matildas has been growing Down Under as the countdown to the tournament Australia is co-hosting with New Zealand gets closer to kick off.

Australia recalls Hazlewood, retains Warner and thinking of dropping Murphy for 4th Ashes test

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood will return to try and help them secure the Ashes series against England at Old Trafford this week with a match to spare.

Captain Pat Cummins also said on Tuesday the top five batters will remain but they were considering not playing rookie spinner Todd Murphy.

"That could mean a recall of first-choice allrounder Cameron Green, who was fit after missing the third test at Headingley with a hamstring issue."

Mitch Marsh filled in for Green and hit a brilliant century to pose a selection headache for the selectors.

Australia will confirm its side at the toss on Wednesday. Even after losing at Headingley by three wickets, Australia still leads the series 2-1.

Scott Boland will make way for Hazlewood after taking no wickets in Leeds. Boland has only two wickets in the series from the opening win at Edgbaston.

Hazlewood has eight wickets after also playing in the second win at Lord's. But he was rested from Headingley to manage his workload.

Retaining the top five means David Warner will continue opening. Warner is averaging 23.5 in six innings but has contributed to opening stands of 61, 73 and 63 with Usman Khawaja.

"(Warner) has been doing really well," Cummins said. "I thought at Lord's, he was really impressive. Last week, like many of us, he probably didn't contribute as much as he would have liked with the bat."

"He's been out there over the last couple of days putting in a lot of work, but I think this tour he has shown a lot of good signs and hasn't quite kicked on to make that big score. Some of those innings he's played under really tough circumstances has made it easy for (Steve) Smith to come in and score runs, or the like."

Australia has not gone into a test without a frontline slow bowler since January 2012 but with Nathan Lyon injured and Murphy considered more dispensable, it was considering a



significant change to the balance of the side. Playing Green and Marsh will shore up the batting but diminish their options in the field.

An all-seam attack will have to be complemented by Travis Head's spin.

Murphy bowled only 9.3 overs for one wicket at Headingley.

"It's all really conditions based," Cummins said. "I would have loved to bowl him a bit more but there wasn't a heap of overs in the game,

the ball seemed to swing and seam a little bit, so that's certainly something to weigh up this week."

It rained in Manchester most of Tuesday and was to clear early Wednesday. But rain was forecast to return on Saturday.

With Manchester in for a wet weekend, England captain Ben Stokes said he was open to gambling during the game seeing as they have to win again to force a series decider at the Oval.

"With the weather that's predicted, it might bring more out of us again knowing that we might have to push the game on even more than we normally do," Stokes said.

England named its side on Monday and made only one change, bringing back James Anderson at his home ground for Ollie Robinson.

Anderson has only three wickets at an average of 75 from the first two tests, but Stokes said his value wasn't only in wickets.

"When you're a quality performer like Jimmy has been for the last 10 years, he is going to be disappointed that he's not contributed to the team like he normally does," Stokes said.

"But I did say to him, Even if you're not taking wickets like you want to be doing, at the other end you see the pressure you're putting on the opposition."

"He holds an end up without that being his main obligation with the ball. You don't get as many wickets as him without having the odd bad game here and there - there's no issues whatsoever with Jimmy."

Indian women's hockey team loses 1-4 to hosts Germany

PTI ■ WIESBADEN (GERMANY)

The Indian women's hockey team suffered a 1-4 thrashing to Germany in the first of the two matches against the hosts here on Tuesday.

Youngster Vaishnavi Vittal Phalke (29) was the lone goal-scorer for India, while Nike Lorenz (6', 59') and Jette Fleschutz (14', 43') scored a

brace each in Germany's win.

The hosts began the match on an attacking note, putting Germany on the backfoot at the very beginning. They scored back-to-back goals in the first quarter mounting pressure on India's defence.

Germany's first goal came off Nike Lorenz's well-executed penalty corner while the team's second goal came off a penal-



ty stroke via Jette. Though the visitors tried to bounce back when they were awarded a PC in the 11th minute, the chance could not be converted.

However, in the second quarter, the Indian team emerged from the early setback with a well-structured game. While they didn't allow any goals by Germany, they successfully converted a PC in the 29th

minute through Vaishnavi.

With the score reading 2-1 at half time, Germany returned to the pitch with a plan to test the Indian defence.

While India lived up to the fight, an infringement by their defence while halting the German attack in the circle saw them concede a PC. Jette made no mistake in converting the opportunity and help her team

extend the lead to 3-1.

Though India found a few chances in the final quarter to score, the German defence was too strong to breach.

Meanwhile, Nike scored the fourth goal for Germany in the dying minutes of the game, taking the final score to 4-1.

India will again play against Germany on Wednesday

"When I went in to bat, I wanted to attack," Shakeel said. "If I had tried to be defensive we would have got bowled out for 150. That's the reason I attacked and was able to take the game deep."

"We have been working to play this kind of attacking cricket back in the camp at home. The coaching staff backed me. Pretty pleased with the effort."