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11 SPORT

Indian students in Canada get chance to prove fraud

Big relief for Indians victim of fraudulent admission letters & facing deportation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/TORONTO

The Canadian Government, amid a temporary suspension of the deportation of more than 700 Indian students, primarily from Punjab, has said it is working on a process to allow the students an opportunity to demonstrate that they were victims of exploitation.

This development comes as the students face potential deportation charges related to obtaining visas through fraudulent admission letters. The issue came to light when these students applied for permanent residency in Canada.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Monday, Sean Fraser, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, assured that the "innocent students who are the victims of fraud" would be given a chance to "prove that they were taken advantage of".

Fraser acknowledged the mental health concerns faced by many students due to the uncertainty surrounding their status and emphasised that the Government would establish a process for them to present their case and provide an



appropriate remedy.

Fraser's statement came in response to a query by Jenny Kwan, a member of the Opposition New Democratic Party, who raised concerns about the students' predicament. However, the Minister also reiterated that individuals involved in fraudulent schemes or complicit in such activities would face the consequences for violating Canada's laws.

India has consistently urged Canadian authorities to ensure fairness and adopt a humanitarian approach, given that the affected students were allegedly deceived by agents. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar confirmed that India has raised the issue with Canadian authorities and emphasised the need to take action against those responsible for misleading the stu-

dents, rather than punishing the students themselves. The Indian Government continues to engage with Canada on this matter.

Government sources in New Delhi reported that some Indian students facing potential deportation have received "stay orders" from Canadian authorities. They also clarified that the actual number of Indian students facing deportation is significantly lower than the initially reported 700.

Recently, a Canadian Parliamentary committee unanimously recommended that the border services agency halt the deportation of Indian students who were deceived by unscrupulous education consultants in India, resulting in their entry into the country with fraudulent college admission letters.

Jenny Kwan, who proposed the motion, argued on Monday that international students victimised by dishonest consultants should not be subjected to deportation and inadmissibility based on misrepresentation.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in response to a question by Indian-origin MP Jagmeet Singh regarding the fate of the Indian students, affirmed that the Government is fully aware of cases involving international students who face removal orders due to fraudulent college acceptance letters.

Trudeau emphasised that their focus is on identifying the culprits rather than penalising the victims, ensuring that individuals defrauded will have the opportunity to present evidence and demonstrate their situations.

Twitter faced closure threat, says Dorsey; Govt calls it 'outright lie'

'Twitter told to block a/cs linked with farm protest'; Thakur retorts Dorsey's charge a cover-up for his past misdeeds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has fired back at Jack Dorsey, the co-founder and former CEO of Twitter, following Dorsey's claim that the Indian Government exerted pressure on the platform to block accounts critical of the Government and covering farmers' protests.

Countering Dorsey's charge, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said "false allegation" was an attempt to cover up past misdeeds and Twitter's internal communications had exposed that the platform was "misused and there was bias and tinkering".

Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar too accused Twitter, under Dorsey's leadership, of repeatedly violating Indian law and, at times, weaponising misinformation.

The BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya also said Dorsey had violated the coun-



try's laws between 2020 and 2022 when he was at the helm of affairs.

In an interview late on Monday to YouTube channel Breaking Points, Dorsey spoke about the requests made by the Indian Government to Twitter.

When asked about the pressures he had received from foreign Governments during his time as CEO of Twitter, Dorsey disclosed that Twitter received numerous demands related to accounts associated with the farmers' protest and journalists who were critical of

the Government. The pressure from the Government reportedly involved threats of shutting down Twitter in India, conducting raids on employees' homes, and closing Twitter offices unless compliance was ensured.

These actions, as highlighted by Dorsey, raise concerns within the context of a democratic country like India.

"India is a country that had many requests of us around the farmer's protest, around particular journalists that were critical of the government, and

it manifested in ways such as 'we will shut Twitter down in India,' which is a very large market for us; 'we will raid the homes of your employees,' which they did; 'we will shut down your offices if you don't follow suit; and this is India, a democratic country,' he said.

Twitter's new CEO, Elon Musk, had also expressed similar views on India's social media regulations, referring to them as "strict." Musk previously stated his preference for complying with Government blocking orders rather than risking the imprisonment of Twitter employees.

The issue at hand draws attention to the challenges faced by Twitter in India, a crucial market for the platform. During the height of the farmers' protest in 2021, the Indian Government requested Twitter to remove approximately 1,200 accounts allegedly associated with the "Khalistan" movement.

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CAPSULE

5.4 MAGNITUDE QUAKE HITS J&K'S DODA

Doda/Bhaderwah: A 5.4 magnitude earthquake hit Doda in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday afternoon, forcing people in parts of the union territory to rush out of their homes in panic and causing damage to some buildings, officials said.

TAXI DRIVER SHOT DEAD IN DELHI OVER ENMITY

New Delhi: A 38-year-old taxi driver was shot dead inside his car by a man over personal enmity in Delhi's Dwarka area, an official said on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Dharendra, a resident of Gallopur. According to police, on Monday around 7:30 p.m., the incident of murder took place near Khaira mod.

AI GROUNDS 2 PILOTS FOR LETTING GIRL IN COCKPIT

New Delhi: In another incident, Air India on Tuesday grounded two pilots for inviting a female friend into the cockpit of a Delhi-Leh flight last week. This comes over a month after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) suspended the licence of an Air India pilot for three months for allowing a woman friend into the cockpit mid-air of Dubai to Delhi flight.

Best Bakery case: Mumbai court acquits two accused

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A Tuesday acquitted two accused in the case related to the 2002 Best Bakery massacre in Gujarat where 14 people had been killed during the post-Godhra riots.

Harshad Solanki and Mafat Gohil were acquitted of all charges by Additional Sessions Judge MG Deshpande.

During the earlier phase of the trial, eyewitnesses had specified the role played by some of the accused, based on which they were convicted. No such specific role was attributed to the present accused, the court said.

On March 1, 2002, two days after the Godhra train arson incident, a mob attacked and burnt down Best Bakery in Vadodara, killing 14 people. The mob's target was the Muslims who had taken shelter inside, including the Shaikh family that ran the bakery.

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PM Modi's US visit historic, will solidify bilateral ties: Blinken

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has hailed the upcoming State visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, describing it as a historic event. Blinken emphasised the undeniable and promising trajectory of the Indo-US partnership, stating that the visit will solidify the defining relationship of the 21st century, with economic ties playing a central role.

Making these assertions while addressing the annual India Ideas Summit of the US-India Business Council (USIBC) late Monday in Washington, Blinken said, "We know that India and the United States are big, complicated countries. We certainly have work to do to advance transparency, to promote market access, to strengthen our democracies, to unleash the full



potential of our people."

"But the trajectory of this partnership is unmistakable, and it is filled with promise. It is being written in places like North Carolina, where our growing engagement is benefiting both our countries," he said, as he highlighted several projects in the state benefiting both nations.

According to the top US diplomat, one North Carolina entrepreneur from Gujarat — commenting on this explosion of US-India commercial activity — observed "this couldn't have happened 15 years ago".

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Kukis slam peace panel, Meiteis hail committee

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Kuki members included in a committee set up by the Centre to facilitate the peace-making process among various ethnic groups of strife-torn Manipur expressed unhappiness, claiming they were not consulted before including their name in the panel.

Several Kuki organisations also raised objections to the inclusion of Chief Minister N Biren Singh in the 51-member panel headed by Governor Anusuiya UIkey.

The Meitei community members, however, welcomed formation of the Peace Committee. The apex body of Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) in a statement said its president has been included in the list of members "without prior and proper consultation and information".

"Kuki Inpi Manipur senses no rationale to pursue peace solely with individuals who have engineered the violence against its people... Peace must be the result of the concerted efforts of the Union Home Ministry and the affected communities. It cannot be a condition to impose normalcy," the KIM said. Kuki-based civil society organisation Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) has also condemned the inclusion of Chief Minister N Biren Singh in the panel.

Opp parties' graft, dynastic politics looted youth: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched a scathing attack on Opposition parties, accusing them of political corruption, nepotism, and malpractice in various employment schemes. He emphasised that the country must choose between "dynastic parties" that have allegedly looted the youth through corrupt practices or his Government, which aims to safeguard their prospects.

Addressing the newly appointed 70,000 Government employees at a virtual "Rozgar Mela" (Employment Fair), the Prime Minister spoke about the perils of dynasty politics and nepotism in the recruitment process. He highlighted a recent "cash for jobs" scam uncovered in one State and warned the youth to be cautious of such schemes.

Modi drew attention to the existence of a rate card for job postings, akin to a menu card in a restaurant. Without naming former railway minister Lalu Prasad, he referred to a "land for jobs" scam. The case is currently being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and is pending in court.

The Prime Minister cautioned the youth against political parties engaged in dynastic politics and accused them of exploiting job seekers. He con-



trasted these parties with his own Government, which he claimed is committed to safeguarding the future of the youth. Modi, without explicitly naming any party, used the "Rozgar Mela" platform to criticise the Congress and other Opposition parties, associating their time in power with political corruption, nepotism, and malpractice in various schemes, including the recruitment process. He credited his Government for ushering in a transparent and efficient employment system.

While making an apparent reference to reports of a "rate card" for Government jobs in West Bengal, governed by the

Trinamool Congress, Modi also took a dig at RJD leader Lalu Prasad, highlighting the criminal case against him for allegedly acquiring poor farmers' land in exchange for jobs during his tenure as Railway Minister.

The Prime Minister asserted that his Government has brought transparency and is putting an end to nepotism in the recruitment process since assuming power in 2014. He emphasised that India is now more stable, secure, and stronger than it was a decade ago, attributing this to the decisiveness of the Indian Government.

Continued on Page 2

Manjhi's son quits Nitish Cabinet over pressure to merge HAM into JD(U)

PNS ■ PATNA

Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) leader and Bihar Minister Santosh Kumar Suman on Tuesday resigned from the Cabinet alleging "pressure" from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) to merge the HAM founded by Suman's father and ex-CM Jitan Ram Manjhi.

His resignation was quickly accepted, signaling the end for the four MLAs strong HAM's presence in the ruling Mahagathbandhan.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, whom Suman had handed over his resignation, told reporters, "The letter of resignation speaks of the inability to stay together because of personal reasons."

"This clearly implies that HAM, of which Suman is the national president, ceases to be a constituent of the Mahagathbandhan," said



Chaudhary, who was accompanied by Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav and JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh "Lalan".

Tejashwi pointed out that it was his RJD which had helped Suman get elected to the legislative council in 2018, maintaining that he did not believe the contention that he was under any type of pressure.

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All on toes to get Somnath, Gir pride out of Biparjoy harm's way

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rain lashed several parts of Gujarat's Aravalli district on Tuesday as Cyclone Biparjoy, the first severe cyclone of the year, approached the coastal regions, posing a significant threat. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has highlighted the "extensive damaging potential" of Biparjoy, with Gujarat's Kutch, Devbhumi Dwarka, and Jamnagar expected to be the most affected areas.

The IMD has urged close monitoring of critical locations such as the Gir National Park, home to the endangered Asiatic lions, and prominent sites like the Somnath temple. In preparation for the cyclone, a total of 18 teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed across Gujarat,

with a focus on Kutch, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Porbandar, Somnath, Morbi, Valsad, Junagarh, and Diu. Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya held review meetings to ensure appropriate measures are in place.

During the video conference meeting, Home Minister Shah stressed the importance of promptly implementing critical directives provided by Prime Minister Modi during a review session held on June 12. The primary objective is to achieve zero casualties and mitigate potential damages. The meeting aimed to assess the preparedness for Cyclone Biparjoy and develop necessary strategies accordingly.

In a preventive measure, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) evacuated a 50-member crew from a jack-up rig in Gujarat



ahead of the expected landfall of severe Cyclone Biparjoy, according to an official statement issued by the defense ministry. The evacuation was conducted swiftly and effi-

ciently. To ensure passenger safety and maintain smooth train operations, a total of 69 trains have been cancelled, 32 trains have been terminated at short-

er distances, and 26 trains will start their journeys from shorter origins, according to Sumit Thakur, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway.

Speaking at a Press conference, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra emphasised the extensive damaging potential of Cyclone Biparjoy and the need for preparedness. The authorities continue to monitor the situation closely and take necessary actions to minimise the impact of the cyclone on the affected regions. "We won't be surprised if these areas record more than 25 cm of rainfall. Usually, they do not receive such intense precipitation at this time of the year. Therefore, there is a risk of flooding in the low-lying areas," he cautioned. "Up to six-metre-high tidal waves are likely to inundate low-lying areas of Saurashtra and Kutch coasts. We have recommended evacuation of the population in such areas and action is being taken," Mohapatra said.

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Take steps to prevent fires at landfill sites: Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai directed the departments concerned on Tuesday to take immediate steps to prevent fires at the landfill sites in the city. This comes after a fire broke out at the Ghazipur landfill.



The Minister said the city Government is committed to preventing such incidents in the future. "Fires are reported from landfill sites in Delhi during the summer season every year. Following the recent incident at the Ghazipur landfill site, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Delhi Fire Services have been instructed to strictly adhere to the existing norms and instructions to prevent and manage such incidents. The aim is to avert the occurrence of such fires and take prompt action to extinguish them if they do occur," a statement quoted the minister as saying.

According to experts, organic waste dumped in a landfill produces methane when it rots. In hot weather conditions, methane catches

fire spontaneously and the blaze spreads as it feeds on combustible material, such as textiles and plastic.

"A standard operating procedure has been developed to prevent such fire incidents. To ensure a strict implementation of this SOP, all departments concerned have been instructed to maintain a 24x7 vigilance," Rai said. Measures taken by the city government to prevent fires at the landfill sites include deployment of personnel, fire tenders and CCTV cameras, a ban on the entry of unauthorised persons and rag-pickers, monitoring of the sub-surface temperature and declaring the area a no-smoking zone.

Rai launched a nine-point action plan last year to prevent

NEET UG 2023 results announced



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the results of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) UG 2023 on Tuesday. The score cards for NEET UG 2023 are available at the official website — neet.nta.nic.in.

The NEET UG was conducted at 4,097 centres across 499 cities in India and 14 cities abroad on May 7 and at 34 centres across 11 cities on June 6. A total of 11.45 lakh candidates out of 20.38 lakh have qualified the exam. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of qualifying candidates (1.39 lakh) followed by Maharashtra (1.31 lakh)

and Rajasthan (over 1 lakh).

The examination was conducted in 13 languages (Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu).

The examination was also conducted outside India in Abu Dhabi, Bangkok, Colombo, Doha, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, Manama, Muscat, Riyadh, Sharjah, Singapore along with Dubai and Kuwait City.

"The NTA has provided all India rank to the candidates and the admitting authorities will draw a merit list based on the ranks for the seats of MBBS and BDS falling under their jurisdiction.

NDMC creating 'waste-to-wonder' park ahead of G20 summit

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As part of the beautification drive for the upcoming G20 summit here, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is building a 'waste-to-wonder' park and installing water fountains at several intersections in the national Capital.

With India presiding over the G20 bloc for a year, the beautification project will enable the NDMC to showcase Delhi's unique heritage, NDMC Vice-Chairman Satish Upadhyay said.

A 'waste to wonder' park is being built in Delhi's upmarket Shanti Path, which will exhibit sculptures made of scrap material. The different sculptures will depict the national animals and birds of all the G20 countries. These art pieces for the G20 park have been conceptualised and curated by a team of renowned national-level artists with experience in waste-to-wonder projects, Upadhyay said.

"Alongside each piece, an information plate will be placed mentioning the animal, its real picture and its importance for the country con-



cerned. The details of the artists will also be displayed," the NDMC vice chairman said.

The NDMC has also erected four sculptures made out of waste material at different intersections in the city, while the installation of fountains is in progress, Upadhyay said.

"As part of the planned renovation works, the tiles on the footpath are being renovated and paint work is underway across New Delhi," Upadhyay said. Connaught Place, the heart of the city, is also undergoing a revamp, which is likely to be completed by July, he added.

"The conservation and restoration of Connaught

Place include repair works and exterior painting of all buildings in the outer and inner circles and radial roads," the NDMC vice chairman said.

India assumed the year-long presidency of G20 on December 1. More than 200 meetings are scheduled to be held at 55 locations across the country and the summit will be hosted in Delhi in September 2023. The G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US, and the European Union.

PM Modi's US visit historic, will solidify...

From Page 1

Blinken has said economic ties are at the heart of the Indo-US strategic partnership, and under the leadership of President Biden and Prime Minister Modi "and private sector leaders like you -- it is growing stronger by the day". Blinken added that last year, trade between the two countries reached a record USD 191 billion, making the US the largest trading partner for India. American companies have invested at least USD 54 billion in India -- from manufacturing to telecommunications.

In the US, he said, Indian companies have invested over USD 40 billion -- in IT, pharmaceuticals and more -- supporting 4,25,000 jobs from California to Georgia. This February, Air India announced the historic purchase of more than 200 Boeing aircraft that will support an estimated one million-plus jobs across 44 States, Blinken said.

"We're here ahead of a historic State visit by Prime Minister Modi -- one that will further solidify what President Biden has called a 'defining relationship' of the 21st century," Blinken said.

"We see this defining rela-

tionship in our unique connection as the world's oldest and largest democracies, with a special obligation to demonstrate that our Governments can deliver for and empower all our citizens."

Blinken said both the US and India are making transformative investments in their own countries -- through Biden's USD 1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Modi's Rs 100-trillion infrastructure plan -- to make their respective economies more productive and attractive for investors.

"India has joined three pillars of our new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework -- committing to build more resilient supply chains, seize clean energy opportunities and combat corruption," he said.

"Together, we are helping shape the innovations of the future and the norms governing them -- from artificial intelligence to quantum computing," Blinken said and added that in January, USIBC co-hosted a roundtable where the two Governments inaugurated a new Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies.

"We're elevating and expanding the strategic technology partnership between

Governments, businesses, and academic institutions in the US and India because we believe how technology is designed and used should be informed by democratic values and respect for human rights," he said.

Central to that cooperation is diversifying and deepening the supply chains with trusted countries while also reducing strategic dependencies, he said.

Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and her counterpart Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal recently established a partnership to make the semiconductor supply chain more resilient.

In Tamil Nadu, the US International Development Finance Corporation provided USD 500 million to help a leading US company build a solar manufacturing facility.

The project will power roughly 30 million light bulbs in homes, schools, and businesses across India, create over a thousand jobs for Indians and Americans, and shift a key component of the US' clean energy supply chain to a close partner, the top diplomat noted.

On the strength of bilateral ties, Blinken said, "The road

that we've travelled over the last 25 years has been quite extraordinary, and I think it's a testament to the importance that we attach to the relationship that it's a road that has gone through multiple administrations -- Democrat and Republican."

He said the people of the two nations share deep bonds, "but maybe most important here in the United States is an Indian American diaspora over 4 million strong and growing stronger every day."

The US and India's education systems have produced the leaders of some of our most iconic companies -- from Google to Infosys to -- not to mention former Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga, who is now the new president of the World Bank and onetime president of the USIBC, he said.

Indian Americans have created a third of all immigrant-founded startups in the United States. "Think about that for a minute. That is extraordinarily powerful," Blinken said.

"We see the importance of the partnership in a shared commitment to addressing regional and global challenges -- promoting health security, working with our Quad part-

ners to build a free, open, secure, prosperous Indo-Pacific where people, where goods, where ideas can travel freely and rules are applied fairly," he said. Whether it's investing and inventing new technologies, combating the climate crisis and helping to build more inclusive economies, Blinken said he has tremendous confidence that the rising generation of Indians and the rising generation of Americans will take the bilateral relationship to new heights.

He again expressed the deepest condolences of the United States to the victims of the terrible train crash in Odisha's Balasore which killed more than 280 people.

"I had an opportunity to speak to my friend Foreign Minister Jaishankar when we -- just shortly after the accident, and just to convey to him how much it had resonated here in the United States as we saw the images and to let him know that we stand with the people of India as they recover from this human tragedy."

He praised India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, for his remarkable work in advancing the relationship between the two nations and their people.

Manjhi's son quits Nitish Cabinet over pressure to merge HAM into...

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"I have been witness to the respect they got from the Chief Minister. Manjhi was made the chief minister (in 2014) by Nitish Kumar who also made his son a minister two and a half years ago and helped the latter retain his ministerial berth last year, when HAM followed JD(U) in quitting NDA and joining Mahagathbandhan," said Yadav.

Lalan ridiculed the contention of Suman, who held SC and ST welfare portfolio, that JD(U) was putting pressure for a merger. "When two parties are aligned together, talks centre around many topics. Of course, we were of the view that it was no point in their party surviving like a tiny shape and they would only grow stronger if they merge. But it was for them to accept or reject the proposal.

How could anybody have forced it on them?" said Lalan.

He also asserted that the development was no setback to the meeting of Opposition parties scheduled here on

June 23.

Speculation are rife that the development, which marks the third resignation of a minister since the Mahagathbandhan government was formed in August last year, has led to fresh demands for an expansion of the cabinet.

Earlier, two ministers from the RJD quota, Kartik Kumar and Sudhaker Singh, had resigned because of different reasons. JD(U) MLA Ratnesh Sada, a Dalit leader from Sasaram district, was summoned to the chief minister's residence, triggering speculation that he might be inducted as Suman's replacement.

Congress legislature party leader Shakil Ahmed Khan, whose party is the third largest constituent of the Mahagathbandhan, and expects at least one more berth in addition to the two it holds, told PTI, "Cabinet expansion is expected for quite some time and whenever it takes place, it will be good for the ruling coalition."

Best Bakery: Mumbai...

From Page 1

In 2003, all 21 people who faced trial in the case were acquitted by a court in Vadodra. The verdict was confirmed by the Gujarat High Court. Zahirabibi Shaikh, one of the victims, along with an NGO moved the Supreme Court against the judgment.

The SC in 2004 ordered reinvestigation by the police and a fresh trial in Maharashtra instead of Gujarat.

The sessions court in Mumbai convicted nine out of 17 people accused of murder in February 2006. In 2012, the Bombay High Court acquitted five of those convicted for want of evidence but upheld the conviction of four others who had been sentenced to life by the trial court.

Solanki and Gohil were shown absconding in the Best Bakery case as they were facing trial in the Ajmer blast case.

They were produced before the Mumbai court in 2017 to face trial in this case after the conclusion of the blast case trial. Two other accused died during the course of the retrial and the case against them abated.

All on toes to get Somnath, Gir pride out of Biparjoy harm's...

From Page 1

Authorities on Tuesday shifted 21,000 people from coastal areas to temporary shelters two days before Biparjoy's expected landfall near Jakhau port in Gujarat's Kutch district.

Biparjoy weakened from an extremely severe cyclone to a very severe cyclone on Tuesday. It is predicted to cross Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat and the adjoining Pakistan coasts between Mandvi in Gujarat and Karachi in Pakistan near the Jakhau Port (Gujarat) around the evening of June 15 as a very severe cyclonic storm with a maximum sustained wind speed of 125-150 kmph. A landfall often carries heavy winds, lashing rains, increasing sea level that can pose a threat to people living in the neighbouring region.

"The cyclone is expected to move nearly northwards till

June 14 morning, and then turn north-northeast wards and cross Saurashtra and Kutch and adjoining Pakistan coasts between Mandvi (Gujarat) and Karachi (Pakistan) around evening of June 15 as a very severe cyclonic storm with maximum sustained wind speed of 125-135 kmph gusting to 150 kmph," said Mohapatra.

Wind speed in Kutch, Devbhumi Dwarka, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Junagarh and Morbi on June 15 morning is expected to be around 125-135 kmph and gusting to 145 kmph later. Wind speed in remaining districts of Saurashtra Coast and

North Gujarat could be around 45-55 gusting to 65 kmph.

The cyclone could lead to extremely heavy rainfall (over 20 cm) at isolated places in Kutch, Devbhumi Dwarka, Jamnagar and Porbandar districts from June 13 to June 15. Rajkot, Morbi and Junagarh may receive heavy to very heavy rainfall.

Sea conditions are phenomenal (waves could be 10 to 14 metres high) in the north-east and the adjoining east-central Arabian Sea. The IMD has recommended total suspension of all activities, including oil exploration, ship movement and fishing, until June 15.

The IMD warned that Cyclone Biparjoy might destroy thatched houses and cause extensive damage to kutcha houses. It might damage pucca houses, too. There could be potential threat from flying objects, bending and uprooting of power and communication poles, flooding of escape routes, disruption of railways, overhead power lines and signaling systems due to the cyclone.

There could be widespread damage to standing crops, plantations and orchards. Visibility could get impacted due to spray from salt pans that dot the Saurashtra and Kutch coasts.

Opp parties' graft, dynastic politics looted youth...

From Page 1

Modi stated that the "Rozgar Mela" has become synonymous with the BJP and NDA Governments.

Addressing concerns regarding language promotion, particularly in south

India, he accused certain political parties of exploiting the issue to create conflicts and divisions.

He assured that the Government aims to empower people by providing employment opportunities regardless

of language barriers.

In conclusion, Prime Minister Modi highlighted the world's trust in India and its economy, stating that the entire world is eager to partner with India on its growth journey.

Twitter faced closure threat, says Dorsey; Govt calls it 'outright lie'

From Page 1

Additionally, over 250 accounts were flagged for removal. Although Twitter initially complied by blocking some accounts, it later unblocked them, leading to dissatisfaction within the IT ministry.

The platform's subsequent stance, citing the importance of freedom of speech, was met with criticism from the government, which argued that Twitter cannot assume the role of a court and justify non-compliance.

In May 2021, tensions escalated when Twitter flagged posts by leaders of the ruling party as "manipulated media." Following this, the Delhi Police's Special Cell, operating under the Union

Home Ministry, visited Twitter India's offices in Delhi and Gurugram to serve a notice to the social media platform.

Countering allegations made by Dorsey, Thakur said it was an attempt to cover up "past misdeeds" and that Twitter's internal communications had exposed that the platform was "misused and there was bias and tinkering".

Thakur said many "foreign forces" get active at the time of elections to vitiate the democratic process and build tension, but such attempts have failed in the past and would not succeed in the future also.

"Such elements within the country and abroad will never be able to destabilise the

nation which is being led by a strong leader," the Minister told reporters at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh.

"Dorsey has woken up after deep slumber and is making allegations to cover up his black deeds," he said.

Malviya said that under Dorsey the firm had turned "rogue, disregarding laws of the sovereigns they operated in, muzzling freedom of speech (shadow banning ideologically differing voices) and in many cases promoting secessionist voices and those who were working to exacerbate social fault lines, including several Twitter employees (Dorsey himself is guilty of it)..."

He said 'Twitter Files', released after Musk got rid of

"toxic people" in Twitter, is a testimony.

"It can't be the case that Twitter was always in the right and every other Government, including their own, in the US, was wrong," said Malviya.

"But neither was Twitter ever shut down nor its employees raided or sent to jail, despite Dorsey and his colleagues actively pursuing a policy, which was at loggerheads with Indian regulations.

They were also allowing their platform to be used by foreign forces inimical to India's interest, on several occasions, which posed grave threat to India's national security and well being," said Malviya.

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I, SMT. KARUNA PATEL is the purchaser / Owner of Property bearing No. B-85, Kirti Nagar (WHS), New Delhi vide File No. F.9 (142)/77/LSB/II. I lost/misplaced Original Allotment Letter and Possession Letter of the above said property. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, vide LR No. 547858/2023 dated 13/06/2023 any person claiming any right, interest having any objection may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9716358109 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (INDUSTRIAL) or Asstt. Director (INDUSTRIAL), A-Block, First Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैके. शाखा)
द्वितीय निविदा सूचना

क्र. 513/के.कर्म./2023
नगर निगम भोपाल केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला के द्वारा हाईड्रा/क्रेन एवं रोलर किराये पर लिये जाने हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्र. निविदा क्र.	सामान का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत	घरोहर राशि	निविदा फार्म का मूल्य	प्रदाय अवधि
1.	2023_UAD 274764_2 ESTIMATED FOR HIRING OF HYDRA/CRANE AND ROLLER AT MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL (SECOND CALL)	15000000/-	750000/-	125000/-	मौज अनुसार

BID SUBMISSION END DATE- 26.06.2023 TIME- 03:00 PM
BID OPENING DATE- 27.06.2023 TIME- 03:00 PM

निविदा से संबंधित अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाइट mptenders.gov.in पर देखी एवं केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैकेनिकल) से कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

अपर आयुक्त
परिवहन शाखा
नगर निगम भोपाल

फ़ोन: 476/023/024

Now, Delhi to have food trucks like NY, UK, HK

GOVT OK'S PILOT PROJECT FOR 16 SPOTS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhiites will soon be able to find their favourite street food till as late as 2 am as the Arvind Kejriwal Government has granted in principle approval to its ambitious 'Food Truck Policy'. This will be on the lines of the food truck concept in western cities especially New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Australia, Singapore, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. As a pilot project, Food Trucks will start functioning at 16 locations at first, then the model will be replicated across the Capital.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took to Twitter to announce the introduction of the 'Food Truck Policy' in Delhi. As per the tweet, the policy was approved during a meeting on Tuesday.

"This plan will allow the citizens of Delhi to enjoy delicious meals even late at night. Additionally, it will create opportunities for employment on a large scale and strengthen the economy," the tweet further read. Recognising the immense potential of the food truck industry, Kejriwal emphasised the positive impact it would have on employment generation and the economy as a whole.

The primary objective of the Delhi Food Truck Plan is to establish Delhi as the 'Food Truck Capital'. The Delhi Government intends to support small businesses through this policy, while simultaneously generating employment opportunities and boosting the night-time economy of the city. Delhiites will soon have the convenience of relishing delectable cuisines at any time, fostering the growth of the food truck culture in the capital.



PWD Minister Atishi also revealed that the Kejriwal government is all set to implement the Food Truck Policy, which will not only generate employment opportunities but also contribute to the city's economy during nighttime. "The plan includes the establishment of food courts in different areas of Delhi, where multiple food trucks can operate collectively. Additionally, dedicated food hubs will be developed to cater to the needs of Delhi's residents, fostering economic growth and the employment prospects during nighttime," Atishi said.

Initially, the PWD department of the Delhi government has identified 16 locations, including renowned marketplaces and neighbourhoods across different districts of Delhi, for the establishment of these food truck hubs. Upon successful implementation, the model will be replicated across Delhi, extending the reach of this unique culinary experience across neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the introduction of

food hubs across Delhi stands as a testament to the government's dedication to bolstering India's food culture. These hubs will serve as focal points for culinary enthusiasts and provide a platform for local vendors and aspiring entrepreneurs to showcase their delectable creations. The Food Truck Policy prioritises the maintenance and upkeep of these food hubs, with the responsibility for their operation and maintenance entrusted to a designated agency. This agency will ensure the cleanliness and proper organisation of the food hubs and also ensure that all food trucks operate exclusively within the government-designated food hubs.

Currently there are no food trucks in Delhi. There are only shops that are given the shape of trucks but these will be proper food trucks. We will have concessionaires who will bring in different vendors along with these trucks and they will be responsible for clearances and other things," the official said.

90K streetlights to kill Capital's dark spots

Kejriwal approves proposal that will bolster women's security



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to bolster women's security, the Kejriwal Government has decided to install smart street lights all over Delhi to eliminate dark spots. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday granted in principle approval to the Smart Street Light Policy. Under this policy, the Kejriwal Government will install a staggering 90,953 smart street lights throughout the national Capital, covering a wide range of areas to eliminate dark spots.

This will enhance safety by reducing incidents of crimes against women in poorly-lit areas. This extensive installation will include all Public Works Department (PWD) roads, ensuring comprehensive coverage across the city.

The proposal was presented by Cabinet Minister Atishi before the CM during a high-level meeting at the Delhi Secretariat. During the meeting the Public Works Department (PWD) presented the Smart Street Light Scheme to the Chief Minister. PWD officials provided a comprehensive overview of the project, highlighting the outdated technology used in existing street lights, which made it challenging to procure spare parts and led to excessive energy consumption. Consequently, electricity bills soared due to increased usage. Additionally, the manual monitoring of the current street lights made it difficult to address complaints promptly, as real-time monitoring was lacking.

Commenting on the street light policy, Kejriwal stated that the Delhi Government is doing whatever it can in its purview to tighten women's security. "Smart street lights will play a pivotal role in eliminating dark spots and instilling a sense of safety among our citizens, particularly women, he added.

To ensure the uninterrupted functioning of the smart street lights, the Chief Minister highlighted the implementation of a robust central monitoring system. In the event of any fault or malfunctioning street light, the control room will be promptly alerted, triggering immediate replacement measures. This proactive approach guarantees a swift response and maintenance, ensuring that no dark spots persist in the city. The government has adopted the Energy Service Company (ESCO) model for the Smart Street Light Policy, centralising the control of smart lights. This central control will enable the control room to promptly identify and rectify any faulty lights. Moreover, many lights remain illuminated during the day on various roads, leading to unnecessary electricity wastage. The scheme aims to address this issue and reduce electricity wastage.

Under the Energy Service Company (ESCO) model, the PWD's electricity bill is expected to be reduced by approximately 50 percent. The savings from reduced electricity bills and maintenance costs will be shared with the concessionaire. Out of the total 90,953 smart LED street lights, 59,572 traditional lights will be replaced with smart LED lights, while 31,381 existing LED lights will be converted into smart street lights. The ESCO agency will bear the maintenance costs for a period of 7 years.

A centralised control monitoring system will be established for effective oversight. The command centre will monitor the operational status, electricity consumption, fault detection, light intensity, historical data logging, Geographic Information System (GIS) integration, and more. The system will also provide information on timers, scheduling, dimming control, and alarm notifications.



Water bill settlement scheme from Aug 1

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will bring a one-time settlement scheme for the water bills of 11.7 lakh domestic consumers who have arrears.

Addressing a Press conference at the Delhi Secretariat, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced the Government's plans to implement the scheme from August 1 and said the consumers would receive corrected bills after that. "There has been a severe accumulation of water bills. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meter readings could not be taken. Meter readers filed false readings and therefore, people received wrong bills. There are 27.6 lakh domestic meters in Delhi and of these, 11.7 lakh bills have arrears and they have not been submitted. The arrears are to the tune of Rs 5,737 crore," he said.

Explaining the scheme, the Chief Minister said it will be divided into two sub-heads — one will cover those who have two or more correct readings and the other will cover those who have one or no correct meter reading.

"Had we gone about correcting every bill, it would have taken us more than 100 years to rectify those. Through this scheme, we will settle the bills of 11.7 lakh consumers. In fact, of these 11.7 lakh consumers, seven lakh will get zero bills following the implementation of the scheme," he said.

Kejriwal said the scheme has been approved by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and will come to the cabinet soon. After the implementation of the scheme, the consumers will be given three months to pay the bills. "If they fail to pay the bills within the three months, they will have to pay the bills with arrears," Kejriwal said. He added that the government is taking steps to stop wrong meter readings.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP slammed the Kejriwal government for failing to improve the functioning of the jal board. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that DJB has become a white elephant under Kejriwal Government. "On one hand it is a source of corruption & theft of government revenue while on the other hand it is looting and harrasing consumers too. During the last five years Kejriwal government has every year brought the so called One Time Bill Settlement Schemes for water consumers but despite that the number of unsatisfied consumers has not gone down. Since 2017-18 till day if we recall the CM's or Water Minister's announcements the number of aggrieved consumers in every year-ly announcement hovers around 11 lakhs," Sachdeva said. Delhi BJP President has demanded that Delhi Jal Board should immediately replace all Automatic Air Flow Meters with IP 68 Meters or any such compatible meter as being demanded by RWAs across the city.

Heat pushes city's power demand up to 7,055 MW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The scorching heat and dry weather on Tuesday pushed the peak power demand to 7055 megawatt (MW) in the national Capital. This is the first time this summer that power demand has crossed the 7,000 MW-mark.

According to the State Load Dispatch Center (SLDC) real time data, the power demand crossed 7098 MW at 3:29 PM on Tuesday.

The power distribution companies — BRPL (BSES Rajdhani Power Limited) and BYPL (BSES Yamuna Power Limited) — "successfully" met the peak power demand — 3103 MW and 1615 MW, respectively in their areas.

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) has successfully met the power demand of 2,055 MW peak demand so far, said a company spokesperson. According to sources, Delhi's peak power demand has seen huge variations this month. It has increased from 4390 MW on June 1 to today's high — an increase of 2708 MW or 61 per cent.

Delhi reeled under hot weather conditions on Monday with the maximum temperature settling at 42 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature on Tuesday around 42 degree Celsius while several weather stations have recorded



43-44 degree Celsius.

Last year in June, there were nine such occasions when Delhi's power demand exceeded 7000 MW, with June 29 setting an all-time high record of 7695 MW. Additionally, June 2022 saw the power demand crossing the 6000 MW mark on 11 occasions and the 5000 MW mark on 8 occasions.

In 2018, the peak power demand breached the 7000 MW mark for the first time, reaching a peak of 7016 MW. The expected peak power demand of around 8100 MW in the present year represents a staggering increase of approximately 280% compared to the peak power demand of 2879 MW recorded in 2002.

Sources said to meet the power demand of approximate-

ly 2 crore residents in South, West, East, and Central Delhi, the BSES discoms have made extensive preparations. These arrangements include long-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and banking arrangements with other states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. Through these arrangements, BSES discoms can procure up to 630 MW BRPL (up to 330 MW) and (up to 300 MW) of power.

It further said that green power will play an important role in ensuring reliable power during the summer months in BSES area.

This includes around 888 MW of solar power from SECI, 486 MW of wind power, 40 MW from Waste-to Energy. BSES efforts in ensuring reliable power are also being helped by 130 MW+ of roof-top solar installed on roof-tops in South, West, East and Central Delhi.

Additionally, BRPL will also procure upto 500 MW through bilateral contract. In case of any unforeseeable contingency, BSES discoms will buy short-term power from the exchange, depending on the time-slot. Adding to these efforts are the advanced load-forecasting statistical and modeling techniques, which use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to help the discom accurately forecast the power demand.

L-G to adopt, develop four more villages

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With positive results coming after developing Qutabgarh Village in North West Delhi as a model village, Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has decided to adopt four more villages — Nizampur, Jaunti, Rawta and Deorala. They will have ample civic infrastructure, preservation of heritage, livelihood opportunities, scientific livestock management, healthcare, proper land use and water management among others.

The Raj Niwas said here on Tuesday that Nizampur, Jaunti (in Kanjhawala in North West Delhi) and Rawta, Deorala (in Kapashera in South West Delhi) will be developed on the model of Qutabgarh Village for which the initiatives are under progress.

According to the Census of 2011, Nizampur and Jaunti has population of about 6,000-7,000 and 8,000-9,000 respectively while Rawta and Deorala have 2,933 and 524 people respectively. The Raj Niwas said on the model of Qutabgarh, all efforts will be made for improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in these four villages of the national Capital.

Various issues concerning these villages including water issues, agriculture issues, gender issues and health issues besides will be addressed on priority basis like in the Qutabgarh village. Under the aegis of the Lieutenant Governor, initiatives



for developing Qutabgarh as a model village was started in September, 2022 with the plantation of 1,000 saplings of sandalwood by 500 farmers.

Later, Saxena once again visited Qutabgarh village on April 13, 2023 and distributed 2,000 guava and grapes saplings (1,000) to the villagers.

During the onsite inspection, Saxena had directed concerned officials to undertake all possible steps to develop Qutabgarh into a model village, while adhering to the stipulated time frame.

He had said once Qutabgarh is developed into the first model village, the same model of development will be replicated in other villages. The initiatives under progress to develop Qutabgarh into a model village included the following and the other four villages will be developed on similar lines.

The steps included upgradation of the MCD dispensary

to a poly clinic, a post office is being set up in the village, introduction for the first time of science stream in the local government school, 544 LED street lights have been installed in the village till now.

Moreover, the DDA is developing two ponds in the village. Also, the DDA is developing four new parks with open gym in two parks. Sixty local farmers have been trained at Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in efficient irrigation mechanism and organic farming.

The Irrigation and Flood Control Department has installed sign boards and village maps in Qutabgarh. District Administration has conducted Youth Aspiration Survey, so as to assess the skill requirement and other vocational guidance required by the local youths for their livelihood and career prospects. New Bus routes have been added to strengthen local public transport.



Bike-taxi aggregators to be told to stop ops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Tuesday said it will ask bike-taxi aggregators to stop operations in the national Capital till a policy is notified, a day after the Supreme Court stayed a High Court order that had allowed them to ply. Transport Commissioner Ashish Kundra said the Government will write to aggregators and also appeal to them through the media to comply with the apex court order or face action.

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the High Court order that allowed bike-taxi aggregators Rapido and Uber to operate in the national Capital. The SC's ruling is binding on all, Kundra said.

"The submission of the department in the court was that we have already floated a draft scheme and the scheme is going to be finalised soon. In absence of any scheme and regulatory framework, the companies are overstepping their mandate by offering such services in absence

of any permits or registration from the Transport Department," he said. Kundra said the companies are free to give their comments on the proposed policy on bike-taxi aggregators, and the government will take a decision after taking a comprehensive view of various aspects.

"Those issues have to be incorporated while finalising the policy. We will be writing to them. These are responsible companies and they should advise their driver partners to desist from operations till they have due authorisation and registration. It is unfortunate that in continuing such operations, they are jeopardising the economic prospects of such people who are associated with them unknowingly in an activity not permissible by law," he said.

Earlier in February, the transport department had cautioned bike-taxis against plying on the roads of Delhi, warning that it was a violation of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, that would make aggregators liable for a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

Bidhuri screams transport scam, seeks CBI probe

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Tuesday claimed to expose yet another scam worth crores of rupees in the Transport Department of Delhi government. Bidhuri sought a CBI probe to reveal how huge amounts of money has been distributed among the AAP leaders. He alleged approximately Rs 500 crores have been looted from taxi and bus operators in the name of women's safety, while no call centre has yet been established by the department. Terming Bidhuri's claim as totally baseless, the AAP government said the safety and security of the passengers have always been the utmost priority for the Delhi government.



At a Press conference Bidhuri alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal government got installed plastic panic button of no utility costing only Rs five, but crores of rupees were collected in the name of these buttons. He said that Delhi and the entire country have been made fools in the name of panic buttons. "Arvind Kejriwal kept making tall claims that Delhi is the only state where women's safety is of great concern, but now the truth has come out because no information about any danger reaches anyone when a woman

presses the panic button. The entire call centre system has turned out to be a fraud. The reason behind this is that the Transport Department has not established any call centre to date. If a woman is in any emergency and presses this button, no information is conveyed, and she does not receive any help in any way. The name of the panic button is merely a forced collection that the Delhi government has been carrying out," Bidhuri said and exhibited a demo of the panic buttons installed in two taxis. Bidhuri stated that a CBI investigation should be conducted into this entire matter because in such a massive scam, the government of the Aam Aadmi Party is fully involved. Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said two months back,

BJP had proved with evidence that how Kejriwal government through an NGO has been doing a scam in the name of fitness of auto rickshaws and other commercial vehicles. Rejecting Bidhuri's claim, the AAP government said these panic buttons, when pressed by passengers, immediately trigger an automated alarm that is received at the command control centres located at Shastri Park and Kashmere Gate, respectively. "Dedicated centre, under DIMTS at Shastri Park tracks Autos, Taxis and other public service vehicles fitted with AIS 140 Vehicle Location tracking devices and appropriate action is taking on any alerts received from the panic button. The team also work in providing the required information to the Delhi police too," it said.

CM honours 16 artisans

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday felicitated 16 artisans who excelled in the field of handicrafts with State Award and State Merit Award for 2020 and 2021 at the Delhi Secretariat on Tuesday. He emphasised on acknowledging the creativity and skill set of craftsmen as a means to scale up the handicraft industry, asserting his Government will take every possible step to strengthen the community in the city.

He was speaking after presenting the 'State Award' to outstanding handicraft artisans of Delhi at an event. "By helping craftsmen recognise their own creative potential and nurturing their skill set, we can boost their confidence and enable them to contribute to the growth of the industry," Kejriwal was quoted as saying in a statement issued by his office.

The city Government will take every possible step to strengthen the handicraft artist community in Delhi, he said.

Tihar to replace 2,000 metal exhaust fans with plastic ones

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After gangster Tillu Tajpuria's murder on May 2 in Asia's most secure jail, Tihar, the prison authorities have decided to replace over 2,000 exhaust fans with plastic ones and install lights at dark spots to prevent such incidents.

After the murder, Director-General of Delhi Prisons Sanjay Beniwal issued a circular to remove "dangerous objects" from wards of Tihar Jail that can be used by inmates to make improvised weapons. The PWD will be carrying out the work. It has floated tenders for Central Jail Number 1 of Tihar and more are in the offing. Once the tender is awarded the work has to be completed within a month, the officials added. According to prison officials, keeping the safety of inmates in mind and to prevent a repetition of such incidents in the

near future, the Tihar Jail administration got more than 2,000 exhaust fans removed from the wards housing the barracks where inmates are lodged.

"The process of removing the exhaust fans started after gangster Tillu Tajpuria was murdered," a senior jail official said. He added that exhaust fans were removed only from wards of Tihar jails since those installed in the Rohini and Mandoli jails are out of reach of the inmates lodged there. The attackers of Tajpuria had also taken advantage of certain "dark spots" to gain access to his cell and so, to keep a close watch on the activities in such areas, LED lights will also be installed, he said.

"We have identified dark spots inside the wards and soon these areas will be lit up with LED lights. This will help guards to keep a close watch," he said.

India, US review bilateral ties



Director General of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Chandrajit Banerjee, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, National Security Adviser of the United States Jake Sullivan and US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti during Roundtable on Advancing India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) at CII, in New Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
India and the United States conducted a comprehensive review of their bilateral relations during a meeting between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and his US counterpart Jake Sullivan in New Delhi on Tuesday. Sullivan's two-day visit aims to further discussions and cooperation between the two countries. Accompanied by a delegation of senior US government officials and industry leaders, Sullivan engaged in extensive discussions with Doval on a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues. The visit, which precedes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming state visit to the US, provides an opportunity for the two NSAs to continue their high-level dialogue. They will assess the robust

and multi-faceted cooperation between India and the US, while also reviewing the strategic partnership on a global scale. Building on the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) launched by Prime Minister Modi and President Joseph Biden in May 2022, the NSAs have been actively promoting collaboration in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, Semiconductors, Telecommunications, Defence, and Space. Sullivan's visit will facilitate a review of the progress achieved thus far under iCET and establish new priorities and objectives. During their meeting, the NSAs held restricted discussions on regional and global issues of mutual interest. They also participated in the second Track 1.5 dialogue on iCET,

organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). This dialogue aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing between academia and industry representatives from both countries. Expressing satisfaction with the progress made under iCET, the NSAs encouraged stakeholders on both sides to strive for partnerships in the technology value chain. They emphasized the importance of co-development and co-production of high-tech products and services in India and the US. In addition to the meetings with Ajit Doval, Jake Sullivan is scheduled to meet with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and other Indian ministers during his visit. These interactions further reinforce the close ties and ongoing collaboration between India and the US in various domains.

CoWIN portal safe: Cyber security firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Union Health Ministry dismissed reports of a data breach on the CoWIN platform, Cyber security firm CloudSEK too said that the portal was safe and that threat actors do not have access to the entire platform nor the backend database.

"Based on matching fields from Telegram data and previously reported incidents affecting health workers of a region, we assume the information was scraped through these compromised credentials," CloudSEK said in a report after an independent analysis.

On March 13, a threat actor on a Russian cybercrime forum advertised for compromised access on the CoWIN portal of Tamil Nadu region, it said.

After an analysis, CloudSEK said, it was discovered the breach was that of a health worker and not really of the infrastructure. The content displayed on the



screenshot matches with the Telegram bot mentioned in the media as follows — name of the individual, mobile number, identity proof, identification number and number of doses completed.

"Furthermore, there are numerous healthcare worker credentials accessible on the dark web for the CoWIN portal. However, this issue primarily stems from the inadequate endpoint security measures implemented for healthcare workers, rather than any inherent weaknesses in CoWIN's infrastructure security," the

report said.

Asserting that the CoWIN portal was completely safe with adequate safeguards for data privacy, the Union health ministry on Monday dismissed as "mischievous" the claims of a data breach on the platform and said the matter had been reviewed by the country's nodal cyber security agency CERT-In.

In a statement, the ministry also said that an internal exercise had been initiated to review the existing security measures.

"With reference to some alleged CoWIN data breaches reported on social media... The

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) immediately responded and it does not appear that the CoWIN app or database has been directly breached," said Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

In its statement, the health ministry said there was no basis for the reports alleging the breach of data from the CoWIN portal, a repository of all data of all those who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the country.

"It is clarified that all such reports are without any basis and mischievous. The Co-WIN portal of the health ministry is completely safe with adequate safeguards for data privacy," it had said.

CERT-In, in its initial report, has pointed out that the backend database for the Telegram bot was not directly accessing the APIs of the CoWIN database, according to the statement.



AI grounds 2 pilots for letting female friend in cockpit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has taken action against two pilots for allowing a female friend into the cockpit of a Delhi-Leh flight last week. This incident follows a previous incident where an Air India pilot had his license suspended for three months after permitting a woman friend into the cockpit mid-air on a Dubai to Delhi flight.

Upon receiving a complaint from the cabin crew regarding an unauthorised female passenger in the cockpit of flight AI-445, Air India management promptly grounded the pilot and co-pilot involved. The Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA) responded to the incident by stating that necessary action is being taken in accordance with established procedures. Sources reveal that the airline has formed a committee to conduct a detailed investigation.

In a recent development, the DGCA imposed a fine of ₹30 lakh on Air India for allegedly failing to address the cockpit violation incident promptly and effectively. Additionally, the license of the pilot involved in the Dubai to Delhi flight, where the woman was allowed into the cockpit, was suspended for three months. The co-pilot received a warning for not being assertive in preventing the unauthorised action.

Opp slams Govt over ex-Twitter CEO Dorsey's remark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several Opposition parties including Congress slammed the Centre over former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's claims that the micro blogging platform was threatened with shutdown by the Modi government unless it complied with orders to restrict accounts during the one year long farmers' protest.

While Centre and BJP leaders have rubbished the charges, saying Dorsey's Twitter regime had a problem accepting the sovereignty of Indian law, Congress urged the Centre to stop "suppressing" social media platforms and journalists. TMC spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien tagging Dorsey remarks alleged that "Modi and his boys were not only intimidating farmers during the protests, see what else they did!"

Congress also demanded

answers from the Modi government over the issue and alleged that there cannot be bigger proof of the "weakening of democracy" in the country by targeting institutions. Dorsey, who quit as Twitter CEO in 2021, made the sensational allegation in an interview with the YouTube news show Breaking Points on Monday.

While Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it is "wrong" and "unfair" if attempts were made to scuttle farmers' protests, Rajya Sabha MP and Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi alleged that the BJP and the government tried to "crush" the farmers protest.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitarom Yechury hit out at the government and said the media ecosystem is being manipulated in an "outrageous manner". "Dissent is intimidated, journalists threatened, abused and jailed



on false pretext. No amount of denial by the Modi government can obfuscate the truth of doctoring media content," he said in a tweet

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the political progeny of BJP-RSS, who stood against Indians and fought in favour of the British in the freedom movement, should not pretend to be nationalists over the former Twitter CEO's remarks.

"The BJP has adopted the

toolkit of dictatorship from the British rulers. What did the Modi government not do to crush the farmer's movement? Prime Minister Modi himself called our 'Annadata' farmers 'Andolanjeevi'. The Uttar Pradesh chief minister accused the farmers of accepting foreign funds. BJP ministers and leaders called farmers Naxalites, terrorists and traitors."

At the AICC Press conference, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the party demands that the government stops suppressing social media, stops suppressing, coaxing large sections of media into submission. "Opposition voices are regularly being suppressed by the government," she alleged.

Congress chief spokesman Jaiaram Ramesh said, "During the farmers' agitation the cowardly BJP government threatened to shut down Twitter and raid the homes of their employees."

BJP leaders sought Kuki ultras help: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday raised questions whether BJP leaders, including Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, sought the help of "Kuki militants" during the Manipur election and said he has no right to continue in office pending investigations.

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala asked whether reports of Sarma and former BJP general secretary Ram Madhav seeking the help of "Kuki militants" during the polls in the northeastern state were true and whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had approved this.

"Were the PM and HM aware of help sought from 'Kuki militants'? If yes, how could they sanction it? If not, why were they blissfully unaware? Does it not brazenly compromise our national interests? Do electoral gains far outweigh the interests of the country for Modi government?" Surjewala asked on Twitter.

"What action will PM, HM, Modi government and BJP take against Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and Ram Madhav? Will NIA register a case against them and investigate the links, if any? Will Mr J P Nadda, BJP president, take action?"

"Does cohabitating with a militant outfit" not violate the



oath of office by Assam CM? Does he have right to continue in office till the conclusion of the investigations? Will complete silence of PM and HM the only answers that nation will get?" he asked. Referring to reports, the Congress leader said "the expose on BJP CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and its former national general secretary Ram Madhav is truly disturbing and depicts an unpardonable compromise with national security, if assertions are proved".

Congress general secretary (communications) Jaiaram Ramesh termed the reports "explosive" and said, "What has long been believed is now proven in black and white." "It reinforces what I have been saying all along: Manipur is burning today because of the politics of the RSS/BJP," he wrote on Twitter. Congress has accused the BJP of playing divisive politics in Manipur and claimed that the current situation in the northeastern state is a result of it. Manipur has seen violence between various communities since May 3, which continues even today.

Norms for IAS, IPS, IFoS officers going on study leave revised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The Centre has revised guidelines for IAS, IPS and IFoS officers going on study leave, making it mandatory for them to follow the service rules, failure of which would attract disciplinary and consequential actions.

The move comes after it noticed instances of certain all India service officers not conducting themselves fully in consonance with the spirit of the AIS (Conduct) Rules, 1968 while on study leave. There are three all India services (AIS) -- Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS).

Now, such officers will have to give an undertaking as part of a revised bond that they will abide by the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 and the guidelines on conduct during study leave, failure of which would make them liable for disciplinary action, according to a personnel ministry order.

The bond to be executed before proceeding on study leave has accordingly been revised, where a member of service shall, inter-alia, undertake to abide by the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 and the guidelines on conduct during study leave, it said in the order issued to chief secretaries of all states.

"I am fully aware that in case I am found in violation of the conduct rules or the guidelines on

conduct during study leave as prescribed, I shall be liable for disciplinary action to be initiated against me," reads the part of the undertaking to be given by the officers.

"I also hereby undertake that I understand that, in case of violation of the conduct rules or the said guidelines, further consequential action may also lie against me including such violation being taken into account during the process of panelment in central government, being recalled from study leave and/or debarment from future study leave and optional training programs," it further says.

The guidelines say that the officers are "expected to display a level of maturity and sensitivity befitting a senior officer of the government". "The member of service is expected to exercise discretion in his/her interactions with foreign nationals and/or mission and in his/her interactions on social media," reads the guidelines, adding that such officers shall not overstay beyond the period of the approved leave.

The personnel ministry said before forwarding the proposal of ex-India study leave of any member of service to the central government, the state governments shall satisfy themselves that the member of service fulfils all requisite conditions for grant of study leave.

"They will also exercise due diligence to ensure that the proposed study course is relevant to the officer's area of work and future career growth and is in public interest, before seeking approval of the central government under AIS (Study Leave) Regulations, 1960," it said.

State governments may also like to satisfy themselves regarding the suitability of the member of service before forwarding proposals for consideration of the central government, said the recent order issued also to the home secretary and secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The state governments are also advised to ensure that the member of service is properly briefed before he/she proceeds on study leave, it added.

Court allows Karti to travel to Spain, UK

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has allowed Congress MP Karti Chidambaram, accused in Aircel-Maxis and INX Media scam cases, to travel to Spain and the United Kingdom from June 25 to July 17. The MP/MA fast track trial court directed Karti to furnish a security deposit of Rs one crore and not to open or close any bank account overseas or enter into any property transactions abroad.

Special Judge Namrita Aggarwal allowed former Finance Minister Chidambaram's son Karti's plea, noting that he was on several occasions granted permission by the court to travel abroad. Moreover, on none of the occasions, the applicant has violated any of the conditions imposed upon him by the court concerned, the judge said in an order passed on June 12.

"Therefore, in view of the above facts and circumstances, the applications moved by the applicant/accused Karti P



Chidambaram are allowed and he is permitted to travel to Spain and the United Kingdom during the period June 25 to July 17, 2023," the judge said.

Father Chidambaram is the main accused in the CBI and ED chargesheets on Aircel-Maxis and INX-Media bribery cases. The ED charged that during the course of the pending investigation, it was revealed that the applicant had disposed of some shares of the company beneficially owned or controlled by him and has thus, destroyed the proceeds of the crime.

The court directed Karti to

furnish a security deposit of Rs one crore by way of FDR/bank draft and inform about his travel itinerary, address and contact details for the period abroad to the court as well as to the investigating officers in all four cases. It also directed him to surrender his passport within 48 hours of his return to India.

"He shall not make any attempt to tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses of this case in any manner," the judge said. Karti had sought permission, claiming that he had to attend ATP Mallorca Championships to be held in Mallorca, Spain from June 25 to July 1 and Wimbledon Championships to be held in London from July 3 to July 16.

He also submitted before the court that he had to attend business meetings and visit his daughter, who was working in London after completing her studies there. The CBI and ED opposed the application, claiming that Karti may resort to tampering with evidence or influencing the witnesses in other countries.

Rahul enjoys truck ride in US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi embarked on a unique journey during his recent visit to the United States, where he travelled from Washington to New York in a truck and engaged in a candid conversation with the driver, focusing on the lives of Indian-origin truck drivers in the US.

Rahul's decision to undertake a truck ride in the US followed his previous truck journey from Delhi to Chandigarh in India, where he aimed to listen to the problems faced by truck drivers.

Continuing his efforts to connect with people in India and abroad, the former Congress MP embarked on a 190-km "American Truck Yatra" from Washington DC to New York, accompanied by driver Taljinder Singh Vicky Gill and his companion Ranjeet Singh Banipal. The journey concluded with a hearty breakfast at a local eatery, as per a statement released by the party.

Similar to his truck ride in India, the journey in the US involved a heartfelt conversation



centered around the daily lives of Indian-origin truck drivers. During the ride, Rahul observed that trucks in the US are designed with the safety and comfort of the driver in mind, unlike in India.

The conversation highlighted the stark contrast between Indian and American truck drivers' circumstances. While Indian truck drivers struggle to make ends meet with low wages and face the brunt of rising commodity prices, their American counterparts receive fair wages and dignity for their labor.

In the course of discussing topics such as inflation, the rising prices of commodities, and politics in India, Rahul emphasized that no religion promotes hatred. They also enjoyed listen-

ing to songs by Sidhu Moosewala during the journey.

The statement further mentioned that there are valuable lessons to be learned from the American truck industry, which can inform a new vision for the trucking sector in India. Indian truck drivers are vital to the country's logistics system and deserve a life of dignity. Their progress and well-being are essential for the overall economy of India.

Last month, Rahul Gandhi undertook a truck journey from Delhi to Chandigarh within India. Images and videos captured his interactions with truck drivers at a dhaba, showcasing his commitment to understanding their challenges and concerns.

ICMR begins NCDs-mental health integrated healthcare mechanism

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has started working to develop a mechanism that ensures integrated interventions addressing the Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health at all levels of healthcare delivery, especially at the primary care level. The move follows concerns that patients with mental disorders are at an increased risk of exposure to the chronic diseases and vice versa particularly post Covid-pandemic era.

This is for the first time that the Government has felt the need to invest in research in NCDs and mental health which has long been overlooked whenever NCDs were discussed

or seen as being separate. To begin with, the ICMR is seeking proposals from researchers in this regard with an aim to offer integrated mental health care to reduce health burden due to mental disorders including substance use disorders and NCDs in India.

The researchers have also been asked to suggest ways to overcome the difficulties in integrating screening and treatment for mental disorders (anxiety, depression, psychosis and substance use disorders) with NCD care into all outpatients' visits to health & wellness centres, primary health centres, CHCs and district hospitals.

A senior official from the ICMR explained the need for such integration as NCDs and mental health disorders take a



toll on the population.

"In India, the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is huge. At the same time, patients with mental disorders also carry risk factors for NCDs like cancer and diabetes due to smoking, poor nutrition. In addition, people living with mental health disorders are less likely to seek healthcare and may be less able to adhere to treatment, with consequent adverse treatment outcomes, including morbidity, mortality, drug resis-

care has emerged as a key evidence based approach for integrating mental health care into primary care.

Moreover, say yet another study, "...the synergies across all NCDs including mental health mean it makes sense for governments to address the common risk factors and systems barriers to reduce premature and preventable suffering and death." In alignment with target 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), "by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being", mental health must be integrated into the response to NCDs," according to a Global Health Community of Global Innovators.

The proposals have to focus on outcomes that are translatable into policy, he said.

Various recent studies have revealed that mental health and wellbeing are central to reducing the global burden of NCDs. Case in point is a study in 2019 in BMJ which noted that the strong associations and inter-related causal mechanisms of mental health disorders and other NCDs argue for a joint approach to care. Collaborative

DAY-LONG BOMBING, FIRING AT BHANGAR OFF KOLKATA

Deploy CAPF for Bengal rural polls, HC tells SEC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In what was promptly interpreted by the Opposition parties as a "not so good advertisement" of Bengal's law and order situation under Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress the Calcutta High Court (HC) on Tuesday ordered deployment of central forces during the forthcoming panchayat elections.

The forces will be deployed in seven sensitive districts of Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Birbhum, parts of North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Hooghly and East Midnapore. Besides, the court also directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to install CCTV cameras in all the polling booths.

Hearing petitions filed by the BJP and the Congress, the Division Bench of Chief Justice S Sivagnanam, directed the SEC to conduct the polls with the help of central forces. However the court left the modalities of deployment on the SEC.

The Judges also would not interfere with the date of polling or timings of filing or withdrawal of nominations.

Taking strong note of the continuing violence in the run up to the polls which have been slated for July 8 and regular complaints of Opposition candidates being stopped by the ruling party miscreants from filing their nominations, the court directed the SEC to conduct the polls with the help of CAPF.



Damaged vehicles after a clash broke out between workers of the ISF and the TMC during nomination filing for panchayat polls, at Bhangar in South 24 Parganas district. (Inset) Police detain miscreants after the clash. PTI

While the SEC argued that it had sufficient infrastructure to conduct the polls the Opposition cited lack of adequate police forces.

"While the State has about 80,000 police forces including the back staff there are more than 62,000 booths... there is a hopeless shortfall of policemen for a single-phase polling... even if you put two armed policemen in a booth then and a requisite number of others to man the queues and other law and order issues on the polling day then you will need at least 1.20 lakh policemen," said BJP advocate Tarun Jyoti Tewari.

The court order came almost in tandem of massive violence at Bhangar Block II barely a few miles east of Capital Kolkata where hundreds of miscreants led by local Trinamool

Congress leaders fought daylong pitched battles with the members of a defiant Indian Secular Front an alliance partner of the Left Front whose MLA Naushad Siddiqui claimed hundreds of bombs were charged throughout the day outside the BDO office at Bijayjanj market.

So much so that the Block Development Officer's office had to be locked from inside to prevent the miscreants from entering into its premises, sources said. Several police personnel, ISF and TMC workers were injured, some of them critically in the daylong skirmish that saw two sides fight with all kind of weapons including bombs, guns, bricks, sticks and soda bottles, sources said.

While the lone ISF MLA in the State Naushad Siddiqui complained, "many of our candidates

have been injured in attacks by the TMC while they were going to file their nomination," Trinamool leader Shaukat Mollah said "it is the ISF goons who have been disturbing the nomination procedure from the morning to create terror."

This, even as the State saw Bhangar, a village so near to Kolkata police headquarters burning as never before. An ISF candidate was shot at during the clashes while several police men received bomb injuries. Clashes also took place at Canning some 50 km south of Kolkata where the BJP and the TMC men fought with lathis and bricks even as the saffron workers complained that they were being stopped by the TMC from filing nomination.

"If Mamata Banerjee is so confident of winning... if she is so sure of her developmental schemes then why is she afraid of letting people file nomination... what we saw the whole day was a veritable battlefield that was the trademark of medieval times," said CPI(M) central committee member Sujjan Chakrabarty.

Welcoming the High Court order State Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari said that "this order is a proof of what Mamata Banerjee Government is perpetrating in the State," adding his party would file a caveat in the Supreme Court to preempt the TMC from extracting an ex parte stay order from the Apex Court.



Abhishek skips ED summons for poll preparation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee being probed for his alleged role in the recruitment scams on Tuesday skipped appearance at the Enforcement Directorate office.

He wrote to the ED seeking time on grounds that he was busy campaigning in the panchayat elections could appear before its officials only after the polls were done.

Banerjee, also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote in the letter that he was travelling as part of TMC's "Nabojowar" (New Wave) campaign, besides being busy with the July 8 panchayat poll preparations.

Besides, He said that it would take time for him to arrange for the documents that had been asked from him by the ED.

"I am unable to appreciate the scope and purport of the summons under reference in as much as you have sought information/documents which do not have any connection with the public speech delivered by me on March 29," he wrote in the letter adding, "I am ready and willing to extend my cooperation with your ensuing investigation within the permissible limits of the law."

Nine more hurt in gunfight in Manipur



Governor of Manipur Anusuya Uikey interacts with violence-affected people during her visit to different relief centres in Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts in Imphal on Tuesday. PTI

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Nine more people were injured in a gunfight in Khamenlok area in Imphal East district in strife-torn Manipur as the exchange of fire between militants and village volunteers continued till late on Monday night, police said. Initially, three casualties were reported, but the number mounted as the gun-battle continued before both sides withdrew, a police officer said.

The village volunteers also burnt a few makeshift bunkers and a watch-tower built by the militants, he said.

The area lies along the borders of Meitei-dominated Imphal East district and tribal-majority Kangpokpi district. The injured have been admitted to local hospitals, where the con-

dition of one injured person is stated to be critical while others are out of danger, authorities of the medical establishments said.

Security forces have been deployed in the area in large numbers to prevent further outbreak of violence and to carry out area domination exercises.

Heavy firing between village volunteers and militants erupted in the area on Monday. No major incident was reported in the area for three days before that. In another incident, a militant was killed and two others were injured in a gun-battle with security forces in Govindpur village in Bishnupur district, he said. The militants were trying to construct bunkers around villages when security forces challenged them, resulting in the gun-battle, the officer said.

At least 100 people lost

their lives and 310 others were injured in the ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki community people in Manipur that broke out a month ago. Army and para-military personnel were deployed to restore peace in the State.

Curfew remains in force in 11 of the 16 districts of Manipur, while internet services are suspended in the entire northeastern State. Clashes first broke out on May 3 after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals Nagas and Kukis constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts.

J&K prepares to host Amarnath Yatra pilgrims from July 1

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After successfully holding a AG-20 working group meeting in Srinagar last month the Union Territory administration is now gearing up to welcome Amarnath pilgrims from July 1.

With security remaining a top priority, in the wake of targeted strikes on security convoys, and the members of the minority community in recent months, the multi-layered security grid has been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring peaceful and incident free conduct of the yatra.

To assist the UT administration, the Union Home Ministry has already given its nod to rush additional central paramilitary forces for yatra duty.

According to official sources, around 60 companies are expected to arrive here in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) around June 20. These companies will be deployed along the entire yatra route beginning from the gateway of J&K at Lakhampur to the base camps in Kashmir valley.

In addition teams of State Disaster Response Force, and NDRF components will be stationed along the yatra trek to take care of contingencies.

"Apart from routine deployment, sniper and sharpshooters will also be deployed at many locations while the Amarnath



chaired a high level meeting with the ADGP Jammu range Mukesh Singh and deliberated upon security related matters and other necessary arrangements with the district commissioners and SSP's of different district headquarters.

Yatra convoy will be escorted with security personnel laced with technical gadgets, official sources said.

Meanwhile, J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday conducted on-site inspection at Nunwan and Chandanwari Base Camps and reviewed ongoing works and logistics, lodging, health and other facilities that have been put in place for the comfort of pilgrims.

The 62-day-long Amarnath Yatra will commence from July 1 from the two traditional routes of Nunwan in Pahalgam and Baltal in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Proper arrangements for regular ambulance, Heli-ambulance service and oxygen cylinders must be ensured, the Lt Governor told the officials.

The Lt Governor passed explicit directions for the Camp in-charge and concerned officials for operationalization of Sheshnag and Panjtarni camp by June 20.

In Jammu, Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar

Security forces gun down two terrorists near LoC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces Tuesday gunned down two terrorists near the Line of Control in the Machhal area of Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Kupwara district.

Till late evening it was not clear whether the terrorists were killed while infiltrating inside the Indian territory or were flushed out while they were hiding at a safe hideout in the North Kashmir district. According to a tweet posted by the Kashmir Zone Police, "Two (02) terrorists have been neutralised in a joint operation of Army and Kupwara Police in Dobanar Machhal area (LoC) of Kupwara district."

Modi for India, Shinde for Maha, says ad by CM

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a battle of one-upmanship that it triggered over its ally Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Maharashtra ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha and State Assembly polls, the ruling Shiv Sena on Tuesday claimed that chief minister Eknath Shinde was the "most popular leader" than Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP and he had the numerical edge over the latter in the race to the chief minister's post after the polls. Putting out full-page advertisements the leading English and Marathi newspapers in the state on the basis of the recent pre-poll survey findings, the Shiv Sena unleashed a "Rashtiramdeh Modi, Maharashtra Shinde" (Modi for India, Shinde for Maharashtra) campaign, ignoring the claims of Fadnavis being the rightful chief ministerial in the 2024 Assembly polls based on the fact that he was the leader of the of the dominant ruling alliance part-



ner BJP. Tuesday's development came less than a fortnight after Shinde - who met Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with deputy chief minister Fadnavis in New Delhi on June 4 - claimed that the Shiv Sena led by him and BJP would contest all the forthcoming elections - Lok Sabha, State Assembly and local body polls together on a development plank.

In its advertisement, the ruling Shiv Sena quoted an election survey and said that as per the survey done by the chief minister's post, 26.1 per cent of people in Maharashtra "desire" Shinde to be the next chief minister of the state, while 23.2 per cent of the people "wish" to see Fadnavis as the next CM.

4 dead, 3 critical as chemical tanker explodes on Pune-Mumbai e-way

PTI ■ PUNE

Four people were killed and three critically injured when a chemical-laden tanker caught fire following an accident and exploded on Pune-Mumbai Expressway on Tuesday, police said. The busy carriageway was cleared for traffic after a few hours. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed grief over the deaths.

The accident took place on the expressway stretch between Lonavala and Khandala, an official said.

The tanker caught fire following an accident and exploded causing fiery balls of the chemical to fall on the motorists travelling on the road below, he said.

Four motorists on the road below sustained injuries, of which three died, while one occupant of the tanker was killed and two others in the vehi-



cle were injured, said the official from Lonavala police station.

Fadnavis, who also holds the home portfolio, called the accident "unfortunate".

"Three other persons were injured in the accident and are being treated in a local hospital. I pray for their betterment," he said on social media.

The state police, highway police, personnel from INS Shivaji and the fire brigade are at the spot and the fire has been brought under control, he said.

Lost and Found
It is a Public notice that my client Mrs. Asha Gupta W/o Shri Hari Kant Gupta R/o 153, Gali No. 5, East Azad Nagar, Delhi-110051 is the owner of 153, Gali No. 5, East Azad Nagar, Delhi-110051. That all the previous Original documents in respect to the above said property has been lost/misplaced somewhere and not traceable from the year 2009. It is therefore, Notified that anybody claiming any right, title, interest or lien over the aforesaid property may file such claim or objection to the undersigned within a period of 15 days from the date of Publication of this notice. Otherwise, it will be presumed that the said property is free from all encumbrances, charges and/or lien, etc. any my client is free to sell the said property.
Sahil Arora (Advocate)
Enrol No. D/2186/2019
(Loan Account)
No. 107, F. F. M. S Chambers,
Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-92

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 **SUNNY BHATIA / SASMITA BHATIA** (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBGUR00001955094** located at **FLAT NO - LE / E - 202 TOWER-E, SECTOR-6, ADITYA WORLD CITY, OFF NH - 24, GHAZIABAD-201010**. 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 **May 25, 2023**, informing that **AGARWAL ASSOCIATES (PROMOTERS) LTD** 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.
Date: June 14, 2023
Place: Delhi
For ICICI Bank Limited
Sd-

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Rakesh Sharma, Meera Sharma, Mega System Services B 9/40d Sec 34 Uday Giri 2, Noida Uttar Pradesh- 201301 A/C :- LBDEL00001486111	Flat No. 4/0 D, 3rd Floor, Lig. Bk.-B, 9 Udaygiri- II, Sector 34, Gautam Budha Nagar, Noida Uttar Pradesh	25-04-2023 Rs. 8,37,973 /-	11-09-2022
2.	Rajkumar, Madhubala, House No- 345 A.C. Nagar, Opp. Choti Masjid Faridabad Haryana- 123001 A/C :- LBDEL0000375339	House No 585, Housing Board Colony Sector 10 Faridabad Haryana	27/04/2023 Rs. 2,86,748/-	06-02-2022
3.	Pawan Kumar Maheshwari, Santosh Maheshwari, 232-(4174) Mohalla Shakerpura Near Haryana Aachar Factory Rewari Haryana 123401 A/C :- LBDEL00001131229	Plot No A 83, Mg 2 (Mig) Sadashiv Apartment Shalimar Garden Ext. Hadbast Gram Pasora Pargana Loni Tehsil Gaziabad Uttarpradesh	25-04-2023 Rs. 95,801/-	09-07-2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
Date : June 14, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
Secured Creditor

PUBLIC NOTICE
ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Poonam Sharma, U3s Traders Private Limited, Umakant Sharma, 1/11752 B Gif, Panchsheel Garden, Naveen, Shahdra, Delhi, 110032. A/C No:- LBDEL00004227654, LBDEL00004291576.	Property No-187, 2nd Floor, Bhai Parmanand Colony, Redevelopment scheme of kingsway camp, Delhi	03-05-2023 Rs.58,09,615/- Rs.4,89,124/-	03/11/2022
2.	Poonam Sharma, U3s Traders Private Limited, Umakant Sharma, 1/11752 B Gif, Panchsheel Garden, Naveen, Shahdra, Delhi, 110032. A/C No:- LBDEL0000422766, LBDEL00004291302	Flat No-C-906, 9th Floor, D B City, Bk C, Near Sharda, Bal Gram City Centre Hurawal, Link Road, Village Mehra, Gwalior	03-05-2023 Rs.32,55,137/- Rs.3,32,368/-	03-11-2022
3.	Shyni David Stephen, Suresh N, Flat No-124, Third Floor, Dda Lig, Sarita Vihar, Delhi, 110076. A/C No:- LBDEL00004948785	Dda Lig, Flat No-124, 3rd Floor, Madanpur Khadar, Sarita Vihar, Delhi 110076	08-04-2022 Rs. 51,50,214/-	09-01-2022
4.	Miriyi Cheema, Anila Bhatia Cheema, B-38, Green Woods City, Sec-45, Haryana, Gurgaon, 122001. A/C No:- LBGUR00002191149	Flat No 8072 7th Floor, Type A Tower-8 Ats Triumph Sector-104 Gurgaon	08-09-2022 Rs. 2,27,27,290/-	03-06-2022
5.	Tirupati Balaji, Soni Singh, A-927, Gaur Green Avenue, Abhay Khand-II, Indrapuram, Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad, 200001. A/C No:- LBGHZ00002273142	Flat No 2052 5th Floor, Type B, Tower 2 Ats Triumph, Sector 104 Haryana Gurgaon	08-09-2022 Rs. 1,48,07,770/-	03-06-2022
6.	Prakash Chandra Joshi, Rama Joshi, Block K Flat No-k-1106 11th Floor Diya Green City, Raj Nagar Extn. Ghaziabad.	Block K Flat No-k-1106 11th Floor Diya Green City, Raj Nagar Extn. Ghaziabad.	06-09-2022 Rs. 16,90,552/-	03/06/2022
7.	Sulochana Jha, Dev Shankar Jha, B-429, 1st Floor, Avantika, Sec-1 Rohini, Delhi, 110085. A/C No:- LBDEL00003081733	Flat No-0803, 12th Floor, Tower 12, Village Naurangpur, Supertech Basera, Sector-79 And 79b, Mansarovar Urban Complex, Gurgaon,	06-09-2022 Rs. 13,46,474/-	31/01/2021
8.	Vinod Kumar, Anuradha Tomar, Nagarro Software Pvt Ltd, H No S 36, Sec 22a, Gurgaon, Gurgaon- 122015. A/C No:- LBGUR00002893460	Flat No J 31, 3rd Floor, 63 Golf Drive Tower 9, Sec 63a, Gurgaon	06-09-2022 Rs. 4,22,444/-	03/06/2022
9.	Shakuntala Devi, Sandeep Dutt Sharma, Wz-190, Lajwanti Garden, Delhi, 110046. A/C No:- RBDEL00001865448	Flat No. Wz-190, Lajwanti Garden, Plot No -15 (with Roof Rights), Khasra No-212, Villagr Nangal Raya, New Delhi, Delhi.	06-09-2022 Rs. 4,19,907/-	30/06/2022
10.	Nafeesh Khan Mansoori, Mansoori Body Solid And Sports Pvt Ltd, Sajida Begum, B-604, Meenakshi Appt, Sector- P1, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Surajpur, Noida, 201306. A/C No:- LBDEL00005181909	Plot No T5, Sec Village Tugal Pur Haldona Gautam Buddha Nagar	09-09-2022 Rs. 1,00,84,928/-	03-06-2022
11.	Hardeep Singh Johar, Damandeep Kaur, 1032, The Great Lyalpur, Housing Society Ph I, Sec 10, Dwaraka, Delhi, 110075. A/C No:- LBGUR00002087904	Appt No-1181, Tower 1st, 18 Th Floor, Type -b, Ats Triumph, Sector 104, Haryana, Gurgaon	19-10-2022 Rs. 1,64,78,687/-	30-07-2022
12.	Anand Pradeep Kumar, N 25 Ground Floor, Chitraranjan Park, New Delhi, Delhi, 110019. A/C No:- LBGUR0000328233	Office Unit No 602, 6th Floor, Ild Trade Center, Vill Tikri, Sec 47, Sohna Road, Haryana, Gurgaon	19-10-2022 Rs. 52,88,515/-	04-07-2022
13.	Sandhya Vashishth, Prabhat Chandra Vasisht, F/ 1/16 Southend Appt, Eros Garden, Charmwood Village, Surajkund, Haryana, Faridabad, 201001. A/C No:- LBFDB00002891561	Flat No Am K-2301, 23rd Floor, Sector-118, Tower K, Plot No. Gh-01, Ajnara Ambrosia, Uttar Pradesh, Gautam Buddha Nagar	19-10-2022 Rs. 49,04,121/-	30-06-2022
14.	Rakesh Kumar Pahuja, Raj Rani, Flat No-17, Srm Apartments, 106th Extn, Thana Sihanai Patparganj Shakarpur, East Delhi, Delhi, 110092. A/C No:- LBDEL00004601450	Flat No 1103, Tower-3a, 11th Floor, Sitated in Project "Speedway Avenue" Plot No Gh-a-2, Sector-25, Jaypee Greens Sports City, Sdz, Yamuna Expressway, Greater Noida	06-01-2023 Rs. 31,69,694/-	03/10/2022
15.	Amit Bhagat, Leela Bhagat, 882, Ats Vill 1 Express Way, Sec 93 A, Noida, 201301. A/C No:- LBGUR00001951319	Unit No Ocb0052601, Orchards Jaypee Green, Wishtown Noida, Sec-128, Noida	06-01-2023 Rs. 45,18,032/-	11/10/2022
16.	Jaya Pandey, Ravi Shankar Pandey, B-74 1st Floor Ramprastha Colony, Ghaziabad, Up, Ghaziabad, 201011. A/C No:- LBDEL00002203375	Flat No- 1402, 13th Floor, Tower - A, Kingswoods Court, Plot No- Gh 06, Crossing Republik Dundaehra, Ghaziabad	08-12-2022 Rs. 12,39,373/-	03/06/2022
17.	Rajeew Ahuja, Rekha Rani, Versha Rani, Ho No 231 Ews Weavers Colony Panipat Panipat Haryana 132103. A/C No. LBPNP00004952659, LBPNP00004952664 LBNOD00005332938	Part of House No 842 Ward No 7, Inside Mc Limits, Panipat, Haryana 132103.	09-05-2023 Rs.14,01,172/- Rs.1654600/- Rs.418089/-	03/02/2023
18.	Arjun Sharma Kusum, Sharma Toy Adda, House No 23 Transit Hostel, Thana Sihanai Gate Ghaziabad 201001, Uttar Pradesh Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201001. A/C No:- LBNOD00005308449, LBNOD00005319044	Flat No-b-5/402, 4th Floor, Panchsheel Prime-390, Main Hapur Road, Opp Govindpuram Anaji Mandi Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. 201001	28-12-2022 Rs.38,45,920/- Rs.629783/-	03/09/2022
19.	Kirshan Kumar Rekha, Sharma Rekha, Vishnu Dutt Kaushik, H No-613, & H No 1111, 12 Meter Road Sec-65 Ballabhgarh, Faridabad, Haryana Ballabhgarh Faridabad Haryana 121002. A/C No. LBFDB00002946348, LBFDB00005337380	Plot No-499, Sec 65 Urban Estate Faridabad Haryana 121001.	28-12-2022 Rs.10,23,969/- Rs.956082/-	12/09/2022
20.	Dharmendra Kumar Singh, Amarawati, Ramgarh Engineering College Floor 2nd Dquarter R Vill, Murubanda Post Barikpona P's Rajrappa Jharkhand Ramgarh 825314. A/C No:- LBNOD00004944086, LBNOD00004979183	Flat No.- 1206, 12th Floor, "migsun Vilaasa", Block Sun 3, Plot No Gh-1b(2), Sector Eta-2, Noida. 201308	03-05-2023 Rs.13,76,770/- Rs.871177/-	30/01/2023
21.	Yashpal Singh Panesar Kuljeet Kaur Panesar B 9/8 Block B 9 Rajouri Garden Delhi 110063. A/C No:- LBDEL00002139381, LBDEL00002140737	Flat No-4c-107, 7th Floor, Tower-1, Big Sky Tower, Golf View Apartment, Sector-I, Pocket -d, Sushant Golf City, Sultanpur Road Lucknow 226003.	03-05-2023 Rs.95,19,911/- Rs.12537.7/-	30/01/2023
22.	Vinod Bansal, Preeti Bansal, House No 635 1st Floor, Surya Nagar, Phase 2 Gate No. 3, Sector 91, Faridabad 121013. A/C No:- LBFDB00005803522, LBFDB00005818001	House No-510, Phase-2, Sector- 91, Surya Nagar, Residential Scheme, Faridabad 121002	03-05-2023 Rs.30,03,264/- Rs.80652/-	02/01/2023
23.	Pankur Tyagi, Abhishek Tyagi, Suman Lata Tyagi, A-54 A Nand Gram P/O Mariam Nagar Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201001. A/C No:- LBGHZ00004960883, LBGHZ00005337379	House No-504 A, Ground Floor, EWS, Sector A, Block A, Nandankunj Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. 201001	06-05-2023 Rs.14,01,172/- Rs.223322.33/-	03/02/2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Pivotal moment

The PM's forthcoming US state visit is the first in his 9-year tenure and important on many counts

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to travel to the US on an official state visit from June 21 to 24, where he will be hosted by US President Joe Biden. This will be Modi's first state visit to the US during his nine-year reign as India's PM. The upcoming visit marks a significant milestone in bilateral relationship as it occurs at a time when the world is grappling with numerous challenges. The visit holds immense importance in strengthening diplomatic ties, fostering strategic cooperation and advancing shared goals between the nations. The India-US relationship has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, bolstered by shared democratic values, economic cooperation and common security concerns. Modi's visit provides an opportunity to reinforce this strategic partnership. The discussions are expected to encompass a wide range of areas, including defence collaboration, counterterrorism efforts, cybersecurity, climate change and healthcare cooperation. Economic collaboration is an especially crucial aspect of the India-US relationship. Modi's visit is expected to focus on expanding trade and investment opportunities since India's economic reforms and initiatives such as 'Make in India', 'Digital India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' present attractive prospects for US businesses. The trip is likely to witness discussions on trade barriers, market access and bilateral investment. The US and India are home to vibrant technology sectors and possess immense potential for collaboration in cutting-edge areas. Modi's visit aims to leverage this potential by strengthening technology and innovation partnerships. The discussions are expected to focus on areas such as artificial intelligence, space exploration, clean energy and digital governance. Increased collaboration in these domains will drive technological advancements, spur innovation and benefit both economies.

As two major democratic nations, India and the US share a commitment to upholding democratic values, promoting human rights and ensuring global stability. The PM's US visit offers an opportunity for both countries to collaborate on addressing global challenges such as climate change, COVID-19 recovery and regional security issues. This trip will provide a platform for India to showcase its commitment to global leadership and multilateral engagements, reaffirming its role as a responsible stakeholder in the international arena. As another important influence of India on the US, India's diaspora in that country is a significant bridge between the nations, with a vibrant and influential presence. Modi's visit will include interactions with the Indian-American community, demonstrating appreciation for their contributions and highlighting their role in furthering bilateral relations. This engagement will not only foster stronger ties with the diaspora but also reinforce people-to-people connections. In a nutshell, the forthcoming visit presents an opportunity to both countries for enhancing strategic partnerships, expanding economic cooperation, fostering technology and innovation collaborations.

PICTALK



Indian Junior Women's Hockey team at their felicitation after winning the Women's Junior Asia Cup, in Bengaluru

Let democracy prevail in Thailand

The rise of the Move Forward Party and its dynamic leader Pita eclipses the Thaksin family aura, giving Thailand a chance at democratic transformation



ASHOK K MEHTA

It looks like democracy is about to trounce the military-monarchy nexus in Thailand one more time. But appearances are deceptive in a country where the military has subordinated the political class. In south and south East Asia Pakistan, Myanmar and Thailand refuse to jettison the Khaki brigade who rule these countries either directly or indirectly. Thailand has never been colonized and has emerged as the region's second most prosperous country and one of the world's leading tourist destinations. Bangkok is the hub of 13 coup-d'etats and 9 coup attempts in 90 years after Absolute monarchy was abolished in 1932 and replaced with constitutional monarchy. From 1948 to 1991 most Prime Ministers were Generals. For more than 10 years now the two PMs were Generals.

Recently the military crafted a constitution inspired by fellow Generals in Myanmar that is designed to ensure the military dominates the hybrid government and Generals in Saville Row suits call the shots. But a slip between the cup and lip has led to a landslide victory for civilian political parties in Thailand-like in Myanmar in 2021 that triggered the coup against Aung San Suu Kyi. In the May elections, no ordinary Generals but three Army Chiefs between 2004 and 2020 were PMs, Deputy PMs and Interior Minister. Yet they were hounded out by civilian youthful leaders hugely popular among people, especially youth seeking reform and change. They planned to rotate among themselves as PMs.

The Move Forward Party under the Harvard-educated businessman turned politician Pita Limjaroenrat and the Thaksin family-backed Pheu Thai Party led by Paetongtarn Shinawatra bagged 151 and 144 seats in the 500-member lower house. Pita turned out to be the dark horse, defeating the favourite Shinawatra scion-led PTP. A coalition of 8 parties is expected to garner 376 seats in a 750-member two-tier Parliament for a majority. The top two parties along with the Bhumjaithai party along with 5 other parties would



form the coalition to select Pita as the new PM. The session of parliament in July will ratify the Prime Minister and the coalition government through a majority vote. Thailand's complex but military-weighted constitution ensures the military wins. There are fears that Myanmar may be replicated in Thailand. In a sense, therefore, the election was a referendum on the military in which the junta suffered a humiliating defeat.

MFP has got a mandate for transformation as Pita canvassed for removing the military from politics, ending conscription, restoring full democracy, scrapping Article 112 on Lese Majeste, overhauling the economy, establishing rule-based diplomacy and establishing a humanitarian corridor between Thailand and Myanmar while attempting to implement Asean's five-point consensus on Myanmar. But dismantling the established military-monarchy order will not be easy. PM Prayuth Chan-ocha gracefully conceded defeat, acknowledging the power of people's vote and adding that he respects democracy and hoped Thailand will be peaceful. His statement has an ominous ring to it. Pita is pledged to reform Lese Majeste introduced in 1908 and reformed in 1976. It carries a penalty of 28 years in jail - 15 years per charge of insult and disrespect



THAI MILITARY MAINTAINS SEVERAL LEVERAGES - LIKE THE HANDPICKED SENATE, ELECTION COMMISSION, DISSOLVING THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY AND COURTS

to monarchy. No one in Thailand openly discusses King Maha Vajiralongkorn, Rama X of the Chakrai dynasty and monarchy. Conversations are in code. In 2017, Prayuth succumbed to the King's desire to exercise greater control over the military by altering the constitution to place key military units under Royal control. People do not venerate the present King as much as they did his father but he is the King.

Thucydides' law will come into play during power transformation. The military maintains several levers - like the handpicked senate, election commission, dissolving the main opposition party and courts. These are the military's non-traditional tools for combating threats that challenge its domination and control of politics. But international as well as domestic safeguards could act as a deterrent to the orderly transfer of power to the elected government. The writing on the wall is that though Pita has got the mandate, the transition may not take place as he has struck at the Palace and Monarchy as well as the military. Other graffiti suggests that he may strike a deal to go slow on reforms targeting Monarchy. Already corruption charges have been levied against Pita which he has denied. He is also accused of constitutional violation (?) which could disqualify him

from parliament. The Supreme Court has 60 days to confirm the results declared by Election Commission. After the 250-seat Senate's vote to determine the final vote tally, the elected government will have to prove its majority in 90 days. The Generals will not want to attract the wrath of the West after their counterparts in Myanmar did an about-turn on democracy. It is therefore better to let the coalition government run for now say, for two years, and let infighting among the coalition lead to disruption and break in law and order or simply manufactured disorder. A valid pretext is essential in the rules-based order for military intervention and restoration of what Generals call 'disciplined democracy'. This has been historically the cycle of action-reaction to ensure that the military grip over politics is more direct than indirect. The rise of MRP and its dynamic leader Pita eclipses the somewhat controversial Thaksin family aura and gives Thailand another more potent chance for democratic transformation.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEACE COMMITTEE FOR MANIPUR

Sir - The peace committee formed by the Union government to find a solution to erupting ethnic violence in Manipur seems to have many roadblocks. Now the Kuki group is said to boycott the meeting opposing the presence of the chief minister, Biren Singh in the talks. The divide between Meities and scheduled tribes there has grown wider after the controversial High Court order. The authorities there are not seen as impartial in their duties which in turn necessitated the intervention of the central government. Given the sensitive nature of the issue, the Central Government has its task cut out to find an amicable solution in the environment of trust deficit.

DVG Sankararao | Vizianagaram

1000 DAYS AND COUNTING

Sir - 1,000 days completed since Umar Khalid has been arrested. Muslim social workers and students including Umar Khalid had been arrested after Delhi Violence. Almost all except a few are still behind bars. The saddest thing is that the Muslim population is 14% while their number in jails is 30%. Hence, it shows that not only Khalid's but countless Muslim youth's bright lives have darkened in prisons.

Tausif Qamar | Howrah

CHILD LABOUR PERSISTS IN INDIA

Sir - Despite the legislation to ban child labour, child trafficking is still horrible. Legislation is a deterrent in case the incidences are rare. But in a country where millions of families are unable to make two ends meet, the children are deliberately moved out to make some income. Indian economy over the years taking a course to market where for every family to make a sustainable income is not so easy. There is a need to create an ecosystem whereby people should take some education and learn some skills to make themselves employable. The way people leave the system of education and enter the labour force, they are trapped into poverty it is no surprise.

BSNL bailout package is puzzling



The government's decision to give BSNL another bailout package of ₹89,000 crore bringing the total to ₹3,22,000 crore is perplexing. The government should learn from its mistakes with Air India, which has also been a drain on public funds. Instead of giving BSNL more money, the government should focus on reforming the company and addressing its underlying problems. One of the main reasons for BSNL's downfall is its inability to adapt to the rapidly evolving telecom industry. Private companies like Airtel and Jio have consistently introduced new technologies, services and

competitive pricing. In contrast, BSNL has lagged in terms of technology and customer service. BSNL has also been hampered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of agility in decision-making. This has led to delayed network upgrades and poor customer services.

One possible solution is to introduce private partnerships or joint ventures with BSNL. This would not only provide BSNL with much-needed financial support but also enable it to tap into the operational efficiencies and customer-centric approaches of private players. Furthermore, BSNL needs to undergo a comprehensive restructuring of its management and operational practices which includes streamlining decision-making processes, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and fostering a culture of innovation and accountability. The government should also invest in employee training and upskilling programmes and help BSNL compete more effectively in the market. Additionally, the government needs to closely monitor the efficient utilization of funds allocated to BSNL.

Bishal Kumar Saha | Murshidabad

Children from such families are easily available and trafficking is so widespread that legislation cannot deter the offenders

RK Arya | Faridabad

INDIA IGNORING NCDs' ALARM BELLS

Sir - While the developed countries have the wherewithal to counter Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), the middle- and low-income countries have to bear the brunt of maximum deaths due to poor implementation of policies and lack of awareness. India is the forerunner in terms of diabetic patients in the world, next only to China. Metabolic disorders are here to stay if the recent Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology report, headed by Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialist Centre and published on June 9, 2023, is to be believed. It has unveiled some astonishing realities pertaining to the increasing

instances of NCDs in India. Nearly 100 million are living with diabetes.

More than one-tenth of the population in India has diabetes, 35% have hypertension and 28% have high cholesterol levels. Urban India has a higher burden of these disorders. But, surprisingly, rural areas are also falling prey to metabolic diseases. Unhealthy eating habits, lesser physical activity, fast food, processed snacks, sugary beverages, craving for tobacco-related products, high blood pressure, increased blood sugar and obesity etc are posing greater risks among the youngsters. Last year, the National NCD Monitoring Survey revealed that 45% of diabetics in India were aware of their health condition but only 15% had their blood sugar under control.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Many villages cut off from cellular network

The claims of 'Digital India' notwithstanding, approximately 700 villages in Uttarakhand alone are devoid of basic mobile telephone connectivity



KUMARI RITIKA

Thirty km from the sub-district headquarters of Garur in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand, lies the village of Surag. This remote village tucked away in the mountains faces significant challenges due to the lack of cellular network, which has a profound impact on the lives of its residents. Surag is a vast village with houses scattered far apart. While a few houses are situated next to a road, most are located in the interiors and upper reaches, inaccessible by vehicles. The villagers residing in these remote areas suffer the most due to the absence of connectivity.

The unavailability of a network signal makes it extremely difficult for the villagers to access vital information that could enhance their daily lives. Although there are a few spots in the village where a network signal can be caught, these locations are often far away from their homes. Consequently, the residents find it arduous to climb distant hills or travel long distances to access communication networks. These journeys are perilous, and the lack of a proper path makes it even more challenging.



Furthermore, the absence of network connectivity has a significant impact on the villagers' educational pursuits. Mamta, an adolescent girl from Surag, highlights the difficulties of constantly having to climb to the top of a distant hill to access network signals for communication. This lack of connectivity also hampers their ability to search for subject-related information on the internet, leaving them without access to crucial knowledge that could support their studies.

Geeta, another young girl troubled by the lack of information caused by the absence of network coverage, explains, "I am unable to receive timely updates of college and job application deadlines, which mean missed opportunities." The absence of network connectivity not only limits access to information but

also has far-reaching consequences, particularly for adolescent girls in these villages. Their desire for network access often leads to the scrutiny of their character as they venture into the jungle in search of network signals. Villagers taunt the parents that their daughters go to find the network to speak with their boyfriends. Rumours and judgments about their character start circulating in their villages, making access to the network rather a difficult task. While we advocate for the right to information for every individual, it is daunting to see that girls in these villages face severe backlash when they attempt to assert these same rights.

On the other hand, the absence of network connectivity has become a source of great fear for the villagers, particularly when it comes to medical emergencies at night. Saraswati Devi, a resident of the village, emphasizes the difficulties they face in such situations. Without network coverage, they are unable to contact their neighbors for help. Living amidst dense forests, they are also afraid of encountering wild animals if

they venture outside in search of a network signal. This fear restricts their movement during nighttime, exacerbating their concerns during emergencies.

The village head, Kumari Champa, acknowledges that only BSNL and a private company provide network coverage in their village, but even their services are limited to specific locations. The lack of network connectivity has affected the lives of all villagers, particularly adolescent girls. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the absence of network coverage disrupted the education of almost all children in the village, with girls being disproportionately impacted.

There are approximately 700 villages like Surag in Uttarakhand that lack basic phone connectivity. When we talk about a digital India, it is essential to recognize that these villages, which constitute a significant portion of the country, are still devoid of cellular network services.

(The writer is a student of class 12 from Chaurson village in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand) Charkha Features



FIRST COLUMN

EMBRACING CHANGE IS KEY TO GOOD LIFE

Investing in self allows an individual to break free from limitations

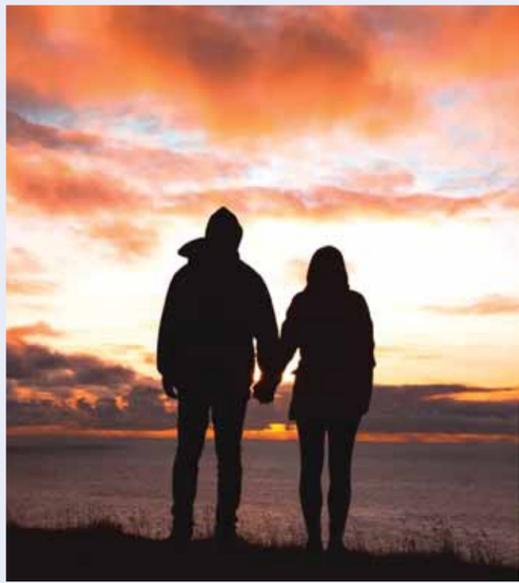


SAKSHI SETHI

In the words of a French philosopher named Henry Burquen, 'To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.'

When we feel stuck or stagnant, it is important to remember that life is a journey of learning and growth. In order to truly progress, an individual must recognise that change and learning go hand in hand. Transformation begins from within. In order to stay vibrant and refreshed, an individual needs to evolve continuously. On the contrary, if a person remains stagnant like water in their life process, then life becomes unpleasant and harmful, thereby preventing them from reaching their fullest potential.

When an individual focuses on their own growth, the dynamics around it too start shifting. Embracing change is a courageous and empowering step towards personal growth and fulfilment. By embracing change, an individual opens themselves up to new opportunities, experiences and possibilities. There is no denying the fact that such a change may involve stepping out of an individual's comfort zone, overcoming fears and facing challenges, but the rewards of such transformation are invaluable. Embracing the change allows an individual to break free from limitations, embrace authentic selves and create a life that truly reflects who we are and what we reflect.



Life is an iterative process, everyone and everything is an ever-evolving story. Through self-reflection and personal evolution, one can empower oneself to create a life filled with authenticity and joy. Remember, when an individual resists change, more suffering is created. Change is never easy when it comes to a career move, ending a marriage, or trying a new diet regime or a new exercise program. In order to stay vibrant and refreshed, one must continuously evolve.

Embracing change and investing in ourselves allows an individual to break free from limitations and move forward. By identifying areas that require attention, setting clear objectives, embracing discomfort, developing new habits and seeking support, one can create a pathway to a better life. Remember, change is not something that happens to a person overnight but something which is actively pursued.

One must embrace the power of intentional change and embark on a journey of personal and professional transformation. Be it life or innovation, the key is to embrace change and view failures as stepping stones to success. The best-laid plans can get sidetracked sometimes from factors that are beyond one's control and other times from a person's desire to adjust. Either way what matters is to recognize that embracing change is the key to a good life as it reminds us that success is not a destination but a journey.

(The writer is an educator)

Tackle plastic menace to sustain the Earth



RAJDEEP PATHAK

There is an imperative need for making global efforts towards a sustainable future on our planet and, for this, combating plastic pollution is important



South Africa's capital Cape Town has almost run out of water — clearly sending warning signals to the rest of the world. This coastal paradise of 4 million on the southern tip of South Africa is perhaps the first modern major city in the world to completely run dry. A report by Aryn Baker (Time's Africa Bureau Chief based in Cape Town) on "What It's Like To Live Through Cape Town's Massive Water Crisis" points to the lacune of the authorities in getting into action mode to take control of this crisis that has been looming large for a decade — now pointing towards 'Zero Day'. In this context, World Environment Day — celebrated on June 5 — serves as a crucial reminder for humanity to take stock of the impact of its actions on the planet. "Beat Plastic Pollution," the theme for 2023 rightly focuses on the urgent need to address the detrimental effects of plastic pollution on climate change, oceans, and wildlife.

Coincidentally, June 8 also marked 'World Ocean's Day', which again sends a stark reminder of how oceans have been exploited by humans for years now. Pollution, destruction of aquatic habitats, overfishing, and ocean acidification are some of the well-known examples of this exploitation. The sheer volume of plastic waste generated, coupled with its slow decomposition rate, has led to severe consequences for the planet.

Scientists point out that the link between plastic pollution and climate change lies in the carbon emissions released during plastic production and disposal. Moreover, plastic waste that finds its way into oceans poses a direct threat to marine ecosystems, disrupting marine life, and degrading delicate habitats. Additionally, animals suffer from entanglement or ingestion of plastic,

leading to devastating consequences for their health and survival.

Plastic waste, when exposed to sunlight and seawater, undergoes a process called photodegradation, releasing harmful chemicals. These chemicals contribute to ocean acidification, altering the pH balance of marine ecosystems, thereby posing a severe threat to coral reefs, shellfish, and other marine organisms, disrupting their growth, reproduction, and overall survival.

The production, use, and disposal of plastics contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate change. Plastics are derived from fossil fuels, primarily petroleum, and their manufacturing processes release significant amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) into the atmosphere. Moreover, plastics are non-biodegradable and persist in the environment for hundreds of years.

It is well established globally that in order to tackle climate change effectively, collaboration and knowledge sharing between scientists, governments, communities and individuals is vital. Governments, research institutions, and NGOs are working together to advance scientific understanding, develop innovative solutions, and share best practices. Initiatives such as the 'Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change' (IPCC) provide policymakers with up-to-date scientific assessments to inform decision-making and thereby initiate climate action programmes.

One step in this direction is the remarkable success story of Rwanda's complete ban on plastic bags in 2008 following Bhutan's decision of 1999. This visionary move led to a significant reduction in plastic waste and a shift towards more sustainable alternatives. The case study of Rwanda highlights the importance of strong government policies and the role of individual action in effecting change.

Also, the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch Cleanup" through the organisation "The Ocean Cleanup", spearheaded a groundbreaking initiative to remove plastic debris from this part of the Pacific Ocean by deploying advanced technology and extracting plastic waste, in an attempt to mitigate the threat to marine life and simultaneously raise awareness about the magnitude of the problem.

International organizations such as the 'United Nations Environment Programme' (UNEP), 'Greenpeace', and 'WWF' have been at the forefront of the fight against plastic pollution by launching awareness campaigns, conducting research, and working with governments and industries to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainable alternatives.

India has also made notable innovative strides in this direction. The "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" emphasizes waste segregation, recycling, and promoting alternatives to single-use plastics. Initiatives such as the "Plastic Waste-Free Cities" campaign is

effectively mobilizing volunteers and citizens to tackle plastic pollution at the grassroots level.

World over organisations such as the 'United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)', 'The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal', 'The Global Partnership on Marine Litter' (GPML), 'The Group of Seven (G7)' and 'Group of Twenty (G20)', to name a few, have addressed this grave issue and have implemented various measures to combat it by bringing about Legislation banning single-use plastics, imposing levies on plastic bags, and incentivizing recycling.

While progress has been made, major challenges remain in curbing the plastic menace. Addressing issues such as inadequate waste management infrastructure is crucial. International cooperation is essential to support developing countries in building their capacity to manage plastic waste effectively and sustainably. A transition towards a circular economy, where resources are reused, recycled, or repurposed, is another alternative for tackling plastic pollution. Governments and businesses should support initiatives that promote the design and production of plastic products with recycling and reusability in mind. By adopting reusable products, reducing plastic consumption, and actively participating in recycling programs, individuals can contribute to the collective effort with the government to combat this global challenge.



PRODUCTION, USE AND DISPOSAL OF PLASTICS CONTRIBUTE TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, EXACERBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

(The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti. Views expressed are personal)

Vaping at a young age increases the risk of diabetes

We all know nicotine consumption or heated not burnt (HNB) tobacco products in any form are bad, but did you know that it can lead to diabetes, too?

The current burden of diabetes is extremely high and is increasing every passing moment globally. In developing economies like India, it is mainly fueled by the accelerated prevalence of overweight, early obesity and unhealthy lifestyles like the increasing trend of consumption of nicotine products in school-going children, adolescents and young adults. The estimates in the year 2019 showed that 77 million individuals were diabetic in India, which is expected to rise to a whopping 134 million by 2045 which will have a worse outcome if associated with or triggered due to early nicotine consumption.

The Government of India in a futuristic approach realized the morbidity of this



H PANDEY

(The writer is FIAGES FLCs FALS and Consultant Surgeon and industrial health expert. Views expressed are personal)

association and launched the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, heart Diseases, and Stroke (NPCDCS) in 2010. By March 2017, non-communicable disease cells which help with planning, monitoring, and reporting activities were established in 390 (55%) of 719 districts by the govt of India which is a very good initiative to monitor and track the new cases and registered follow-ups for outcomes. Further, as diabetes is still not a notifiable condition, there are limited data available on patients treated in the private sector, thus its actual burden is unknown. As a result, the burden of diabetes in India might just be hugely underestimated as actually known.

Everyone knows nicotine consumption (Vaping) or heated not burnt (HNB) tobacco products as released via devices like IQOS, in any form is bad for you, but did you know it can lead to diabetes? And if you have diabetes, vaping can make it much worse. You might just get surprised and fearful to know how they're connected and why quitting is still one of the best things you can do for your health.

Insulin present in our body helps blood sugar to enter inside cells away from the blood, but nicotine exposure brings changes in the cells so they don't adequately respond to insulin, which increases blood sugar levels. Chemicals present in e-cigarettes or HNB are already

proven to harm cells in your body and cause inflammation which makes cells stop responding to insulin thus worsening diabetes to a greater level. Nicotine consumers have a proportionately higher risk of belly fat, which increases the lipid constituents in the body (eg LDL, VLDL). So if you still decide to use nicotine products either heated or heat not burnt types, you're 30% to 40% more likely to get type 2 diabetes than people who don't consume nicotine. The more you start early any form of nicotine consumption, the higher your risk, thus increasing your risk for type 2 diabetes even if you aren't overweight.

Nicotine product use, which was accountable for 6% of the total disease burden in

India in 2016, is another significant contributor to diabetes and heart disease now.

The Global Burden of Disease Study 2016, reported obesity and tobacco use to be one of the most important risk factors for death due to diabetes. Diabetes is a progressive disorder that leads to serious complications involving the eyes, kidneys, blood vessels, heart, and virtually all other systems of the human body, which are associated with increased costs to the family, community, and healthcare system. The "Global Burden of Disease study" conducted in 195 countries between 1990 and 2023 brought out the facts that the low- and middle-income regions had a higher burden of diabetes, while the high-income regions also were

not much behind with a significant burden of diabetes which is directly proportional to their lifestyle disorders like early nicotine or its products related consumption pattern (vaping etc).

Bidi and raw tobacco consumption start from a young age in lower socioeconomic groups while vaping and HNB are catching faster as style statements in urban kids and adolescents cause this association between diabetes and nicotine consumption to grow happily and manifolds. Breaking the habit is one of the best things you can do for your health.

Managing diabetes is challenging, and vaping in any form can make it even more so. Nicotine increases your blood sugar levels and

makes them harder to handle. People with diabetes who vape may often need larger doses of insulin to keep their blood sugar close to their target levels.

Merely treating diabetes might just not be sufficient as it will take care of only blood sugar levels, the simultaneous cessation of nicotine products needs to be the primary highlight in all sponsored or self-help programmes now. Sensitization over the direct risk link between diabetes and the early start of nicotine consumption has to be sincerely and seriously dealt with in all opportunities and fronts. The resistance to e-cigarettes menace causing increased numbers of potential diabetics or heart patients, has to continue.

Missile attack on Zelensky's hometown kills 11

AP ■ KYIV

Russian missiles rained down in a central Ukrainian city overnight, killing at least 11 people and wounding more than two dozen in a warehouse and an apartment building, regional officials said Tuesday.

The attack in Kryvyi Rih, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown, comes as Ukrainian forces are in the early stages of a counteroffensive, more than 15 months after Russia invaded.

Russian forces have unleashed overnight missile strikes repeatedly against targets across Ukraine in recent weeks, and Tuesday's toll was among the highest from a single attack.

In late April, missile strikes hit an apartment building in the central city of Uman, killing 23 people, including six children.

Images from the latest missile attack relayed by Zelenskyy on his Telegram channel showed firefighters battling a blaze as flames poked through broken windows in the damaged apartment building. Charred and damaged vehicles littered the nearby ground.

"More terrorist missiles," he wrote. "Russian killers continue



their war against residential buildings, ordinary cities and people."

The governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, Serhiy Lysak, wrote on Telegram that the bodies of seven people were recovered from a private company's warehouse, and "another four destinies were cut short" at the apartment building. He said search operations had been

called off. Kryvyi Rih Mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said on the social media app that 28 people were wounded.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its military fired missiles at Ukrainian operational reserves and a depot with Western weapons and ammunition. It said all targeted facilities were hit. Khrakiv, Ukraine's second-

largest city, meanwhile, was attacked with Iranian-made Shahed drones, and the surrounding region was shelled, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said on Telegram. The shelling wounded two civilians in the town of Shevchenkove, southeast of Khrakiv.

The mayor of Khrakiv, Ihor Terekhov, separately reported early Tuesday that the drone

strike damaged a utilities business and a warehouse in the city's northeast. Neither Terekhov nor Syniehubov referenced any casualties within Khrakiv.

The Kyiv military administration reported that the capital came under fire as well on Tuesday, but the incoming missiles were destroyed by air defences and there were no immediate reports of any casualties there. Air defences overnight shot down 10 out of 14 cruise missiles and one of four Iranian-made Shahed drones launched by Russian forces, Ukraine's General Staff said on its Facebook page.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's deputy defense minister, Hanna Maliar, told Ukrainian TV that its offensive operations were ongoing in four areas in the south and east: Near the town of Orikhiv in the southern Zaporizhzhia region; in the eastern Donetsk region near the city of Bakhmut; around the town of Marinka; and near Lyman in the Luhansk region.

The head of Ukraine's ground troops said the country's forces were "moving forward" outside Bakhmut. Oleksandr Syrskiy wrote on Telegram that

Russian forces are "losing positions on the flanks."

For weeks, Ukrainian officials have been reporting small gains west of Bakhmut, which was largely devastated in the war's longest and bloodiest battle before Moscow's forces took control last month. Over the last day, nearly a dozen front-line towns and villages in Ukrainian-held areas of Donetsk came under increased shelling as Ukrainian troops pushed forward, Zelenskyy's office said. Also on Tuesday, the Russian Defence Ministry published a video showing what it said was a German-made Leopard 2 tank and US-made Bradley fighting vehicle captured from Ukrainian forces. According to the ministry, the video was shot by Russian soldiers after fierce fighting in Zaporizhzhia, and a soldier is seen pointing at the immobilised vehicles. It wasn't immediately possible to verify the video's authenticity.

Like the Bakhmut area, battle zones in Zaporizhzhia are one of several places along the roughly 1,000-kilometre front line where Ukrainian forces have been intensifying their counteroffensive operations.

'Won't hesitate to use nukes to repel aggression'

AP ■ MOSCOW

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Tuesday that he wouldn't hesitate to order the use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons that are set to be deployed to Belarus if his country faces an aggression.

Earlier this year, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the planned deployment of short-range nuclear weapons to Moscow's neighbour and ally Belarus in a move widely seen as a warning to the West as it stepped up military support for Ukraine.

Putin has emphasised that Russia will retain control of them, but Lukashenko's statement contradicted that. "God forbid I have to make a decision to use those weapons today, but there would be no hesitation if we face an aggression," Lukashenko, known for his blustery statements, said, according to the state news agency BelTA.

Russian officials had no immediate comment on Lukashenko's remarks.

Lukashenko emphasised that it was he who had asked Putin to deploy Russian nuclear weapons to Belarus. He argued that the move was necessary to deter a potential aggression.

I believe no one would be willing to fight a country that has those weapons," Lukashenko said. "Those are weapons of deterrence." Putin said during Friday's meeting with Lukashenko that work on building facilities for the nuclear weapons will be completed by July 7-8, and they will be moved to Belarusian territory quickly after that.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended to destroy enemy troops and weapons on the battlefield.

They have a relatively short range and a much lower yield than nuclear warheads fitted to intercontinental ballistic missiles that are capable of obliterating whole cities.

Lukashenko said that Belarus doesn't need Russia's



strategic nuclear weapons to be deployed to its territory. "Am I going to fight America? No," he said.

The Belarusian leader added, however, that Belarus was readying facilities for intercontinental nuclear-tipped missiles as well, just in case.

Along with Ukraine and Kazakhstan, Belarus hosted a significant share of Soviet nuclear arsenals when they were all part of the Soviet Union.

Those weapons were withdrawn to Russia after the 1991 Soviet collapse under a deal sponsored by the US.

Russia didn't say how many of its tactical nuclear weapons would be sent to Belarus.

The US government believes Russia has about 2,000 tactical nuclear weapons, which include bombs that can be carried by aircraft, warheads for short-range missiles and artillery rounds.

Russia used Belarus' territory to send its troops into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and has kept forces and weapons on the territory of its ally.

Lukashenko, who has been in power for 29 years, has relied on Russia's political and economic support to survive months of protests, mass arrests and Western sanctions following an election in 2020 that kept him in power but was widely seen at home and abroad as rigged.

Earthquake jolts Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A moderate 5.6-magnitude earthquake on Tuesday jolted parts of Pakistan, including the country's capital Islamabad, spreading panic and forcing people to run out of their homes. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the earthquake was felt at 1:04 pm local, with its depth at 10 kilometres, Geo News reported. The quake's epicentre was eastern Kashmir, the PMD said, with its longitude at 75.97 E and latitude at 33.32 N.

Tremors were felt in Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar, prompting people to rush out of their offices and homes. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage to property. In Punjab, the tremors were felt in Shakar Garh, Chichawatni, Sialkot, Mandi Bahaudin, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Hafizabad, and Zafarwal.

Attack on military installations pre-planned

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan said on Tuesday that the attack on military installations in the country last month following his arrest was all "pre-planned" to launch a crackdown against his party with "mind-boggling precision". Khan, 70, in a series of tweets on Tuesday, lambasted the ruling alliance, a day after the National Assembly adopted a resolution demanding speedy action against a political party involved in the May 9 violence, without naming his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

Khan, also the chief of PTI said, "The simplest way to find out who was responsible for the arson on the 9th of May, is to ask ourselves the billion-rupee question that who gained and benefited the most from the violence. Clearly, it wasn't PTI." The former premier also



asked, "How come within 48 hours (after the attack on military installations) there was the most well-planned operation conducted with mind-boggling precision — 10,000 PTI workers, supporters and pro-media persons were either jailed or incapacitated. Very clearly this was all preplanned."

Khan has virtually been under house arrest at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore as the Punjab police have taken over its control, and

Imran open to dialogue with military establishment

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has ruled out talks with the Shehbaz Sharif-led federal government but appeared eager to initiate a dialogue with the military establishment, calling them the "real" decision-makers in the country.

Talking to reporters on Monday after his appearance at the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in connection with multiple cases, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chairman said that politicians, including the incumbent rulers, were "powerless" and they have no authority to conduct the dialogue.

Responding to a question whether he was ready to hold talks with politicians on the

charter of economy, Khan claimed the establishment is the "real decision maker and power is concentrated" within the military, the Dawn newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Pakistan Army chief Gen Asim Munir has vowed to bring to justice all those "responsible for bringing shame to the nation on May 9" and said that such "orchestrated tragic incidents" would never be allowed again at any cost.

The PTI chief also accused former Army Chief General (ret.) Qamar Javed Bajwa of "backstabbing" him and said that he could have sacked Bajwa on at least three different occasions but exercised restraint, the report said.

no PTI worker is allowed to stay there.

Slamming the country's law enforcement agencies, the former cricketer-turned-politician said, "...our own security forces are raiding our houses in the middle of the night, breaking doors, vandalising the house and robbing it."

He further claimed, "Women are abused, harassed and threatened, and if the person is not there, then their boys, fathers and even servants are picked up and jailed."

Alleging that his sisters' driver and cook were picked up when the police couldn't find her son, Khan said, "My sisters' driver and cook Rahim were picked up when the police couldn't find her so." Adding that both were jailed packed like sardines, the PTI chief said, "Rahim suffered breathing problems, and since his release, he has been on the ventilator fighting for his life."

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NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company :-

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert.No.	Dist.No.	Lost Shares
1	I 0000857	INDRAVADAN RANCHOODAS SHAH	1131546	310666554-753	200
2	M 0004640	MOTI LAL SHARMA	1131346	310577890-8441	552
3	C 0002276	CHANDRA KALA TODI SURYA PRAKASH TODI	90143421-26 90206680-84	10001170-2229 15580200-449	300 250
4	SRF0147720	SEEMA DAS KUNDU	1131386 90123733 90123734	310592646 9075106-55 9075156-205	2200 50 50
5	A 0001576	ASHOK SATYAPRIYA LACHAKE	1125486 28642 54785 95085 300777-81 449777-81 90150311-12 1131619	308111890-2289 2115501 2809462 4085083 15701154-233 23720946-1028 10377090-184 310693322	25 8 16 83 83 95 1240
6	SRF0050629	K R THANGAM L MEEENAKSHY K SUGAVANAM	318723	16079060-109	50
7	SRF0126361	KEKI NARIMAN MARKER THIRITY KEKI MARKER ROHIN KEKI MARKER	318723 467723-27 590236 590236 590237 590237 590238 590238 590239 1131256 90251835	16079060-109 24098852-935 2589576-600 2620801-07 6754824-41 2620808-25 3392244-59 5259931-46 5259947-63 16079110-142 16079143-143 310538926-40265 6754774-823	50 84 25 7 18 18 16 16 17 33 1 1340 50
8	J 0000177	JAI KANWAR GUPTA	4429 122538 90021397 90158856 1125489	1264061-80 5192899-908 6670414-33 12071365-84 308292478-757	20 10 20 20 280
9	J 0001657	JAGDISH PRASAD SHARMA	123076 975672 90021788 1131834 68494 130807	5202817-34 18565226-61 6683858-93 310784378-737 3439569-76 5450264-79	18 36 36 360 8 16
10	N 0003175	NIRMAL KEDIA	328236-38 346672 346674 477236-38 90166781-82	16277222-78 16661750-59 16661765-66 24297014-70 12740800-899	57 10 2 57 100

Any person having any claim/objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim/objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.
 Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for SRF LIMITED
 Sd/-
RAJAT LAKHANPAL
 Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance) & Company Secretary

Place: Gurugram
 Date: 13-06-2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
 To be known to all that my client, (1) SHRI VINIT LAL S/O SHRI J. LAL AND (2) MRS. NEER LAL W/O SHRI VINIT LAL, BOTH RESIDENTS OF FLAT NO.C-171, GROUND FLOOR, GOLF VIEW APARTMENTS, SAKET, MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110017, are the owners of DDA HSG FLAT NO.177, ON GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK-C, SITUATED AT SAKET, MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110017, VIDE DDA FILE NO.F.3212/17/MIG. Have applied for Conversion of leasehold from freehold of the aforesaid property in DDA. The original documents i.e. Original ALLOTMENT LETTER, DDA POSSESSION LETTER, NOC FOR WATER & ELECTRICITY CONNECTION AND SITE POSSESSION SLIP of the above said property have been lost or misplace by our client and is not traceable despite of his best efforts. An F.I.R./NDR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No. 54706/2023 dated 13.06.2023. Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or claim in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9810080559 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LR&Housing) M/O or Director (Housing), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)
 Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 16 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE
 This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

- 1)ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED-AI181 REG. NO.HR55AM3600-YOM 2022
- 2) TATA ACE REG. NO. DL1LAE5457-YOM-2021
- 3) TATA ACE REG. NO. DL1LAH3704-YOM-2022
- 4) EICHER REG. NO. HR55AN4536-YOM-2022
- 5) TATA 1512 REG. NO. DL1GE0578-YOM-2022
- 6)TATA MOTORS LTD.-CB_LPT_1512 REG. NO.HR38AE5655-YOM-2022
- 7)TATA MOTORS LTD.-CB_LPT_1512 REG. NO.HR38AE5793-YOM-2022
- 8) TATA MOTOR LPT 1512 REG. NO. UP16HT5739-YOM-2021
- 9) TATA LP 1512 REG. NO.HR38AB4527-YOM-2020
- 10)ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED - CB AL1214 REG. NO. UP80ET4648-YOM -2019
- 11)ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED-CB-AL 1618 FULLY BUILT CONTAINER REG. NO. HR38Y5141-YOM -2018
- 12) TATA ACE REG. NO.DL1LAF8956-YOM-2021

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'SL can't afford to hold snap presidential polls'

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka is not in the position to hold a snap presidential election this year because of the ongoing economic crisis and the government's focus is on debt restructuring, Cabinet Spokesman Bandula Gunawardena said on Tuesday. "No election would be possible this year as the state finances have not improved", Gunawardena said while responding to speculation that the government might opt to hold a snap presidential election.

He said the government's focus, for now, is centred on successfully ending the process of debt restructuring.

Former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as the President of Sri Lanka by the Parliament to serve the remainder of ex-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa's term, which was supposed to end in November 2024. The IMF extended a nearly USD 3 billion bailout facility to debt-ridden Sri Lanka to help stabilise the country's economy after it was jolted by a devastating economic crisis last year.

"Without restructuring our debt it will not be possible to obtain any more foreign loans", Gunawardena, also the Minister of Transport and Highways and Minister of Mass Media, said, citing the example of 53 million dollars needed for improving the roads infrastructure. "Until we pay back the existing loans we will not be able to borrow", he stressed. Sri Lanka has a tight September deadline from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to conclude its outstanding debt.

The nearly USD 3 billion bailout from the IMF that was approved on March 20 was delayed due to the need to restructure debt. President Wickremesinghe, who is also the finance minister, is also under mounting criticism for holding back the local council election claiming the treasury was short of funds to allocate money for election expenditure. The opposition who blamed Wickremesinghe for postponing elections due to fear of losing has petitioned the highest court for intervention in the matter.

Lavrov: Russia seeks expansion in ties with Pak

Islamabad (PTI): Russia is keen to expand and deepen bilateral ties with Pakistan as the first shipment carrying discounted Russian oil reached Karachi Port at the weekend, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

Lavrov made these remarks in a video message on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Islamabad, the Express Tribune newspaper reported.

He said Russia views Pakistan as a "key international partner in the joint efforts to combat common security challenges and threats, including transborder crime and terrorism."

Pakistan on Monday began transporting the much-anticipated discounted Russian crude oil to a refinery here in the cash-strapped country's port city, a development that is likely to provide relief to the people hit by skyrocketing inflation.

The first shipment of discounted Russian crude oil arrived in Karachi on Sunday after an agreement was inked between Islamabad and Moscow in April.

"We know about the great interest and respect that the Pakistani people have towards Russia and President Vladimir Putin. We appreciate it very much," the Russian foreign minister said in a statement.

He said that there had been periods in bilateral relations over the past three-quarters of a century.

Palestinian Prez begins China visit

Beijing (AP): Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas began a visit to China on Tuesday that comes as Beijing is seeking a larger role in Middle East politics and competing for energy resources.

In announcing the visit, China's Foreign Ministry said China was willing to help broker relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government that have deteriorated to the lowest level in recent years. The ministry did not say who Abbas would meet in Beijing or give other details of his four-day visit.

Increased fighting over the last year between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank has resulted in the deadliest period of violence between the sides in years in that territory.

The visit also comes after China hosted talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia that resulted in the two restoring diplomatic relations.

That development was seen as representing a diplomatic victory for China as Gulf Arab states perceive the United States slowly withdrawing from the wider region.

Panic as tour boat capsizes in Erie Canal water tunnel

AP ■ LOCKPORT (US)

A passenger thrown from a boat that flipped over with 29 people aboard during a tour of a dimly lit cavern system said he fought to breathe in the chilly water under the capsized craft.

The flat-bottomed boat carrying local hospitality workers capsized Monday during a tour of an historic underground water tunnel off the Erie Canal in the western New York city of Lockport, killing one person.

"By the time I realised what happened, the boat was on top of me and I couldn't find any air pockets or anything. And I'm just trying to, like, breathe because I'm underwater," survivor Daniel Morrisette told ABC's "Good Morning America" in an interview aired Tuesday. The unidentified person who died also was trapped after

the boat operated by Lockport Cave Tours capsized. Eleven people were brought to hospitals, mostly with minor injuries, according to officials.

Elizabeth Morrisette told GMA people were panicking and yelling loudly as they were thrown into the water, which emergency officials said was between 5 feet and 6 feet deep. Some passengers were able to get to safety. Emergency crews used an inflatable boat to rescue about 16 others, fire officials said.

City of Lockport Police were investigating the accident. An email seeking an update was sent to the police chief Tuesday. The tours take visitors on an underground boat ride through a rough-hewn tunnel, which was blasted out in the 19th century to transport canal water as an industrial power source.

'AI helped create last Beatles record'

London (AP): Artificial intelligence has been used to extract John Lennon's voice from an old demo to create "the last Beatles record," Paul McCartney said Tuesday.

McCartney, 80, told the BBC that the technology was used to separate the Beatles' voices from background sounds during the making of director Peter Jackson's 2021 documentary series, "The Beatles: Get Back." The new song is set to be released later this year, he said.

Jackson was "able to extricate John's voice from a ropery little bit of cassette and a piano," McCartney told BBC radio. "He could separate them with AI, he'd tell the machine That's

a voice, this is a guitar, lose the guitar."

"So when we came to make what will be the last Beatles record, it was a demo that John had that we worked on," he added. "We were able to take John's voice and get it pure through this AI so then we could mix the record as you would do. It gives you some sort of leeway."

McCartney described AI technology as "kind of scary but exciting," adding: "We will just have to see where that leads." The same technology enabled McCartney to "duet" virtually with Lennon, who was murdered in 1980, on "I've Got a Feeling" last year at Glastonbury Festival.

Counter-terror police join probe series of killings on Nottingham

PTI ■ LONDON

British police investigating a "serious incident" in the central England city of Nottingham, where a man was arrested on suspicion of murder on Tuesday after three people were found dead, have said they are keeping an "open mind" over the motive and working alongside counter-terrorism police.

Nottinghamshire Police said they do not believe there is anyone else involved in the incident, which also left three people injured and hospitalised - one of whom is in critical condition.

The chief of the force said they are at the early stages of the investigation and need to determine the motives behind the "horrific and tragic" series of events before releasing further information.

"We are keeping an open mind as we investigate the circumstances surrounding these incidents and are working alongside Counter Terrorism Policing to establish the facts - as we would normally do in these types of circumstances," said Chief Constable Kate Meynell. "We do have a man in custody who has been arrested on suspicion of murder. Currently, we do not believe there is anyone else involved in this incident," Meynell said.

"It is safe to go into the city centre, but there are a number of streets that will remain closed, including Ilkeston Road, Magdala Street, Milton Street and Maple Street. This is so officers can gather evidence in order to understand what has happened," she added.



Police officers block a road in Nottingham, Britain, on Tuesday

AP/PTI

Earlier, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he is monitoring developments as a 31-year-old man was arrested on Tuesday. Two people were found dead on one street in Nottingham city centre, around 200km north of London, and the third victim was found dead on another street of the city in the early hours of Tuesday. In the third incident, a white van attempted to run over three people on a different street nearby, and those

three victims remain in a hospital after suffering injuries. "I want to thank the police and emergency services for their ongoing response to the shocking incident in Nottingham this morning. I am being kept updated on developments," tweeted Sunak. "The police must be given the time to undertake their work. My thoughts are with those injured and the family and loved ones of those who have lost their lives," he said. UK Home Secretary Suella

Braverman also took to Twitter to express her shock and said she was in contact with the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police. "I am shocked and saddened that three people have lost their lives today in Nottingham. My thoughts are with those affected by this incident," said Braverman. Nottinghamshire Police said the 31-year-old man they arrested on suspicion of murder remains in police custody as investigations remain ongoing.

Driver denied bail in fatal Australian bus crash case

Cessnock (Australia): A bus driver was driving too fast when the vehicle rolled on its side and hit a guard rail in heavy fog in an Australian wine region, killing 10 wedding guests and injuring 25 others, police alleged Tuesday.

Brett Andrew Button, 58, was driving 35 passengers on a 20-minute journey from a wedding reception at the Wandin Estate Winery to the town of Singleton, both in the Hunter Valley wine region of New South Wales state, when the 2009 Volvo bus rolled at a roundabout late Sunday.

Button had been in police custody but was released on bail when he appeared in the Cessnock Local Court on Tuesday charged with 10 counts of dangerous driving in relation to each death and one count of negligent driving.

Earlier, acting Police Assistant Commissioner David Waddell alleged that Button "entered that roundabout driving in a manner that was inconsistent with the conditions."

"Obviously, the speed was too quick for him to negotiate that roundabout, causing the vehicle to fall onto its left side and cause those injuries," Waddell told reporters.

It was Australia's most deadly road accident since 1994, when a bus skidded on its side across a highway and down a steep embankment in Brisbane, killing 12 people and injuring 38.

Police said Button underwent mandatory testing for drugs and alcohol Sunday night but no impairment was detected. AP

UK's public inquiry into govt's handling of Covid pandemic begins hearing

AP ■ LONDON

The United Kingdom's public inquiry into the country's preparedness and handling of COVID-19 opened for hearings in London on Tuesday amid a vigil by some bereaved families who lost loved ones during the pandemic.

The independent inquiry was formally set up last year by then prime minister Boris Johnson and began hearing evidence for the first time in the wake of some controversy over access to some government documents and messages.

The probe is being chaired by Baroness Heather Hallett, who published a timetable to say nearly six weeks of hearings are planned during the first phase of Module 1, which will run until July 20.

"I have promised many times that those who suffered hardship and loss are and will always be at the heart of the inquiry, and I have done my very best within the constraints upon me of time, resources, and my terms of reference to fulfil that promise," said Baroness Hallett in her opening statement.

Addressing the small group of families gathered outside the Dorland House inquiry headquarters, the House of Lords peer said she intended to answer three key questions related to the pandemic - was

the UK properly prepared; and the response appropriate; and can we learn lessons for the future?

"The pandemic affected everyone in the United Kingdom and, in many cases, continues to have a lasting impact on lives. Yet every experience is unique," she said in her call out for evidence earlier this month.

"By sharing the personal impact the pandemic had on you, your life and your loved ones, you can help me and the Inquiry's legal team to shape my recommendations so that the UK is better prepared in the future. The scale of the pandemic was unprecedented, but no one's story is the same as yours, so please help me understand the full picture by sharing your story. Every single story will matter," she said.

Under the "Every Story Matters" initiative, the inquiry has asked people to share their stories to help make recommendations for the future, by providing evidence about the human impact of the pandemic on the United Kingdom population.

It provides an opportunity for those affected by the pandemic to share their experiences without the formality of giving evidence or attending a public hearing, the inquiry said of its online and offline options open to people to share their experiences.

Admiral with Pacific experience tapped as next top naval leader

Washington (AP): A Navy admiral with extensive experience in the Indo-Pacific has been recommended to be the service's next top leader, officials said Monday.

Admiral Samuel Paparo, current commander of the Navy's Pacific Fleet, was recommended by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and is on tap to be nominated as the next chief of naval operations, although President Joe Biden has not yet formally signed off on it, the officials said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because no public announcement has been made.

The selection of Paparo comes as a bit of a surprise, since he had long been expected to move up to take over US Indo-Pacific Command. Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the current vice chief of naval operations, had been widely mentioned as a leading candidate for the top Navy job.

If Franchetti were selected she would have become the first woman to be a military service chief and the first woman to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Women have served as military service secretaries as political appointees, but never as their top uniformed officer. This was seen as a chance for a woman to break another all-male precedent. Biden is expected to approve the recommendation, but all nominations for senior military jobs are currently stalled.

Shocked by Republicans' support for Trump after indictment: Jill

AP ■ NEW YORK

Jill Biden in her first solo outing of the 2024 campaign said Monday it was "a little shocking" that a sizeable number of Republicans are still thinking of voting for Donald Trump even after his federal indictment, a subject that her husband has tried to avoid speaking about.

She told Democratic donors that the 2024 election presents a choice between what she described as the "strong, steady leadership" of President Joe Biden and the "chaos and corruption, hatred and division" of "MAGA Republicans."

The first lady, speaking to a small group of Democrats in an apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side, said she was surprised to see a headline before her flight landed that described a majority of Republicans in a poll saying they were still planning to vote for Trump, who is set to appear in a Florida court on Tuesday.

"They don't care about the indictment. So that's a little shocking, I think," she said. The first lady, opening a



campaign swing on the East and West coasts after a grueling six-day trip abroad, was at times grim as she referred to Trump's time in office and the stakes for next year's election, saying, "We cannot go back to those dark days."

Though the 2024 election in which Biden is seeking reelection is more than a year away, helping him win a second term is a top priority for the first lady, who is also a community college English professor.

She started a three-day fundraising swing Monday in New York City before flying later that night to California. She is scheduled to hold events in San Francisco and Los Angeles, with most of her time to be spent raking in

money at four political events, including two in California's Bay Area, to benefit the president's campaign, the Democratic National Committee and Democratic state party committees.

Biden will also join Gabrielle Giffords at a separate event in Los Angeles to mark 30 years of anti-gun violence work by the Giffords Law Center, a nonprofit led by the former congresswoman. Giffords was shot in the head in 2011 during a constituent event in her Arizona district.

As she was in 2020 and the 2022 campaigns, Jill Biden will be active in the 2024 election cycle, helping the Democratic Party build up its resources and infrastructure while reminding supporters of what's at stake.

That message was stark Monday, when she urged donors to "think about where we were three years ago."

"We know what's in store with the MAGA Republicans. We just know it, right? We know because we've lived it. We've seen it," she said. "We know what it's like to see US policy tweeted out in late-night tweet-storms."

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, RITA SHARMA D/O SHRI SANJAY SINGH R/O HOUSE NO.212, MUNIRKA VILLAGE, NEW DELHI-110027, is the owner of FLAT NO.42, MUNIRKA CO-OPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETY LTD., PLOT NO.11, SECTOR-9, DWARKA, NEW DELHI, have applied for Conversion of leasehold from freehold of the aforesaid property in DDA. The original documents i.e. Original ALLOTMENT LETTER and POSSESSION LETTER of the above said property have been lost or misplaced by my client and is not traceable in spite of his best efforts. An FIR/NCR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No. 545/19/2023) dated 12.06.2023. 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. 9650798751 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Group Housing) or Director (Group Housing), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate) Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, T6 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-110013

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Anjan Kumar Sehgal S/o Late Hans Raj Sehgal, R/o A-12, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024 do hereby notify for public at large that he is executing the Will Dated 16.11.2016 of her daughter Late Ashima Sehgal after her death, who expired on 19.02.2021 and as per her will deed made on dated 16.11.2016 in favour of my client. Any person/s have objection/claim (s), interest for the proposed Will Deed Registration of aforesaid Ashima Sehgal may contact the undersigned within 2 days from the publication of the notice, failing which the claim of any such person will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and the Will Deed shall be Registered and implemented with immediate effect.

AMIT ANAND (ADVOCATE), 102, G.K. House, Plot No. 187/A, Sant Nagar, New Delhi-110065 M.No. 9958088885

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY MARINE DEPARTMENT

No. MD/ACCTS-WK-R/4/2022/749 Dated, the 7th June, 2023 THIRDO Corrigendum to e-Tender Call Notice No. MD/ACCTS-WK-R/4/2022/499 dt. 19/04/2023 The 3rd Corrigendum to the e-Tender Call Notice No. MD/ACCTS/WK/R/4/2022/499 dated 19.04.2023 for the work "Supply of 01 No.60 Ton Bollard Pull Tug along with Manning Crew on Hire for Marine Operation at SPMs and Inside Harbour at Paradip for a period of seven years" has been published in the e-Procurement system Government of India. For further details, please log on to the Website: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app. Dy. Conservator, Paradip Port Authority PPA/PR/21/2023-24, Dt. 08/06/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all, TAHIR HASAN S/O LATE NIAZ HASAN KHAN R/O FLAT NO.175, GROUND FLOOR, SIDHARTH ENCLAVE, NEW DELHI-110014 Mutatee/Owner of DDA SFS FLAT NO. 175, on GROUND FLOOR (alongwith Servant Quarter No.48), CAT-III, SIDHARTH ENCLAVE, NEW DELHI-110014 have applied for certified copies & conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents i.e. Allocation Letter, Demand/Allotment Letter, NOC For Water and Electricity Connection, Site Possession Slip, Mutation Letter & Other Relevant Documents of the above said flat has been lost. An FIR/NCR/LR No. 547929/2023 dated 13/06/2023 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person/s claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9415218142 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) SFS or Director (H)-SFS, Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed that I Shreyasi Shrivastava D/o Late Deepika Shrivastava G/o Late Mithlesh Saxena R/o L-27/F Sheikh Sarai Phase-2 New Delhi-110017 the owner of LIG Flat No. L-27/F Second floor and I have Lost/Misplaced the original allotment cum demand letter, possession letter, NOC, water connection and site possession slip in respect of the above said flat and I have Lodged an FIR/NCR Vide LR No. 478355/2023 dated 24/5/2023 with police station crime branch delhi. if anybody finds the said documents inform me at above said address, if any other claimant has any right in the aforesaid property, he should file an FIR and give Intimation to Dy/Asst. Director LIG(Lab Housing) DDA Vikas Sadan INA New Delhi within 15 Days from the date of issue of this notice. Thanks,

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Ruchi Kapoor w/o Mr. Gaurav Kapoor who is owner of the Ground Floor without roof/terrace rights of Property Bearing No. 3/52, area measuring 100 sq. yds., situated at Ramesh Nagar, New Delhi-110015 vide Sale deed dated 10.06.2021 (Document No. 4850) purchased from Mr. Pritpal Singh s/o Late Mr. Sujay Singh and same to be finance & mortgage by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. That the Surviving Member Certificate (SMC) of Late Mr. Sujay Singh is Lost/Misplaced/Not available. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/interest)/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which I shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Lucem Legal LLP B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP - 201301, Contact # 0120-4269375

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I.D. JOINTS WITH EPDM RUBBER RING

FOR THE YEAR 2023 (2nd Attempt) Tender ID:- 598132

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I.D. Joints with EPDM Rubber ring (75 to 315mm Dia for various dia of PVC Pipes.) Confirming to Relevant IS or as per given specification from Indian Manufacturer only. Estimated amount Rs. 411.97 Lacs (Without GST). Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & down load the Tender documents at free of cost from website:- https://www.nprocure.com The last date of submission of online tender is 14-6-2023. No/INF/VPN/2023/G/572

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby brought to the notice of public at large that the following original documents of property being all that land in Survey No. 91/13 (Part), situated at Gachibowli village, Serilingampalli Mandal, Rangareddy Distt., have been lost and not in possession of Present owner i.e. (1) Original Provisional Allotment letter dated 18.03.2017, (2) Original Final Allotment letter dated 13.04.2017, (3) Original Provisional Certificate dated 15.09.2017, (4) Original letter dated 04.10.2017, the said documents are in the name of Bhegwal Products Ltd. The owner has lodged online police complaint vide I.R. No. 473289/2023 dated 23.05.2023 as well as publishing this notice in this regard. Any person (other than owner) who comes in knowledge of possession of aforementioned Original documents, may please return the same to above mentioned property address or at below mentioned address. Any person or authority dealing with the deed and / or the aforesaid Property and/or deriving any benefit by impersonation or claiming any interest in the aforesaid property on the basis of aforementioned Original documents or in any manner whatsoever, he/she/it shall do so at his/her/its own cost, expense, liability and risk or may also send his/her/their claims in writing to the undersigned along with documentary evidence in support of the claim within 15 days from date of publication of this notice.

Sushil Kumar Singh (Advocate) F-10, LGF, Jangpura Ext., New Delhi-110014

उपरो राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

उपरो राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण का कार्यालय बरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक, विद्युत सम्पन्न-दिल्लीय सीएसई सिटी, गांधीबाजार | E-Mail: ed2@upsidc.com

अपराकारीन ई-निविदा सूचना

सम्बन्धित सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न योजनाओं में स्थित आचारिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत विकार/अनुपयान कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/संस्थानों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों/उद्येकारों से अपराकारीन ई-निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है।

Table with 3 columns: क्रम, कार्य का नाम, बाई बिल म/लक्ष. 1. Upgradation of Conventional sodium street lights to LED along with AMC for three years under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at IA, Etah & IIDC Etah. 2. Upgradation of Conventional sodium street lights to LED along with AMC for three years under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at IA, Salempur (Hathras). 3. Providing LED High Mast Lighting system under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at IA, Etah, IIDC Etah and IA, Salempur (Hathras).

निविदा दिनांक 14.06.2023 को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 21.06.2023 को 18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 22.06.2023 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात् खोला जाएगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा अपलोड राशय पत्रों की मूल प्रतियाँ निविदा खोलने के बाद 03 कार्यदिवस में पंजीकृत डाक / व्यक्तिगत रूप से कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। नोट: 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर एवं जीएसटी/सीडी सहित सब अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उपरो राज्य सरकार के अधीन आने वाले निगमों/संस्थानों एवं Eligibility Criteria के अनुसार समस्त प्रश्न अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अथवा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जाएगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी website: www.onlineupsidc.com पर स्वायत्त लिंक यूटिलिटी की website: https://tender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है। बरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक, अपराकारीन विकास प्राधिकरण, गांधीबाजार

Chinese man arrested over anti-US graffiti

Hong Kong (AP): Hong Kong police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly spray-painted graffiti on the wall and gate of the US Consulate, according to media reports and the police.

Photos from local media including the South China Morning Post showed the English word "hegemony" and the Chinese words for "double standards" painted in white on the gate and a nearby wall.

The vandalism comes amid a deterioration in US-Chinese relations as the nations clash over trade issues and tensions over Taiwan, a self-governed island that China claims is part of its territory. Police said that they received a report at 5.22 a.m. from the consulate reporting the vandalism. They arrested a 47-year-old man surnamed Wen from mainland China on suspicion of criminal damage. Offenders found guilty of destroying or damaging property could face a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail. The consulate did not immediately comment when contacted by The Associated Press. The graffiti was removed by late Tuesday morning.

'22 US troops injured in Syria chopper accident'

Beirut (AP): A helicopter accident in northeastern Syria over the weekend left 22 American service members injured, the US military said Tuesday, adding that the cause of the accident was under investigation and that no enemy fire was involved.

The military statement said the service members were receiving treatment and 10 were moved to "higher care facilities" outside the region. "A helicopter mishap in northeastern Syria resulted in the injuries of various degrees of 22 US service members," it said. "No enemy fire was reported."

A spokesman for the US-backed Syrian Kurdish forces did not immediately respond to an Associated Press request for comment. There are at least 900 US forces in Syria on average, along with an undisclosed number of contractors. US special operations forces also move in and out of the country, but are usually in small teams and are not included in the official count. US forces have been in Syria since 2015 to advise and assist the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the fight

against the militant Islamic State group. Since the extremist group was defeated in Syria in March 2019, US troops have been trying to prevent any comeback by IS, which swept through Iraq and Syria in 2014, taking control of large swaths of territory.

However, IS sleeper cells remain a threat. There are also about 10,000 IS fighters held in detention facilities in Syria and tens of thousands of their family members living in two refugee camps in the country's northeast. Over the past years, U.S. troops have been subjected to attacks carried out by IS members and Iran-backed fighters there. In late March, a drone attack on a U.S. base killed a contractor and wounded five American troops and another contractor. In retaliation, U.S. fighter jets struck several locations around the eastern province of Deir el-Zour, which borders Iraq. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at the time that the strikes were a response to the drone attack as well as a series of recent attacks against US-led coalition forces in Syria by groups affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

Office of the Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh Email : sepwdp@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 3235(j) / 984C-03(Yata 'A')/2023 Dated : 12/06/2023 National Competitive E-Tender Notice The Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand in anticipation of sanction for following works. All other information will be available from date 15/06/2023 at 5.00 Pm onward on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in

Table with 7 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Earnest Money (in Lac), Cost of Tender (₹), Validity of Tender (day), Period of Completion (months), Contractor's Category of Registration. 1. PD, PWD, Pithoragarh Maintenance work of Chupkote bend Jamrari Motor Road transferred from PMGSY (One time maintenance). 2. PD, PWD, Pithoragarh Maintenance work of Salla Motor Road from km. 5 of Gurana Gogina motor road transferred from PMGSY (One time maintenance). 3. PD, PWD, Didihat Maintenance work of Nachani to Bansagar Motor Road transferred from PMGSY (One time maintenance). 4. TD, PWD, Berinag Maintenance work of Dasaithal to Agron Motor Road transferred from PMGSY (One time maintenance). 5. PD, PWD, Champawat Maintenance work of Champawat Khark-Karki Mudiyani Motor Road transferred from PMGSY Champawat (One time maintenance).

Sensex jumps 418 pts to close at 6-mth high

Nifty above 17,700 mark on macro data push

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex spurted 418 points to settle at more than six-month high while Nifty closed above the 17,700 mark on Tuesday on positive domestic macroeconomic data and gains in global markets. Buying in index majors Reliance Industries and ITC also added to the optimism in equities.

Climbing for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 418.45 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at 63,143.16, a level not seen since December 1 when the barometer closed at an all-time high. During the day, the index advanced 452.76 points or 0.72 per cent to 63,177.47.

The NSE Nifty climbed 114.65 points or 0.62 per cent to end at 18,716.15.

From the Sensex pack, ITC, Titan, Asian Paints, Reliance, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Nestle and ICICI Bank were the major gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, HCL Technologies, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

"The sustained flow of better-than-expected domestic macroeconomic data kept the market mood afloat, with the Nifty



midcap trading to all-time highs. "Attention now turns to the release of US inflation data and the upcoming Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) announcement, where the view is optimistic on keeping rates on hold," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Retail inflation declined to a 25-month low of 4.25 per cent in May, mainly on account of softening prices of food and fuel items. This is the fourth straight month when retail inflation has declined and the third straight month of Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation remaining within the RBI's comfort zone of below 6 per cent.

India's industrial production growth rose to 4.2 per cent in April from 1.7 per cent in March 2023, mainly due to good performance by the manufacturing and mining sectors, according to official data released on Monday.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.17 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.82 per cent.

Among the indices, realty rallied 2.94 per cent, consumer durables zoomed 1.80 per cent, telecommunication (1.69 per

cent), FMCG (1.38 per cent), healthcare (1.04 per cent), metal (1.03 per cent) and commodities (0.90 per cent).

Services emerged as the only laggard. "Nifty rose for the second consecutive session aided by positive overnight cues. Global equities were largely up on Tuesday, taking cues from an upbeat session on Wall Street ahead of key US inflation data that could shape the outlook for Federal Reserve monetary policy," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

As many as 2,117 stocks advanced, while 1,469 declined and 136 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Among others, shares of Zee Entertainment Enterprises declined more than 6 per cent in day trade before settling nearly 1 per cent lower on Tuesday after Sebi banned Essel Group chairman Subhash Chandra and ZEEL's Punit Goenka from holding any directorial or key managerial position in any listed firm.

Tyre maker F Ltd became the first company to cross the Rs 1 lakh share price in intra-day trade with the stock rising more than 1 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 1,00,300 apiece. The stock closed up by 1.02 per cent at Rs 99,950.65.

Sebi comes out with framework for execution-only platforms for investing in direct MF schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital market watchdog Sebi on Tuesday introduced a regulatory framework for 'Execution Only Platforms' for direct plans of mutual fund schemes in a bid to protect the investors dealing in such schemes.

The execution-only platform allows transactions in direct plans of mutual funds without the help of distributors.

The new framework would be applicable from September 1, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its circular.

Over the past few years, direct plans of mutual fund schemes have gained traction among investors as such schemes are cheaper compared to the regular plans, which include a commission paid to distributors. This resulted in mushrooming of several online platforms that provide the facility of investing in direct plans.

Sebi noted that several entities including investment advisors and sock brokers are providing execution services, like the purchase and redemption of direct plans of mutual fund schemes, through the digital mode. Such platforms are often availed by investors who are not their clients. At present, there is no regulatory framework in place to facilitate the provision of such "execution only services" in direct plans of mutual fund schemes, independent of the regulatory requirements applicable to investment advisors and stock brokers.

"While the investors may find it convenient to avail the services of such online platforms, investors who are not clients of such intermediaries may not have protection for the risks associated with such transactions," Sebi said.

Accordingly, the regulator decided to prescribe a framework for Execution Only Platforms (EOPs) for transacting in direct plans of schemes of mutual funds following the public consultation in this regard. Under the mechanism, an entity desirous of providing execution-only services in



direct plans of mutual funds can obtain registration under either of the two categories — category 1 EOP as an agent of asset management companies registered with the industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) or category 2 EOP as an agent of investor, registered as a stock broker.

The move would make it convenient for investors to put investments through EOPs and would help in ease of doing business for the platform by mandating only such appropriate regulatory compliances as is required for the EOP activity.

The regulator has also specified the nature of services that may be offered by the EOPs, cyber security requirements, pricing of services, grievance redressal mechanisms, technology related requirements among others.

"The responsibility of ensuring compliance with KYC requirements, with respect to transactions executed through both categories of EOPs by investors in mutual funds, shall lie with the AMC's," Sebi said.

With regard to Category 1 EOP, Sebi said that the entity will have to enter into agreement with the AMC's which should clearly define their rights and obligations relating to EOP services. Further the entity will have an objective, fair and transparent policy for providing execution services for products of AMC's.



'Commercial vehicle industry to record 8-10% volume growth this fiscal'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The commercial vehicle (CV) industry is likely to record moderate volume growth of around 8-10 per cent this fiscal, with the pent-up demand leveling off, a report said on Tuesday.

The growth will come amid increased government thrust on infrastructure spending despite expected muted exports on account of the uncertain global environment amid inflationary concerns, Care Edge Ratings said in its report. This growth is also expected to come on the back of the strong upcycle that the industry is witnessing despite the high base effect.

Noting that the demand remains strong across all the segments, while the medium and heavy commercial vehicles (MHCV) are expected to grow by 10-12 per cent in FY24, the light commercial vehicles (LCV) are likely to grow by 6-8 per cent aided by last-mile connectivity demand boosting e-commerce activities, it said.

"With tailwinds like healthy replacement demand, increased freight movement and increasing government infra spending and a continued boom in e-commerce, the CV industry is expected to continue its growth momentum in FY24 with moderate volume growth of 8-10 per cent. Exports are likely to remain subdued for the current fiscal year," said Arti Roy, Associate Director at CareEdge Ratings.

The recent price hikes post the implementation of phase II of the Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) emission norms will also impact CV demand, the report said.

However, the sustenance in demand is aided by healthy replacement demand, increasing freight movement amid increasing government infrastructure spending and rising economic activities, according to CareEdge Ratings.

During FY22 and FY23, the MHCV segment reported strong year-on-year volume growth of around 53 per cent and 39.7 per cent, respectively, while the LCV segment reported growth of around 21.7 per cent and 23.1 per cent, respectively, it said.



'Fuel, jewellery, grocery top 3 preferred items for people offloading ₹2,000 notes'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fuel, jewellery and daily groceries are the top three preferred items for people to offload their Rs 2,000 currency notes post the RBI's announcement of withdrawing the currency note from circulation, revealed a new survey.

The pan-India survey, conducted by location-based social network Public App, also found out that a whopping 55 per cent of people are planning to deposit their currency notes at the bank while 23 per cent and 22 per cent are planning to spend them and get them exchanged, respectively.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on May 19 made a surprise announcement of the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 currency notes but gave the public time till September 30 to either deposit the Rs 2,000 notes in accounts or exchange them at banks.

In about two weeks, almost half of the Rs 2,000 currency notes in circulation, worth around Rs 1.8 lakh crore, came back to the banking system, the RBI informed recently.

The poll results, shedding light on the citizens' perspective and providing valuable insights into their experiences during

this transition, are based on over one lakh responses across 22 states.

"In a bid to spend their Rs 2,000 currency notes, people are spending available cash on petrol and diesel, gold and jewellery, and daily groceries," said the survey. When asked if they were facing issues while getting their notes exchanged, according to the survey, 61 per cent claimed they encountered no difficulty in the process.

It was easiest in Kerala (75 per cent), followed by Andhra Pradesh (53 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (50 per cent).

"But, 42 per cent of the respondents faced rejection from the local Public while using Rs 2,000 Banknotes despite the deadline," it said.

It also noted that where 51 per cent of respondents are of the opinion that the government should have given them more time to exchange their Rs 2,000 notes, 44 per cent of them complained that the exchange of notes should have been higher than Rs 20,000.

People can deposit the Rs 2,000 currency note or exchange it with lower denomination currency but the exchange is allowed up to Rs 20,000 at a time.

Disinflation process to be slow, says RBI Governor Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Tuesday said the disinflation process in India will be slow.

"As per our current assessment, the disinflation process is likely to be slow and protracted with convergence to the inflation target of 4 per cent being achieved over the medium-term," Das said in his address at the Summer Meetings organised by Central Banking in London.

In remarks that came a day after official data suggested a cool-down in headline inflation to 4.25 per cent for May, Das said there have been signs of some softening in inflation in recent months, with the consumer price inflation coming down from the 7.8 per cent peak in



April 2022. He said the RBI's inflation projection for the current financial year 2023-24 is lower at 5.1 per cent, but reminded that the number will still be above the 4 per cent target.

The rate-setting panel has eschewed from providing any future guidance on the timing and level of the terminal rate recognising that explicit guid-

ance in a rate tightening cycle is inherently fraught with risks, Das said. The RBI is mandated to maintain price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth, Das said, adding that the central bank cannot be oblivious to growth concerns, given the high population and the necessity to reap the demographic dividend.

The RBI prioritised growth during the pandemic years even as inflation remained above the target but within the tolerance band, Das said. The Monetary Policy Committee prioritised growth over inflation at the height of the pandemic during 2020 and 2021, given the frail economic conditions and notwithstanding intermittent inflationary pressures from supply shocks, he added.

Jaipur Rugs targets to open 35 stores in next 5 yrs, says company head

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Handmade rugs maker Jaipur Rugs is embarking on a global expansion with plans to establish

presence in Asia Pacific and Europe, targeting a total of 35 stores in the next five years, according to company Director Yogesh Chaudhary.

The company, which on Tuesday opened its latest store in Dubai, is aiming to reach around 100 stores within the next 10 years.

"Our initial focus in the MEA region will be on our Dubai store, leveraging its strategic location and the opportunities it offers. Simultaneously, we

are actively seeking favourable locations in APAC and Europe to expand our presence," Chaudhary told PTI in an e-mailed response.

On the future roadmap, he said, "With a vision of opening 35 stores within the next 5 years and reaching approximately 100 stores within the next 10 years, we are committed to aggressive growth and establishing a strong footprint in these markets."

At present, Jaipur Rugs operates a total of seven stores in India — one store each in Delhi and Bengaluru, two in Mumbai and Jaipur each. Internationally, it has a company-owned store in Milan, Italy.

Sebi to auction Arise Bhoomi Developers' assets in July to recover investors' money

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday said it will auction 11 properties of Arise Bhoomi Developers and its directors on July 14 for a reserve price of over Rs 43 crore to recover investors' money.

The properties that have been put on sale include land parcels, a shop and a plot, located in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice.

Arise Bhoomi Developers mobilised over Rs 8 crore during 2013-14 from the public in the name of the 'purchase of

agricultural land' through its various investment schemes, promising them an expected sum at the end of the contract.

The schemes, as per Sebi, qualified to be a CIS (collective investment scheme), which requires compulsory registration from the regulator. However, the company launched the schemes without obtaining the necessary approvals from the regulator.

Inviting bids, Sebi said it will auction the properties belonging to the company and its directors through an online mode on July 14 between 11 am to 1 pm. Further, the total reserve price has been pegged at Rs 43.6 crore.



Reliance climbs 8 spots to 45th rank on Forbes' Global 2000 list

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd climbed eight spots to the 45th rank, the highest for an Indian company on Forbes' latest Global 2000 list of public companies worldwide.

The Global 2000 ranks the largest companies in the world using four metrics: sales, profits, assets, and market value, Forbes said while releasing the 2023 ranking of the world's top 2,000 companies.

JPMorgan, America's biggest bank with USD 3.7 trillion in assets, is at the top of the list for the first time since 2011 and has emerged stronger from this spring's regional banking crisis, with more deposits and opportunistic acquisition of the failed First Republic Bank, it said.

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway that topped the list last year, fell to the 338th position in the latest list due to unrealised losses in its investment portfolio.

Saudi oil behemoth Aramco is at 2nd position followed by three giant-sized state-owned Chinese banks. Technology giants Alphabet and Apple are at 7th and 10th place, respectively.

Leasing of warehousing space at record 51.32 mn sq ft in FY23, rent up 3-8%: Knight Frank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Warehousing leasing edged up to a record 51.32 million square feet last fiscal across eight cities on a strong demand from third-party logistics and retail sectors.

The data for warehousing demand includes industrial space for light manufacturing/assembly.

In a webinar, Knight Frank India on Tuesday released India Warehousing Market Report, which stated that the rentals rose 3-8 per cent across seven out of eight cities.

As per the data, the total leasing of warehousing space rose to 5,13,24,201 square feet last fiscal from 5,12,94,933 square feet in the 2021-22 fiscal.

Across cities, the leasing activities rose in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata but declined in NCR, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and



Ahmedabad. Leasing of warehousing space rose 10 per cent last fiscal to 9.5 million square feet.

Bengaluru saw a 25 per cent increase in demand to 7.4 million square feet while Kolkata witnessed an 18 per cent rise to 5.1 million square feet last fiscal.

The leasing of warehousing space fell 5 per cent in Delhi-NCR to 8.6 million square feet.

Pune saw a decline of 2 per cent to 7.4 million square feet, while Hyderabad witnessed a fall

of 7 per cent to 5.1 million square feet.

In Chennai, the demand fell 11 per cent to 4.5 million square feet last fiscal. Ahmedabad too witnessed a fall of 29 per cent to 3.8 million square feet during 2022-23 fiscal.

Among sectors who took spaces in warehousing, the share of third-party logistic firms was highest at 39 per cent.

Retail sector accounted for 13 per cent of demand last fiscal, while other sectors, including manufacturing contributed 30 per cent to the total leasing.

The leasing of warehousing space by e-commerce players dropped during the last fiscal due to excess capacity built during the pandemic to meet the surge in consumption.

As a result, the share of e-commerce in total warehousing leasing plunged to 7 per cent last fiscal from 23 per cent in the previous year.

TRAI directs telcos to deploy AI-based system to crack down on unauthorised senders of pesky messages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator TRAI has directed all telcos to deploy Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning based systems to detect, identify, and act against senders of commercial communication who are not registered in accordance with regulations.

All the access providers have been asked to comply with the directions and report an updated status on actions taken, within 30 days.

In a statement on issue of direction for deploying Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning-based UCC (Unsolicited Commercial Communication) Detect system, TRAI explained that the entities who do not get registered with the access providers, and use ten digits mobile numbers for sending commercial communications through messages or calls are called Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs).

While a slew of measures taken by TRAI to curb pesky messages, has led to a drop in complaints against Registered Telemar-



eters (RTMs), "UCC from Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs) is still continuing."

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) termed pesky calls and messages as a major source of inconvenience to the public.

"At times these Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs) through messages having fraudulent links and telephone numbers trap the customers into sharing of their critical information causing financial

loss to the customers," TRAI said.

To detect, identify and act against all such unregistered telemarketers, TRAI has been nudging Access Service Providers to implement "UCC_Detect System" with requisite functionalities within the framework of TRAI's Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018. Access Service providers have implemented such detect system as per their suitability and feasibility.

However, "the UTMs are continuously evolving new techniques to send unsolicited communications and the current UCC detect systems deployed by the Access Service providers are not fully capable to detect such UCC," TRAI said.

In order to have uniformity of UCC Detect System implementations, TRAI has directed all access providers to deploy Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning based UCC_Detect system capable of constantly evolving to deal with new signatures, new patterns and new techniques used by Unregistered Telemarketers.

Rupee rises 5 paise to close at 82.38 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 5 paise to settle at 82.38 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday,

as a weak greenback overseas and strong macroeconomic data supported investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.42 against the US dollar and settled at 82.38 (provisional), up 5 paise over its previous close.

During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day

high of 82.35 and a low of 82.47. On Monday, the rupee closed at 82.43 against the US currency.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.37 per cent to 103.27.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 1.53 per cent to USD 73 per barrel.

"The dollar fell against most of the Asian currencies before the release of US inflation numbers later in the evening."

NAINA: Art-music collaboration

New Delhi: MG Motor India and Songdew have partnered to present "NAINA," a unique collaboration merging art and music. "NAINA" combines an emotive music track by the talented band Nawazishain with a mesmerising painting by renowned artist Vijender Sharma. "MG Taal Season 2" reaffirms our dedication to cultivating exceptional indie talent and bringing their artistry to the forefront. Nawazishain's "NAINA" showcases the immense potential.

REAL MADRID LOOK TO SIGN MBAPPÉ POST BENZEMA EXIT

AP ■ PARIS

The door looks wide open for Real Madrid to try signing Kylian Mbappé, because Karim Benzema's sudden departure leaves the Spanish giant short of a star striker.

Madrid will hope it's three time lucky, after Paris Saint-Germain rejected an offer of 180 million euros (\$190 million) for Mbappé in 2021. Madrid missed out again last year when Mbappé - amid frenzied speculation that Madrid would get him to join - signed a new three-year deal with PSG until 2025.

Now he's stunned the club by saying he will not trigger a 12-month extension on his contract, which expires at the end of next season.

The France superstar confirmed his decision in a letter to PSG, a person with knowledge of the correspondence told The Associated Press on Monday. The person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, also said PSG would not allow Mbappé to leave as a free agent.

This immediately raised the possibility of an immediate transfer bidding war by Madrid and other clubs this summer.

The 24-year-old Mbappé has a long connection with Madrid.

He visited the club when he was a youth before deciding instead to join Monaco, which



then sold him to PSG in 2017. He might be on another flight to Madrid before long.

The Ballon d'Or winner Benzema bid his farewell to Madrid last week after 648 games, 25 trophies and 354 goals for the club. He joined Al-Ittihad to become the Saudi league's latest star after Cristiano Ronaldo, who plays for Al-Nassr.

Given his stated ambition to win the Champions League and the Ballon d'Or, Mbappé seems unlikely to join them for a while yet.

With Madrid president Florentino Pérez needing to rebuild, this gives him another

shot at Mbappé, especially since PSG won't let him leave for free at the end of next season.

Although Madrid would have to pay huge wages, the fact PSG doesn't want to lose him for nothing may lower the transfer fee.

Madrid has also freed up cash with Benzema off the wage bill along with fellow high earners Eden Hazard and Marco Asensio, who are also leaving. Asensio has also been linked with a move to PSG, which could factor into the bargaining.

An issue that could potentially hinder a bid might be the fact Madrid is already preparing to spend 130 million euros

(\$139 million) to sign 19-year-old England midfielder Jude Bellingham from German club Borussia Dortmund.

The clubs have reached an agreement on the transfer, though contract details still have to be "coordinated and completed," Dortmund said last week.

It seems unlikely that transfer won't go through, so can Madrid afford to also buy Mbappé?

Here's a look at where else Mbappé could go.

NEWCASTLE

If anyone can easily afford Mbappé, it's the club with the richest owners in soccer.

Newcastle has yet to really make a signature transfer to headline its new era under Saudi ownership - so how about signing the 2022 World Cup's top scorer?

Whether Mbappé would want to join Newcastle is another thing entirely. The club has vast wealth, now it is controlled by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, but not the lure of record 14-time Champions League winner Madrid.

It might be too much of a jump, too, for Newcastle, which will play in the Champions League next season after a fourth-place finish but may not have enough top-quality players to tempt Mbappé.

MANCHESTER UNITED

United is the other team which probably has the wealth to afford Mbappé, and the status.

It is historically considered the biggest club in England along with Liverpool.

However, it's an awkward time for United to be putting together such an expensive transfer, given the club is up for sale and its owners - the Glazer family - are weighing up bids from Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe. The Glazers might not even sell at all, and

instead take up other funding options.

Another question is whether Mbappé would want to go from one Qatari-owned club to another, especially if he has been unhappy at the way the PSG project has unfolded recently.

The prospect of United's rival, Manchester City, being interested is unlikely considering the English and European champions already have a superstar striker in Erling Haaland.

STAY AT PSG?

If Mbappé changes his mind, then he has until July 31 to sign the one-year extension - or negotiate a longer deal.

But it looks like he's done all he can with the club, where he is the all-time leading scorer with 212 goals.

Although PSG won the French title as expected, it finished only one point ahead of Lens and was eliminated early from the Champions League for the second straight season and from the French Cup.

PSG's form slumped after the World Cup, with a total of 10 defeats in 28 games overall in 2023 far too high for a club with such vast resources.

Mbappé's frustration, in his body language and way he reacted to his teammates, was all too apparent toward the end of a disappointing campaign.



Recurring problems plague Germany team 1 year before Euro 2024

AP ■ BERLIN

All the old problems were there to see.

Germany's uninspired showing in a 3-3 draw with Ukraine was just the latest example of the team's struggles, leaving it in a state of alarm one year before the country hosts the European Championship.

Only Kai Havertz prevented worse for the team on Tuesday, when he came on as a substitute and pulled a goal back, then forced the penalty from which Joshua Kimmich nabbed the equalizer in injury time.

It prevented Germany's second straight defeat after the 3-2 loss at home against Belgium in March, but it did little to address recurrent problems and doubts about coach Hansi Flick's ability to address them.

Flick sat stone-faced after Havertz and Kimmich's goals, unable to take pleasure in either after what he had seen before.

The German soccer federation stuck with Flick as coach after Germany's World Cup flop in Qatar, bringing in former

national team striker and coach Rudi Völler as sporting director to support him as Oliver Bierhoff's successor.

But so far there has been no sign that any of the team's problems in Qatar have been addressed. Instead, it was a familiar tale of Germany dominating possession and creating chances while still prone to costly mistakes. Mistakes led to all three Ukrainian goals.

A wayward pass from Julian Brandt led to Viktor Tsyhankov's equalizer, another mistake from Nico Schlotterbeck preceded Ukraine's second goal, and Brandt's difficult ball for Matthias Ginter led to the third - again scored by Tsyhankov.

"That's what we need cut out - the mistakes at the back and at the front," Kimmich said after preventing what would have been Ukraine's first ever win over Germany.

The result did not hide the team's shortcomings. Germany made a good start but lacked precision and then failed to make headway against the visitors' hardworking defense once they had settled into the game.

Champions League players aim for another trophy at Nations League Final Four

AP ■ ROTTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

There is another international trophy to win in Europe this weekend and players from Manchester City and Inter Milan will be available at the four-team Nations League Finals in the Netherlands.

Netherlands defenders Nathan Aké and Denzel Dumfries are teammates again after facing each other down in Man City's 1-0 win over Inter on Saturday in the Champions League final.

The Nations League host team will play in the first semifinal match on Wednesday in Rotterdam against a Croatia team with Inter midfielder Marcelo Brozovic.

Spain can call on midfielder Rodri, whose goal made Man City champions of Europe for the first time, for the second semifinal match against Italy on Thursday. That game will be played in Enschede.

The final will be played on Sunday in Rotterdam, with the third-place game in Enschede on the same day.

Italy coach Roberto Mancini has called up five Inter players, including the entire central defensive line - Francesco Acerbi, Alessandro Bastoni, Matteo Darmian - that kept striker Erling Haaland mostly in check last weekend.

This year's long European season was split in two by the World Cup in Qatar. Croatia finished third at that tournament, four years after reaching the final and losing to France.

"At the end of the season, there is the issue of fatigue," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said, "but we have a historic opportunity to win the first trophy."

That lure of a first international title appeared to persuade Luka Modric to stay with the national team. Now 37, Modric has played 164 times for his country since captaining Croatia to victory over Morocco in the third-place game in Qatar he wanted to "continue until at least the Nations League and after we will see."

It is the third Nations League Final Four tournament, which teams reach by winning



a top-tier group. The promise of a 10.5 million euro (\$11.3 million) prize from UEFA adds to the attraction.

NETHERLANDS

The Dutch are without two key players as they bid to win the country's first international title since the 1988 European Championship. Memphis Depay's latest injury - a calf problem sustained in May - keeps the Netherlands' most important forward out of the squad. Depay averages a goal every two games in his 88 internationals.

Matthijs de Ligt picked up a similar injury in training for the Croatia match. Daley Blind, a teammate at Bayern Munich, came in as a replacement.

The Netherlands were runners-up in the inaugural Final Four, losing to Portugal in the 2019 final after beating England in the semifinals.

CROATIA

The Nations League gives Modric and his teammates another, if not last, chance to win a trophy. Thirty-four-year-old Ivan Perisic and the 30-year-old Brozovic still feature in a consistently star-studded midfield.

Croatia qualified from a tough Nations League group that included World Cup finalist France and Denmark. Modric's penalty kick at Stade de France last June lifted Croatia to its first victory over France at the 10th attempt.

Leipzig defender Joško

Gvardiol is not available this week because of a stomach muscle injury. Augsburg forward Dion Drenja Beljo was added to the squad.

ITALY

Inter players can quickly shake off their Champions League disappointment as the backbone of European champion Italy's squad. Nicolò Barella and Federico Dimarco also linked up with the squad on Monday.

This will be Italy's third semifinal match against Spain in two years. The Azzurri won on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the Euro 2020 semifinals in London. Spain then won 2-1 in Milan in the 2021 Nations League final four.

SPAIN

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente will be put to the test after a lackluster start. He replaced Luis Enrique following the national team's poor World Cup campaign, showing some of the same problems from the past - lots of possession and few scoring chances.

In March, Spain needed two late goals in a hard-fought 3-0 win over a Norway team missing Haaland to open its qualifying campaign for the 2024 European Championship, then fell 2-0 at Scotland. It leaves the coach under pressure to show significant improvement at the Final Four, where Spain reached the final in 2021 but lost to France.

AIFF receives five bids for direct entry in I-League; IWL to be eight-team event

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Tuesday announced receiving five proposals for direct entry in the upcoming I-League 2023-24 season, while adding that the Indian Women's League (IWL) will be an eight-team affair in the coming edition.

The AIFF said in a release that YMS Finance Pvt Ltd from Kolkata, Namdhari Seeds Pvt Ltd from Punjab, Nimida United Sports Development Pvt Ltd from Bengaluru, Concatenate Advest Advisory Pvt Ltd from Delhi and Bunkerhill Pvt Ltd from Gurugram were the five entities which have sent in their proposals for direct entry.

"Tier 1 bids came from cities like Delhi, Gurugram and Bengaluru. Tier 2 bids from Varanasi and Tier 3 from Sri Bhaiji Sahib village. The bids will be accessed and reviewed by financial experts to decide on

which team(s) will participate in the I-League 2023-24 season," the release said.

The league committee decided to have the IWL 2023-24 as an eight-team event, consisting of top-four teams from each of the two groups of the 2022-23 season.

AIFF explained, "A 2nd Division will be introduced and the state champions will compete in the same. The top



two teams from the 2nd Division will qualify for the IWL 2024-25 and two teams from 2023-24 will be relegated. The nomination date for the 2nd Division will be confirmed by the committee later."

The men's 2nd Division League 2023-24 will comprise of eight teams -- three from the last season who could not secure promotion from the final round, two I-League relegated teams

and three from the 3rd Division -- to make a total of eight teams. The league committee of the football governing body met via video conferencing on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by Lalnginglova Hmar and was attended by secretary-general Shaji Prabhakaran, committee members M Satyanarayan, Arif Ali, Kiran Chougule, Amit Chaudhuri, Caetano Fernandes, Reginold Varghese and CTO Vincent Subramaniam.

Prabhakaran said, "There is an encouraging environment for more clubs to be part of the I-League. The 2nd Division League was very competitive last season. I'm sure the two promoted clubs Delhi FC and Shillong Lajong will add a lot of value to the league."

"We will have a better and improved structure for the IWL this season, more games in youth competitions and hope to welcome more new teams in the I-League," he added.

After Junior Asia Cup title triumph, senior players cannot take their place for granted: Schopman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior India hockey players cannot take their place in the side for the upcoming Asian Games for granted after the success of the junior women's team in the Asia Cup in Japan recently, chief coach Janneke Schopman has said.

The junior women's team returned to Bengaluru on Tuesday after displayed superb skills defeating four-time champions Korea 2-1 in the summit clash to clinch their maiden Asia Cup title in Kakamigahara, Japan on Sunday.

The Dutch tactician also said that while senior India players were "quite competitive", the age of junior players will not come in the way of their selection in the India side for the Asian Games, to be held in Hangzhou, China

in September-October this year.

"I was able to see everyone off the field and on the field and their performances. Let's see what happens but the senior core group is quite competitive and people have to show up in every session to get selected," Schopman, who coached the junior Asia Cup side, said in a virtual press conference on Tuesday.

"Age is not the deciding factor (for team selection for the Asian Games) and we winning the Junior Asia Cup means players showed up, so I (I'll) definitely take that into consideration.

"I am quite happy with the performance of the players in the Junior Asia Cup and the thing for me was always to use the Australia tour and Junior Asia Cup to have 25 out of our 33 players (in core probabilities) performing," she added.

Korou Singh named India captain for AFC U-17 Asian Cup

PTI ■ KHAO YAI (THAILAND)

Promising midfielder Korou Singh was on Tuesday named India captain for the upcoming AFC U-17 Asian Cup.

The talented 16-year-old has become an influential player on the pitch in the recent past. After scoring a goal each in the SAFF U-17 Championship and the AFC U-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers, the winger went on to put on a fine show in the team's training matches in Spain and Germany, against the junior teams of some of the top clubs in the world, like Atletico de Madrid, Real Madrid, VfB Stuttgart, FC Augsburg, and more.

Overall, he scored three goals and made five assists in the 10 practice matches in Europe before reaching Thailand, where he scored one and assisted another in two training games against local sides.

"Being the captain of India



in a tournament like the AFC U-17 Asian Cup is a big responsibility, and we believe that Korou is quite capable of carrying out such leadership responsibilities," India head coach Bibiano Fernandes said while announcing Korou as the captain of the team.

The India U-17s are currently training at the Khao Yai Sports Complex in Thailand, and will travel to Bangkok on June 14 before the start of the AFC U-17 Asian Cup, where they are set to play Vietnam (June 17), Uzbekistan (June 20), and Japan (June 23) in Group D.

Randhawa resigns as chairman of AFI's selection panel after 18-year tenure

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, one of the country's track and field legends, on Tuesday said he has resigned as the chairman of the Athletics Federation of India's selection committee owing to his "advancing age".

The 84-year-old, who won a gold medal at the 1962 Asian Games in decathlon and finished a creditable fifth

in 110-metre hurdles event at the 1964 Olympics, said his advancing age is "making it difficult for me to give the job my 100 per cent".

"I have resigned as the chairman of the Athletics Federation of India selection committee after serving in the position for 18 years," he said in a press release.

"I think it is the right time for me to hand over the reins to a younger person at a time

when Indian athletics is at a very exciting stage of its evolution." He expressed his elation at India's "evolution" in athletics and reserved special mention for Neeraj Chopra and Anju Bobby George.

"I am truly delighted that we now have two World Athletics Championships medallists in Anju Bobby George and Neeraj Chopra. The cherry on the cake, of course, is Chopra's Olympic



Games gold medal in Tokyo 2020. "After a number of near misses, including that of my friend the late Milkha Singh in 1960 and PT Usha in 1984, Chopra made all our dreams come true.

"Besides India's successes in the Asian Games, Asian Championships and South Asian Games, we have also seen how the robust junior programme, with the National Inter-District Junior Athletics

Meet as a fabulous competition at the entry level, has led to successes in age-group competitions both at the Asian and world levels.

"There can be no better time for me to bid farewell." Randhawa, who was the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, achieved four national records within two days. He was bestowed the Arjuna Award in 1961 and

Padma Shri in 2005. "Athletics has been in my veins from my childhood, and I am privileged that I could serve the sport in various capacities.

"In fact, I have been associated with the Athletics Federation of India for 63 years as an athlete, coach, government observer, and chairman of the selection committee. I look back at the six decades with great pride and humility," he said.

The Commonwealth Games bronze medallist duo squandered their lead in the opening game, going down to Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi of Japan.

CWG Birmingham 2022 champion and world No 5 men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty begin their campaign against Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in the opening round.

ROHIT LIKELY TO LEAD IN CARIBBEAN

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is no imminent threat to Rohit Sharma's Test captaincy but the stylish Mumbaier will need to rake up some significant numbers in West Indies to prevent a question mark over his leadership in the traditional format.

Rohit will lead Indian in the two-Test series in the West Indies and then perhaps sit with BCCI and decide on his future in traditional format.

If those privy to developments in the Indian team are to be believed, unless Rohit himself decides to stay away from two-Test series against West Indies starting in Dominica from July 12, he will be leading the team.

However the BCCI brass and the national selection committee will be under pressure to take a tough call if he fails to notch up at least one big knock either at Dominica or at Port of Spain during the second Test (July 20-24).

"These are baseless stuff that Rohit will be removed from captaincy. Yes, whether he will last the whole two-year WTC cycle is a big question as he would be nearly 38 when the third edition ends in



2025," a senior BCCI source in know of things told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"As of now, I believe that Shiv Sunder Das and his colleagues will have to take a call after the two Tests and looking at his batting form."

In fact, the BCCI works very differently from other sporting organisations.

In Indian board, those in power believe that you don't take decisions when the criticism reaches crescendo.

"After West Indies, we have no Tests till December-end when the team travels to South Africa. So there is enough time for selectors to deliberate and take a decision. By then the fifth selector (new chairman) will also join the panel and a decision can be taken, he added.

Those who are aware about developments in Indian cricket know that once Virat Kohli quit Test captaincy after series defeat in South Africa, Rohit wasn't very keen to become the leader in longest format initially as he didn't know that whether his body would hold or not.

"The two top men at that time (former president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah) had to convince him to take up the role once

KL Rahul failed to impress as a captain in South Africa," the source said.

Save a classy 120 against Australia on a challenging Nagpur track, Rohit hasn't exactly scored the kind of runs that is expected from a player of his calibre.

Since Rohit took over Test captaincy in 2022, India played 10 Tests and he missed three -- one in England due to COVID 19 and two in Bangladesh due to split webbing.

He scored 390 runs in 7 Tests and had an average of 35.45 in 11 completed innings with a single hundred and no other score above 50.

In that same phase, Virat Kohli played all 10 Tests, scoring 517 runs in 17 innings with 186 against Australia at Ahmedabad being his best.

Cheteshwar Pujara in the same phase played eight Tests and scored 482 runs in 14 innings with two unbeaten knocks at an average of 40.12. But one needs to factor, scores of 90 and 102 came against a weak Bangladesh attack.

Moeen's rash shots given licence by England in Ashes after answering Ben Stokes' call

AP ■ LONDON

The message flashing on Moeen Ali's mobile phone was simple and to the point. "Ashes?"

It came from England captain Ben Stokes, who had just learnt that his premier spinner - Jack Leach - was likely to miss the entire test series against Australia because of a back injury and was on the look-out for a replacement.

Ali's first response? "LOL." The news of Leach's absence was quickly confirmed so Ali thought about it, and realized how much fun it would be to play for England again given the team's new-found attacking approach under Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

This was also the Ashes, he said to himself, the biggest test series in cricket. So Ali decided to come out of test retirement and could be thrown straight into England's team for the first match at Edgbaston on Friday.

There he was on Tuesday, back in his test match whites and facing the glare of the English media. Like he does on the field, he adopted a relaxed approach.

"I spoke to Stokesy about how he talks to the batters and he says it will be perfect for the way (I) play," Ali said. "There are no question marks over any shots that you play, which gives me the license to play a few more rash shots, I guess.

"Even with the ball, just speaking to him, he is more on the aggressive side. I know

I go for runs and all that kind of stuff but he knows there's also wicket-taking deliveries in between, which is all he cares about, really."

And that's the message that appears to have been sent to Ali. Don't change. "I've never been able to hold an end up," Ali said of his spin bowling. "When I have, it's when I've been taking wickets - it's the only time I have been able to build any sort of pressure. And I know Ben and Baz (McCullum) know that. You want to take wickets all the time but doesn't mean it's going to happen.

"But there might be times where I need to build a bit of pressure and stuff, and play the game that's in front of me. I'm sure they know what they are going to get from me."

Ali quit test cricket in



September 2021 to focus on the shorter formats, having played 67 tests for England and scored 2,914 runs, as well as taking 195 wickets. A couple of statistical milestones are in reach, then, for the 35-year-old Ali, who doesn't know how long he'll continue to play the longer format.

After all, rewind to 2019 when he was dropped after the first test of the Ashes series, and didn't return.

"Was that four years ago? Really? Seems like yesterday," he said. "I have forgotten about those things. I've moved on now. It's a bit of a fresh start and we see how we go.

"I'm a kind of guy who's a bit, Go with the flow. At the moment, it's just these (first) two games. Let's play these games and see what happens."

Ali comes into the Ashes in good spirits having just won the Indian Premier League with Chennai Super Kings, where he was alongside Stokes, who barely played because of injuries.

"We spoke at the IPL and he didn't mention anything about coming out of retirement," Ali said. "It was more just about the Ashes and how he was looking to take the team. Obviously then there was Leach's injury. He (Stokes) had watched me train and he still thinks I can bowl decently."

Ali has been back in England since the IPL and playing again for his home county, Warwickshire, which plays its games at Edgbaston - the venue for the first test. He has been captaining its Twenty20 team, the Birmingham Bears, too.

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McDonald credits 'subcontinent journey' for WTC triumph

PTI ■ LONDON

They might have failed to conquer the 'Final Frontier' on their last tour of India, but Australia head coach Andrew McDonald feels their "sub-continent journey" helped them get the World Test Championship mace.

Having missed out due to over-rate penalties in the 2019-21 cycle, Australia on Sunday became the first team to win ICC world titles across formats when they defeated India by 209 runs in a lopsided WTC Final at the Oval here.

"You can string down series in isolation, you can talk about the subcontinent journey where we went from Pakistan to Sri Lanka into India," McDonald told reporters.

"We had to navigate through that. So, it was a tricky World Test championship cycle and I think the wins in the subcontinent got us here."

The Pat Cummins-led side had enjoyed some splendid wins in the sub-continent before travelling to India in pursuit of its first Test series triumph since 2004-05 in the final leg of the WTC cycle.

Before travelling to India, Australia won a three-match series in Pakistan 1-0 with a crushing 115-run defeat of the hosts in Lahore in March.

Then in Sri Lanka, they won the first Test by 10 wickets only to go down by an innings and 39 runs in a drawn 1-1 series.

On turning Indian conditions where the matches failed to last the distance, Australia's biggest bright spot in a 1-2 loss was their nine-wicket win in the third Test in Indore. It also sealed their WTC Final berth with a round to spare in the 2021-23 cycle.

"We're really strong in Australia. So I think that most people would expect us to be winning Test matches in Australia, but to be able to execute in Pakistan, win a Test match in Sri Lanka and then to get that win in Indore to secure a place in the final was vitally important to give us this opportunity. And we've been able to take that, so it's a job well done."

The 42-year-old further said they were just buying into the "new concept" of the WTC having missed out on the inaugural final in 2021.

"It's a new concept. But we're certainly buying into the concept and I think that was probably the disappointment of the first couple of years when it was in existence where we missed out due to over rate so we've made it a significant focus of ours."

"Every time we come into a series we're checking in around where we are, there's a ladder, albeit stretched out over two years, which is a little bit different to other sports, but yeah, it's high on the priority list.

"And you put on the prior-



ity list, you want to be here and you want to win it and that's what we've been able to do. So it's right up there. And if you go into that dressing room at the moment, there's a lot of happy people about, reflecting on what they've been able to achieve over the last few years."

The focus however will shift to the marquee Ashes showdown in less than a week when they will be looking to break a 22-year drought in England.

"Probably the next 24 hours we will switch our focus as you will, in what you do to the Ashes and the first Test," he said.

The five-match Ashes begins with the Edgbaston Test from Friday.

"We can't wait for it to come around. First was the World Test Championship final. Let's enjoy what the team's been able to achieve over the last couple of years and then get excited about Edgbaston ball one."

"So one thing that we've got to factor into England is how we deny them those boundaries. So there's a couple of things that we can potentially tidy up and take from this game into the next one, but different opponent. So we'll get back to the drawing board around that."

SELECTION CONUNDRUM

Scott Boland's impressive show -- five wickets -- in the WTC Final has led to a selection headache.

With Josh Hazlewood set to return, left-arm seamer Mitchell Starc's spot could come under the scanner, especially after leaking runs against India.

"India showed good intent at certain times and the game went at high three-four runs per over," he said.

"Mitch at times went a bit more than that and he generally goes at a fraction more than the other bowlers, and they complement each other really, really well. His wicket-taking ability is second to none. We've got to weigh all that up when we make decisions.

"But it's not a concern because we know what we're in for in the summer is slightly higher run-rate and that's because of the grounds and the surfaces.

Bangladesh not fazed by 'unknown' Afghanistan ahead of one-off Test

AP ■ MIRPUR

Bangladesh players have been urged to forget about the mystery Afghanistan side and focus on their strengths for their one-off Test starting on Wednesday.

Coach Chandika Hathurusingha admits they have little idea about most of the Afghan players but that shouldn't be a problem if they stick to their process.

"Normally we focus like 25% on the opposition strengths and weaknesses and 75% on what we do," Hathurusingha said. "But as it stands, we don't know much about them so we can't control that."

Afghanistan played its last Test in 2021 against Zimbabwe and only four players have survived from that squad. Rested was celebrated legspinner Rashid Khan, who claimed 11 wickets in the win against Zimbabwe and 11 wickets in Afghanistan's only previous Test against Bangladesh in 2019.

Bangladesh has its own fitness problems. Captain Shakib Al Hasan has been ruled out by a finger injury, opener Tamim Iqbal is complaining about a back issue, and fast bowler Taskin Ahmed is waiting to be cleared fit.

Hathurusingha was unfazed by those problems in the middle of monsoon season, saying they will aim to continue the attacking mindset they displayed against Ireland in their only other Test this year in April. Bangladesh scored just above 4.5 runs per over and won by seven wickets in Mirpur.

Since this one-off Test was not part of the new World Test Championship cycle, they will experiment, Hathurusingha added.

"Before that Ireland series, we wanted to play a certain brand of cricket, regardless of the result. So, yes, our endgame is to get results but we wanted to understand how our skillset lasts five days in different conditions, challenging us to play in a certain way.

"When we want to get some points in the test championship, we might tactically do different things, but this game is giving us the opportunity to play on a sporting wicket."

Stand-in captain Liton Das said their experience gives them the edge over the Afghans.

"We are better than them in one aspect, we have been playing test cricket for a long time," Liton said. "Our maturity level is also higher because we play a lot of Test cricket now."

"Of course, we have less idea about their cricketers because they have played more ODIs and T20s. It is difficult to judge their Test credentials. We have a plan up our sleeves, and if we execute it we will win."

Afghanistan has played only six Tests in total (and won three) but coach Jonathon Trott didn't believe it was a big disadvantage.

"It doesn't mean tomorrow they will play better than us," Trott said. "We prepared really well. I feel the players have trained exceptionally well. They are excited to play a test in Bangladesh."

Women's Emerging Asia Cup: Shreyanka grabs 5/2 as India crush Hong Kong by 9 wickets

PTI ■ MONG KOK (HONG KONG)

Rising all-rounder Shreyanka Patil decimated an inexperienced Hong Kong side with impressive figures of 5/2 as Indian U-23 women's team opened its campaign in the Women's Emerging Asia Cup with a comfortable nine-wicket victory, here on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old Shreyanka, one of the finds of inaugural edition of WPL hav-



ing put up a stellar show for RCB, bowled her tight off-

breaks as Hong Kong were bowled out for 34 in 14 overs,

Record field ready for action as Hero Women's Pro Tour returns to Clover Greens

PTI ■ HOSUR (TAMIL NADU)

A record field of 35 professionals and five amateurs will compete in the eighth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour 2023, scheduled to begin at the Clover Greens here on June 14.

The event carries a prize purse of Rs. 12 lakh and the cut will fall after two rounds. Clover Greens will be hosting its first Hero WPG Tour event since the seventh leg of the

2019 season of the Tour. The winner then was Gaurika Bishnoi, who is once again in the field this week.

Tvesa Malik, who will also tee up, is hoping to regain her form and get back on the Ladies European Tour. She is among the multiple winners in the field, which despite the absence of some players like Diksha Dagar, Pranavi Urs, Vani Kapoor, Amandeep Drall and Ridhima Dilawari, is very strong.



While Pranavi is playing on the Epson Tour in the US alongside two other Indian pros, Nishtha Madan and Nikita Arjun, the others are in Europe.

The depth of Indian women's golf will get another boost as the event will see no less than five players make their pro debut, of which four are Indians and the fifth is a Sri Lankan national.

Together with Vrinda Yadav, Yaalisai Verma, Snigdha Goswami and Rishika

Muralidhar, Sri Lankan Taniya Balasuriya will also make her pro debut.

The field includes three of the six champions from the ongoing season. Headed by Sneha Singh, the only multiple winner in 2023, the other two are Gaurika Bishnoi and Seher Atwal.

Seher now divides her time between the Hero WPGT and the Ladies European Tour and will also feature in the Singapore Ladies Masters next month.