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NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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ASHRAF SET TO RETURN AS PCB CHAIRMAN
12 SPORT

India-US trust unparalleled, New Delhi fit for big global role: Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a rousing welcome by Indian community people on his arrival in New York on Tuesday. Modi was received at the airport by Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu and India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ruchira Kamboj

'We have a core belief in respecting sovereignty... but fully prepared to protect our dignity'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an exclusive interview given to *The Wall Street Journal* before his departure for the United States, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised that India deserves higher global profile and expanded role on the international stage. Modi highlighted the strengthening ties between India and the US, expressing unparalleled trust between the leaders of both nations.

During the interview, the Prime Minister underscored the necessity of peace and tranquility in the border regions for fostering normal bilateral relations with China. He reiterated India's unwavering commitment to upholding sovereignty, territorial integrity, the rule of law, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Simultaneously, he affirmed India's preparedness and dedication to safeguard its sovereignty and dignity.

Maintaining that peace and tranquility in the border areas are essential for normal bilateral ties with China, Modi said, "We have a core belief in respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, observing the rule of law and peaceful resolution of differences and disputes. At the same time, India is fully prepared and committed to protect its sovereignty and dignity."

The Prime Minister also asserted that India was not "supplanting any country" and was aiming at gaining its "right"

ful" position in the world. His remarks came as a response to *The Wall Street Journal's* view that India, which has invested enormously in education and infrastructure, was poised to gain as multinationals look to diversify manufacturing and supply chains in an era of geopolitical tension.

On relations with the US, he said ties between New Delhi and Washington are stronger and deeper than ever. There is an "unprecedented trust" between the leaders of the US and India, Modi said.

He also pointed out that he is the first Prime Minister to be born in free India. "And that's why my thought process, my conduct, what I say and do, is inspired and influenced by my country's attributes and traditions. I derive my strength from it," Modi also said, "I present my country to the world as my country is, and myself as I am." On the Ukraine conflict, the Prime Minister said, "Some people say that we are neutral. But we are not neutral. We are on the side of peace."

"All countries should respect international law and the sovereignty of countries," he said.

Disputes should be resolved with diplomacy and dialogue, not war, he added. Modi said he has spoken several times to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, noting he recently spoke to Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Japan in May. "India will do whatever it can" and supports "all genuine efforts to bring an end to the conflict and ensure enduring peace and stability."

The US daily said Washington has put pressure on India to reduce its dependence on Moscow for arms, and some in the US have criticised Modi's Government for not taking a more forceful stance against Russia's invasion

of Ukraine. "I don't think this type of perception is widespread in the US," said Modi, referring to criticism of India's stance on Russia.

"I think India's position is well known and well understood in the entire world. The world has full confidence that India's topmost priority is peace."

In his interview, Modi linked many of the world's problems, such as terrorism, proxy wars and expansionism, to a failure of global institutions created during the Cold War to adapt, saying that smaller and regional groupings have emerged in the vacuum.

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US' India push to stem China's growth bound to fail: Chinese ex-Min

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden in Washington, China's State-owned media has criticised the United States for its alleged efforts to impede China's economic advancement by strengthening ties with India. This critique comes as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is on a five-day visit to Beijing.

In an opinion piece published in *The Global Times*, China's prominent diplomat and former Foreign Minister Wang Yi asserted that the US's geopolitical motivations are driving its push to enhance economic and trade interactions with India, but that such endeavours are destined to fail. The article also accused the US of merely paying lip service to India without delivering substantial results.

"The US seems to be intensifying its efforts to push India to confront China and hinder China's economic progress,"



stated the editorial piece.

It further referenced a recent warning from the *Financial Times*, which highlighted concerns among some Indian elites over the US attempts to utilise India as a counterforce against China.

Wang Yi elaborated, stating, "The US's geopolitical calculations are not difficult to discern. As feared by many Indian elites, Washington's vigorous efforts to strengthen economic and trade cooperation with India are primarily aimed at impeding China's economic development."

The article emphasised that the US's geopolitical calculations are doomed to fail, as China's crucial role in the global supply chain cannot be replaced by India or any other economy.

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SC snubs Bengal plea, OK's Central forces for rural polls

Holding elections can't be licence for violence: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a blow to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the petitions filed by the West Bengal Government and the State Election Commission (SEC) challenging the Calcutta High Court's order to deploy Central forces across the State for the upcoming panchayat elections on July 8.

The Supreme Court, while dismissing the petitions, emphasised that the tenor of the high court order aimed to ensure a free and fair election in the State. It is no secret that West Bengal has often become a hotbed of political violence during elections.

In the previous panchayat polls held in 2018, more than 20 people lost their lives, and numerous others sustained injuries. The run-up to the July 8 polls has already witnessed several clashes, with reports of multiple casualties, including incidents on June 15, which was the last day for filing nominations. These incidents compelled the Calcutta High Court to issue an order mandating the deployment of Central forces across the State.

Opposition leaders, including BJP's Suvendu Adhikari and Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, had petitioned the court for deployment of Central forces for ensuring peaceful elections, stating the



State had witnessed large-scale violence during the urban local bodies elections in 2022 and the Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections in 2021.

They had also prayed for extension of the last date of nomination claiming the time given was not adequate. The court had left it to the SEC to consider the prayer.

The panchayat polls are set to be conducted across over 61,000 booths, many of which are located in sensitive areas. The bench, comprising Justices BV Nagarathna and Manoj Misra, while dismissing the petitions, made a significant observation, stating, "Holding an election cannot be a licence for violence. Elections cannot be accompanied by violence."

The bench further clarified that the high court order was primarily aimed at ensuring a free and fair election in the entire state of West Bengal, given that the state is conducting elections for local bodies on a single date. Moreover, considering the significant number of seats up for polls, the order of the high court does not warrant any interference from the Supreme Court. The bench

expressed its reluctance to intervene in any other directives issued by the high court regarding the conduct of elections for the three-tier panchayati raj institutions.

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CNG taxi permit in Delhi raised to 15 years

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a big relief to taxi owners, the Delhi Government on Tuesday extended the permit validity of taxis running on plying on CNG or other clean fuels, and possessing a Contract Carriage permit, to up to 15 years.

However, this extension is subject to the fulfillment of all other prescribed conditions as stipulated in the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, CMVR, 1989, and Delhi Motor Vehicle Rules 1993.

A number of representations were received from various taxi unions registered in Delhi demanding to implement uniformity in respect of validity of the permits issued under Section 74 of the MVA, 1988, also known as Contract Carriage Delhi NCR Permit up to 15 years.

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PM to meet Musk, economist Romen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/NEW YORK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who embarked on his US visit early on Tuesday morning from New Delhi, is set to participate in a thought-provoking interaction with a diverse group of individuals in New York.

The esteemed gathering will include prominent figures such as Elon Musk, the owner of Twitter and Tesla, astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson, and Nobel laureate economist Paul Romen.

Joining the conversation will be author Nicholas Nassim Taleb, investor Ray Dalio, Indian-American singer Falu Shah, author and researcher Jeff Smith, former US trade representative Michael Froman, diplomat Daniel Russel, and defence expert Elbridge Colby.

The Prime Minister will also have the opportunity to meet physician and Nobel laureate Dr Peter Agre, healthcare expert Dr Stephen Klasko, and Indian-American businesswoman and artist Chandrika Tandon.

The distinguished list comprises nearly two dozen eminent personalities, including scientists, scholars, academicians, and experts from the health sector.

Officials have stated that the discussions will focus on fostering better synergy, understanding developments in the US, and inviting collaborations with India, among other key topics.

Engaging with thought leaders has been a recurring practice for the Prime Minister during his visits to various countries, aimed at enhancing people-to-people connections, officials noted.

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Devotees throng the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath in Puri on Tuesday

PTI

CAPSULE

RETAIL INFLATION FOR WORKERS EASES IN MAY

New Delhi: Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers eased to 5.99 per cent and 5.84 per cent, respectively, in May. P10

HAJI IQBAL'S ₹500 CRORE ASSETS IN UP ATTACHED

Noida/Saharanpur: The Uttar Pradesh Police on Tuesday attached gangster Haji Iqbal's allegedly ill-gotten properties worth over ₹500 crore across Lucknow, Noida and Saharanpur, a senior officer said.

4 SUSPECTED MILITANTS HELD IN MANIPUR

Imphal: Four suspected cadres of the proscribed militant outfit United National Liberation Front (UNLF) were arrested in Thoubal district of ethnic violence affected Manipur, the Army said on Tuesday.

No urgent hearing on plea for Army protection to Kukis: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid escalating ethnic violence in Manipur, the Supreme Court declined an urgent hearing on Tuesday for a petition seeking Army protection for the minority Kuki tribes and prosecution of the communal groups targeting them. The court recognised the gravity of the law and order issue but emphasised that it should be addressed by the administration.

A vacation bench consisting of Justices Surya Kant and MM Sundresh expressed reservations about court intervention, stating that it could potentially worsen the situation in the State. "This is a significant law and order issue. Let the administration handle the matter. Can the Supreme Court order individual protection?"



Our interference may exacerbate the situation. We hope that it won't be necessary for the courts to pass an order deploying the Army or central forces." Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, representing the

petitioner NGO Manipur Tribal Forum, highlighted the discrepancy between assurances given and the tragic reality on the ground, with 70 tribal-als losing their lives.

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Ayush Min rolls out hand-woven tribal mats on Yoga Day

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the world gears up to celebrate Yoga International Day on June 21, a remarkable addition to this year's festivities awaits. For the first time ever, yoga enthusiasts will have the opportunity to practise on stunning yoga mats woven by traditional tribal communities. These mats are adorned with unique designs and motifs that beautifully represent the diverse cultural heritage found across the country.

In a collaborative effort to promote tribal artisans and their exceptional artistry, the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED) has sourced approximately 34,000 hand woven mats from tribal communities. These vibrant mats will be utilised during various events organised by the Union Ayush Ministry on the auspicious occasion of International Yoga Day.



Beyond serving as comfortable surfaces for yoga practice, these mats serve as a testament to the rich cultural traditions preserved by tribal communities. Each mat boasts distinct designs and motifs that encapsulate the cultural significance of the regions they originate from.

"Each mat is a vibrant testament to the diverse cultural heritage of India's tribes, reflecting their stories, folklore, and artistic legacy," said an official

from the TRIFED under the Union Tribal Ministry. "The mats will act as catalysts, fostering a deep connection between yoga enthusiasts and the rich cultural heritage of tribal artisans. Through these interactions, participants will develop an appreciation for the artistic brilliance and cultural depth that tribal communities bring to the country's diverse tapestry," he added.

The creator of these talented tribal weavers such as Sonali Sinku, Ratri Tudu, Nilima Murmu and Pranati Tudu contribute their skills and craftsmanship in the production of mats from various districts, including Beltala, Gochara, Sanchara, Kantal Bera, Debra, and Laulara in Medinipur and Purulia.

Odisha, and the lush landscapes that surround them. By incorporating natural materials and the artistic traditions of the Santal community, these mats provide individuals with a serene and eco-friendly yoga experience.

Usharani Naik, a member of the Bathudi tribe from the village of Gohaldihi in Mayurbhanj, Odisha, contributes her skills to the creation of yoga mats, while Gurucharan Naik, a member of the Bathudi tribe from the village of Betnoti, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, is another skilled artisan contributing to the production of yoga mats.

Gondha Grass which is harvested from waste land and riverbeds by tribal women, are used for mat weaving by a community in Potka block in East Singhbhum, Jharkhand. Cotton yarn and Gondha Grass are used to create various craft items such as mats, bags, covers, and domestic items.

Kejriwal expresses concern over 4 murders in 24 hours

CM proposes Cabinet meeting with L-G Saxena on law and order situation in Delhi



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses the media in New Delhi on Tuesday

Pointing to four murders in Delhi in the last 24 hours, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has proposed a Cabinet meeting with Lieutenant-Governor (LG) VK Saxena on the law and order situation in the national Capital. In a scathing letter addressed to Saxena, Kejriwal expressed deep concern and highlighted the need for immediate and effective measures to restore the faith of Delhi's residents in their safety and security. He also pointed out the rise in the number of private security guards hired by residents

due to shortage of Delhi Police personnel. Referring to the recent murders that have sent shockwaves through the city, the Chief Minister stressed that the repeated occurrence of such serious crimes has eroded public confidence and called for a swift response to fulfil the obligations entrusted to those responsible for maintaining law and order. The AAP chief appealed to the LG, to initiate "urgent effective steps to restore the confidence in residents about the security and safety of their lives, since such serious

crimes have shaken Delhi". "The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the heart rending fact that four murders have taken place during last 24 hours in different parts of Delhi," read the letter. "As a responsible citizen and representative of over 2 crore Delhi residents, I express my willingness to extend full cooperation in ensuring the rule of law and safeguard the interests of the people in the NCT of Delhi," it said. "Such serious crimes have shaken Delhi. It is high time that those entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of city residents be not seen as failing time and again in their mandatory duty," the letter read.

Kejriwal also drew attention to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, adding that it should have served as a wake-up call for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Lieutenant Governor, both of whom "bear direct responsibility for maintaining law and order in Delhi". Regrettably, no

substantial action has been taken based on this report, which reveals that Delhi alone accounted for 32.2 per cent of total crimes against women among 19 metropolitan cities in India, he noted.

"Given such alarming figures, urgent preventive steps on crimes against women were required, but unfortunately for the reasons best known to the MHA and your goodself, nothing changed on the ground," the letter said. The AAP supremo alleged "lack of urgency" by the LG and the MHA to deal with the issue. "I am constrained to state that the kind of urgency required for prevention of crimes in Delhi is completely missing on the part of decision makers responsible for the maintenance of law and order here," he alleged.

Stressing on the need for immediate measures such as enhanced police patrolling during night hours, Kejriwal called for an open dialogue with Delhiites to seek their input on improving the law and order situation.

Saxena expresses concern over politicisation of crime

Delhi L-G invites Kejriwal to discuss law and order

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a detailed letter addressed to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on Tuesday night Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (LG) VK Saxena highlighted various steps taken by him and the Delhi Police to control the crime situation in the national Capital and expressed concern about the "politicization of crime." Saxena's letter was prompted by Kejriwal's letter on June 19, which highlighted the "alarming" rise in crime and proposed a meeting between the LG and the Cabinet.

"I also take this opportunity to highlight that politicizing crime has almost become a habit these days, and you would appreciate, while this provides no solution at all, it does subject the victim and their family to avoidable agony, apart from encouraging crime," the LG wrote, reminding Kejriwal of his active monitoring of the Delhi Police since assuming office about a year ago. Saxena further added, "In

this regard, I am sure that the issue of an unfortunate rape in 2012 raised by you to politically target the then Chief Minister will serve as an eye-opener and conscience-knocker for you."

The letter emphasised the LG's commitment to regular reviews and direct engagement with key officials, including bi-weekly meetings with the Commissioner of Police, weekly meetings with the Special CPs, and periodic interactions with the DCPs. Saxena expressed shared concerns with the Chief Minister and reiterated his deep understanding of the gravity of the crime situation in Delhi. He emphasized the significance of visible policing as a strong deterrent against criminal activities, a viewpoint he has consistently expressed on various platforms.

However, the LG also highlighted the evolving and complex nature of crime in the city, pointing to significant societal changes, particularly regarding technology and the accessibility of crime-

inducing content on various platforms. Recent distressing incidents, including gruesome killings and acts of violence, underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to address the evolving nature of crime.

The LG further noted that many perpetrators involved in these incidents were young individuals below 30, often without prior criminal records but with an active presence on social media. He also highlighted the rising occurrence of crimes related to family and monetary disputes, citing specific examples such as incidents in Saket Court and Ambedkar Basti (RK Puram). While recognising the positive impact of initiatives undertaken by the Delhi Police, such as the installation of CCTV cameras, eradication of dark spots, and efforts to enhance public transport safety, LG Saxena emphasised that these measures alone are insufficient to combat the growing menace of crime.

Responding to Chief Minister Kejriwal's offer of cooperation to ensure the rule of law in Delhi, the LG welcomed the gesture and emphasised the crucial role that departments under the Chief Minister's control, including Education, Social Welfare, Transport, and Health, can play in shaping the youth and addressing societal issues that contribute to crime.

"I am indeed happy that you have offered to 'provide all possible cooperation to ensure the rule of law in Delhi.' The biggest role that you and your Government can play in this regard will be to shape our youth and youngsters by way of education as also targeted counseling and interventions at all levels, where the Citizen-Government interface takes place," he wrote.

The letter concludes with an invitation for a constructive discussion between the LG and CM aimed at collaboration to tackle the challenges of crime control in Delhi.

Bring single-window clearance system: LG to Labour Dept

Move will simplify norms for opening of 24x7 businesses



Delhi Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena has directed the Labour Department to develop a 'single-window system' for approving applications regarding round-the-clock operations of shops and commercial establishments in the city.

New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) VK Saxena has directed the Labour Department to develop a 'single-window system' for approving applications regarding round-the-clock operations of shops and commercial establishments in the city. According to the officials,

the single-window system will simplify procedures related to registration, amendment and exemption of establishments by bringing various approvals on one platform. Saxena has also approved a file proposing such exemptions to 155 establishments. The proposal was sent by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for approval. In a statement, the

AAP government criticized the LG, saying the file regarding 155 shops and establishments was sent to the LG as a mere constitutional procedure, which he has now processed after several days. "It is unbecoming of a constitutional post holder like the LG to engage in such cheap optics for his publicity and steal credit for the government's ongoing efforts.

Labour is a transferred subject, under the purview of the elected government of Delhi and not under the LG. The LG is a mere rubber stamp when it comes to transferred subjects and holds no real

power to opine on such subjects," the AAP said. It will help reduce the time taken for getting the approval and make the process smoother for applicants, Raj Niwas official said. Saxena directed the Labour Department to expeditiously develop the system as an integrated portal for approving applications related to shops and business establishments proposing to operate 24x7 across Delhi, they said.

However, the Labour Department is duty-bound to observe strict adherence to the stipulated timelines for the disposal of pending as well as

fresh applications, according to a note by the department. The efforts also aim at providing a fillip to the much desired 'nightlife' in the national capital, the official said while stressing the need for making the targeted segment of entrepreneurs and business establishments aware of the guidelines and standard procedure to apply for exemptions under the Delhi Shops and Establishments Act, 1954.

The exemptions under Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Act are given to establishments engaged in providing essential services to the people. SR

Want to restart free yoga classes for my Delhi: CM

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said Yoga Day for him would be the day when free yoga classes will be started in the city again.

"Tomorrow is International Day of Yoga. This day inspires us to do yoga. Two years ago, the Delhi Government started free yoga classes for the people of Delhi. About 17,000 people started doing yoga every day. Last year, they stopped these yoga classes. Who benefits from this? Should public welfare programmes like this be

stopped? Yoga day for me will be the day when I will again start free yoga classes for my Delhiites," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi. "God also supports you if you have good intentions. They stopped us in Delhi, we started free yoga classes in Punjab. I am glad it is getting an overwhelming support from people there," he said in another tweet.

Kejriwal and his ministers had earlier alleged that Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena had not approved the extension of the scheme after

October 31, 2022. However, LG secretariat sources had claimed that the office had not received any file seeking permission for the programme's extension beyond October 31. "Hence, it is wrong to say that the LG has not approved the extension," they had maintained.

Meanwhile, the New Delhi Municipal Council will organise yoga events at eight prominent locations, including Kartavya Path, on International Yoga Day on Wednesday, officials said. SR

CM urges Cong to clear its stand on ordinance in Patna Opp meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the first meeting of the National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA) as futile and a conspiracy, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said the AAP government will raise the issue in the Supreme Court.

Kejriwal further said the ordinance, through which the Authority was constituted, has made bureaucrats "the bosses" of ministers in Delhi and expressed hope that the Congress will clear its stand on the Centre's ordinance in the non-BJP parties in Patna on June 23.

The Friday meeting of opposition parties has been called by Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader

Nitish Kumar to chalk out a joint strategy to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"Since the matter was in black and white, the authority was unanimous in its decision to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the official," Kejriwal had said earlier in the day.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, Kejriwal has received a proposal from the Services Department encompassing three distinct categories of requests. These categories include departments requesting the transfer of certain officers, posting of officers against vacant positions, and an officer's request for transfer/postings.

After the first meeting,

Kejriwal alleged the Centre of snatching powers of the elected government through the ordinance. The chief minister claimed that the Centre wants to control Delhi through IAS officers. "An officer has been given charge above every minister. The Centre wants to control the Delhi government through officers.

In every department, the final decision will now rest with the department secretary, not the minister. The secretary can dismiss the minister's decision. The ordinance has placed the Delhi chief secretary above the Cabinet," he charged. Officers have the power to reject decisions taken by ministers, he said. "We will present all these matters in the Supreme Court. We are hopeful that we

will get relief from the Supreme Court and also that the Bill won't be passed in the Parliament," he added. The chief minister said that two officers have been appointed above the Chief Minister in order to overturn the CM's decision in the NCCSA. "No proposal can be brought to the Cabinet without the consent of the officers. Even after losing the elections, the BJP wants to run the Delhi government through deceit," he added.

"In the last week of May, a file came to me on the suspension of an officer. I raised three to four clarifications on the file and said that after this I will say when the meeting (NCCSA) will happen. But the file never came back to me.

Delhi varsity to launch new admission portal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi University will launch a new portal for registering and applying for the three BTech programmes to be introduced this academic session by next week. According to officials, the students will get to choose their preferences among the three programmes and the university will later allot seats to them. The BTech Computer Science and Engineering, BTech Electronics and Communication Engineering, and BTech Electrical Engineering will begin at the university from this year with a total capacity of 360 seats. Students will be selected for the courses based on their Joint Entrance Examination (Mains) score. "The process is expected to begin next week. Students will be given to fill their preferences and seats will be allotted to them. They will be given a few days to accept the seats allotted to them," said Dean of Admission Haneeet Gandhi.

Gandhi refused to comment on the registration fee. "We are still discussing the details," she added. The three courses would be conducted by the Faculty of

Technology. According to a notification issued by the university, a seat in each of the three programmes will be given to a single girl child.

The university will also introduce a Financial Support Scheme (FSS) to extend the benefits of equity and access to quality education to economi-

Registration for short-term AI, ML courses at JMI starts

New Delhi: Jamia Milia Islamia (JMI) has announced a short-term training programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) next month, registration for which are underway.

The programme, which is being organised by the university's Department of Computer Engineering, will be for three weeks between July 4 and July 22, according to the brochure released by the university.

"The timings of the program are from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, from Monday to Saturday.

cally weaker students. Each course will have 120 seats, according to the university.

A minimum of 50 per cent weightage would be given to major subject area of a course with a maximum of 65 per cent weightage. The remaining weightage would be given to minor subject areas of study.

The classes will be held both online and offline," the official informed. The course includes both lectures and practical work under the guidance of experienced professionals, the university said.

There are 80 seats for the course — 30 reserved for offline participants and 50 seats for online participants — which will be allotted based on "first come first serve". All students from UG, PG, and PhD scholars and faculty with mathematical backgrounds are eligible for the course. SR

CM's house bigger than eligibility: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Tuesday sought to know from the Delhi government how Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal got the type of official accommodation for which he is allegedly not even eligible.

Addressing a press conference here, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva and Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the national capital Delhi being a Union Territory, its chief minister is eligible only for Type VII accommodation.

However, Kejriwal's bungalow is much bigger than what he is eligible for, according to the guidelines of the ministry of housing and urban affairs, Sachdeva said.

Citing a show cause notice issued by the Directorate of Vigilance to the Public Works Department engineers, he said, "We want to know who asked the PWD to carry out renovations and expansion of the CM bungalow without any proper tender and budgetary provisions."

REJUVENATING DELHI WITH YOGA

DDA Proudly Celebrates

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY 2023

at

BAANSERA

(Delhi's First Bamboo Theme Park Spread Over 37 Acres)

on the banks of Yamuna

21st June, 2023 | 6:30 AM

Chief Guest:

SHRI VINAI KUMAR SAXENA

Lt. Governor, Delhi

The following DDA Sports Complexes and Parks also Celebrating Yoga Day

- Siri Fort Sports Complex
- Saket Sports Complex
- Netaji Subhash Sports Complex
- Vasant Kunj Sports Complex
- Hari Nagar Sports Complex
- Paschim Vihar Sports Complex
- Dwarka Sports Complex
- Major Dhyan Chand Sports Complex
- Chilla Sports Complex
- Yamuna Sports Complex
- Commonwealth Games Village Sports Complex
- Rohini Sports Complex
- Squash & Badminton Stadium
- Rashtriya Swabhiman Khel Parisar, Pitampura
- Poorv Delhi Khel Parisar
- Coronation Park, Burari
- Swarn Jayanti Park, Rohini
- CBD Ground, Karkardooma

Let us all join together and celebrate our ancient art of total wellness and harmony of mind, body and soul

DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Modi Govt uplifting every section of society: Baghel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the successful completion of nine years of the Modi government at the Centre, in the series of various campaign programmes being run by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the United Front Conference of Cantt assembly constituency was organised at the party's city office located at Gulab Bagh here on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, SP Singh Baghel, while addressing the conference as the chief guest in the programme, said that the Modi government at the Centre during its successful nine-year tenure focused on the all-round development of the society by uplifting every section. He said that the Modi government adopted the politics of development by keeping vote bank politics aside and adopted the basic mantra of Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas-Sabka Vishwas-Sabka Prayas for the all-round development of the country.



Union Minister SP Singh Baghel at BJP's programme in Varanasi on Tuesday.

He said that during the rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, everyone is getting justice equally without any discrimination. "Today in our government basic facilities like housing, electricity, water, roads, ration, toilets, health are being provided to the general public," he said, adding that in the Congress regime at the centre and BSP-SP in the state, the rights of the general public were being killed, instead of the facilities being provided to the poor, the family members of the political parties were taking advantage of the government schemes.

"Under the leadership of Narendra Modi in 2014, after the formation of the government at the Centre, the benefits of government facilities are reaching the general public without any discrimination. Today people are getting direct benefits. It is said that now the benefits of all the schemes of the central government are being directly conveyed to the public in a 100 per cent and transparent manner," he said.

Addressing the conference, Rajya Sabha MP Kailash Soni said that the PM has established the politics of development by ending the politics of familyism, casteism, corruption and appeasement. "Today's India is touching new dimensions of development while cherishing its heritage and culture," he said. Cantt MLA Saurabh Srivastava said that due to the hard work of BJP workers, the entire country including Kashi is being developed today.

Varanasi DC asks officers to prepare database of heatwave patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the increasing number of patients in the hospitals due to the scorching Sun and heatwave for the last many days, the Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma has directed the health officers to prepare a database of the patients being admitted in the hospital by classifying their problems and diseases. The DC has directed the officers of Electricity department to provide factual information about the power supply to the consumers through control room and also release media bulletin in case of fault and power cuts.



The DC Kaushal Raj Sharma chairing review meeting of development works.

Chairing the review meeting of the development works of Varanasi Division at the auditorium of his office here on Monday, the DC directed the Health department to make deployment of the doctors at the CHCs and PHCs in sufficient number in view of the heatwave and also ensure the availability of ORS in sufficient quantity.

The ORS should be distributed in the rural areas and the pamphlets should be distributed in the schools and colleges through Gram Pradhans and corporators for the precautionary measures to prevent the heatwave. He directed to chalk out proposal to enhance the facilities of e-OPD and teleconsultation by identifying the CHC and PHC and send it to the government.

He also reviewed the progress of MoU signed by Udyog Bandhu and directed the concerned officer to make appointment of Nodal officer as per the status of MoU by classifying them and also make the weekly review of pending points by making phase wise the present progress of MoU.

Over ₹4,000 cr projects executed in Varanasi South, says MLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former UP Minister and MLA from City South Dr Neelkanth Tiwari said that the development work worth over ₹4,000 crore has been done in his assembly constituency during the last nine years as the period of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government was unmatched. "During this period, where the country has become the world's fifth economy, it has also become strategically strong. Today India has its own distinct identity in the whole world and the country is on the path of becoming a world guru," he said, while talking to the reporters at Circuit House here on Tuesday.



MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Tuesday.

He said that not a single Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) remained functional before 2014 but during the last nine years, three big STPs have become functional. "Now sewage water does not go into the river Ganga," he said, adding that today, a mafia-free and crime-free system has been given in the state under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. "There has been a 40 per cent increase in GST in Varanasi. Today, the mafia

cannot run its empire from jail and the goons cannot collect tax from anyone," Dr Tiwari said.

Describing the development works done in Varanasi, especially in his constituency, he said that due to the kindness of the PM, electric wires are no longer seen hanging on the roads in the old Kashi areas as underground cables were laid there under Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS). "Kashi is the cultural capital and also the oldest city in the world where people from other countries come to acquire knowledge," he said, adding that Kashi, which is globally known as the confluence of ancient cultures and, most of its parts are included in the South City assembly as Kashi Vishwanath, Mata Annapurna, Kal Bhairav, Mahamrityunjaya, Bada Ganesh, Maa Sankata, Durga Kund, Bankati Hanuman and many other famous temples are located in this constituency.

Shahnawaz hits back at Jairam over Gita Press remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Former cabinet minister and BJP national spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain has retaliated on the statement of Congress media in-charge and general secretary Jairam Ramesh. Hussain reached here on Monday evening and during a conversation with reporters at the Circuit House said the Gita Press has published books of Sanatan Dharma and propagated it without profit. Shahnawaz said that if the Congress cannot greet for the award, then it does not have the right to criticise. On the opposition's attack on

power outages in UP, he said there is a scorching heat in the whole country. Electricity consumption has increased by two to three times.

There is no shortage of electricity in UP, but technical fault is coming in many places due to increase in load. CM Yogi Adityanath himself is monitoring the electricity problem. He said BJP will make a hat-trick of victory by winning more than 400 seats across the country. In 2024, Narendra Modi will once again become the prime minister of the country.

Task force (Prayagraj unit) busted an inter-state racket involved in drug peddling and arrested two notorious drug peddlars identified as Satish Singh and Miniketana Nayak, of Chandauli and Kalahandi (Oshiha) respectively near Upardaha village on Prayagraj-Kanpur highway. The police have also seized 37.60 kg ganja worth Rs 9.50 lakh, three mobile phones, Rs 1,000 cash and one car from their possession.

The joint team received an intelligence input about the movement about the inter-state racket involved in drug peddling and intercepted a car on Prayagraj-Kanpur highway that was carrying the drug consignment.

Police said that gang used to supply ganja in UP towns from Odisha.

Police have been looking for a racketeer identified as Mitthoo of Odisha who used to smuggle drug consignments into UP.

The gang used to arrange old cars and SUV to smuggle drug consignments with an intention to dodge cops. A case under section 8/20/29 of the NDPS Act was registered in this connection.

Second accused in murder case nabbed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police nabbed the second accused Mohd Rashid of Sahil Colony, Rajapur, Cantt involved in the murder of an e-rickshaw driver over an issue related to smack in Rajapur area under Cantt police station.

The Cantt police arrested him near the Beli Kachar cemetery after 15 days of the murder. A 315 bore cartridge used in the murder has been recovered from him. Police arrested Pankaj Pasi, the main accused on June 7 while the third accused Shani is still being searched.

Riyasat Ali alias Guddu Khan of Rajapur Mohalla under Cantt police station is a rickshaw driver. His only son Adil Khan also used to drive e-rickshaws. On the night of June 3 around 11:30 Adil reached home with his e-rickshaw. He reached the road in

Rajapur near Myo Road Columbus School to have tea. Standing at a betel shop there, Adil was talking to his colleagues when three youths came and one of them shot him in his head from a close range and escaped. Adil collapsed on the ground bleeding profusely and information was given to the family members. On getting the information, the police of Cantt police station also reached. Police sent Adil to the

Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. His father told the police that his son was shot dead by three boys Rashid, Pankaj and Sunny who sold smack.

Two days after the murder, the family members also created a ruckus at the police station over arrest.

Station House Officer (SHO) Cantt Mohammad Akram said Pankaj and Rashid have been arrested in this murder and a search for Shani is on.

Three youths saved from drowning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Alert policemen and boatmen saved three youths from drowning at Kubri ghat, Kada Dham in the Kada Dham police station area of Kaushambi.

Police said a group of three youths, including Sonu (20), Rohan (18) and Rahul (22) of Bhairavpur in Fatehpur, reached Kubri ghat for swimming in Ganga. They jumped in the river and went into deep water zone.

After a hard work of 20 minutes, the swimmers and boatmen took out all the three from the river.

Following the incident, the residents have demanded police authorities to instal deep water barricading so that people cannot go beyond the limits.

BID TO FACILITATE PASSENGERS: Now passengers will be able to catch a flight directly from Prayagraj to Kolkata. Air travel between Prayagraj and Kolkata will begin from July 3. It will be operated on Monday and Friday, two days a week. The number of people travelling from Prayagraj to Kolkata is more. There was also a demand for it for a long time. Now this facility is being provided to the people of the Sangam city by Alliance Air.

The aircraft will fly at 12:25 pm and reach Kolkata after

1:45 hours i.e. at 2.10 pm. To come to Prayagraj from Kolkata, the aircraft will fly at 2:35 pm and reach Prayagraj at 4:15 pm.

After reaching Prayagraj, the same flight will leave for Delhi at 4:40 pm. Station manager of Alliance Air, Mukesh Jaiswal said a fare of Rs 4,215 has been fixed. Now Prayagraj will get direct flight facility for 12 cities. There will be direct flights for Lucknow, Dehradun, Bhopal, Indore, Delhi, Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Bilaspur and now Kolkata.

Summer training programme organised by IIT-A inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

India represents today a huge market for the application and use of VLSI and semiconductor ecosystem. Government policy and capital is going to catalyse these two elements and create a sustainable ecosystem that will serve the world's demand and India's needs in the coming decade.

This was stated by Prof Anand Bulusu, IIT Roorkee while inaugurating a month-long summer training programme on "Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI) design organised by Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad, (IIT-A) with the support of IEEE.

Prof Bulusu as chief guest said the impact of the VLSI design ecosystem has been experienced in the past few years. The resonance in hardware design establishments has noted that the proposals of businesses without an engineering design operation were given no consideration. VLSI will continue to power electronic advancement with the endless demand for devices with compact sizes, high performance and functionality, and reliability. The number of job opportunities in India is also expanding rapidly, making designing VLSI embedded systems an attractive career.

Coordinator Prof Manish Goswami said this eighth training programme will cover digital and analog integrated circuit design aspects along with design methodologies using various simulation tools. VLSI is significant because it is convenient for compact design. It consumes lesser power when compared to a discrete parts circuit and VLSI can be used for different functions.

UP IEEE Chairman Dr Satish Singh, said IEEE was striving hard to technically empower all technical institu-

tions of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Indian VLSI and embedded engineers play an essential role in designing VLSI systems for semiconductor industry.

Head of IT department Dr Sanjay Singh said the Government of India announced fiscal support for a design-linked initiative scheme to drive global and domestic investment related to design software, IP rights etc, from MSMEs and start-ups for financial incentives and infrastructure support across various stages of development and deployment of semiconductor designs for Integrated

Circuits (ICs), chipsets, System on Chips (SoCs), Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor linked design(s). These are all very much in the right direction in establishing India's footprint in the semiconductor product and supply chain business.

Dean (SD) Prof Shekhar Verma said IIIT-A had achieved milestones for working in the direction of VLSI design by organising eighth consecutive series of summer schools on the same topic. In today's world, semiconductor technologies have the most significant impact on our daily lives.



President Droupadi Murmu being felicitated with a bouquet by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on her birthday in New Delhi on Tuesday

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 DURGESH THAKUR/ PINKI THAKUR (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBFD00004965177 located at situated UNIT NO-A7-704, SITUATED IN OUR PROJECT "HABITAT 78", SITUATED AT SECTOR-78, FARIDABAD, HARYANA. 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 Sep 10, 2021, informing that CONSCIENT INFRASTRUCTURE PVT. 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.

Dated: June 21, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited
Place: Delhi/ NCR Sd-

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

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

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

Sl. No.	Job No	Name of Work	Amount (Rs. in Lacs.)
1.	12/D(H)/DGM(H)/DD(H)-I/2023-24, D/o Pak (Subhead Plantation 2023-2024) Division-I, Sector-72, 63, 64, 65, 119, 122 and Sector-68, 69 Central verge Two year maintenance.		Rs. 73.59 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 27/06/2023 upto 5.00 P.M. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 28/06/2023 at 11.00 am

Director(Hort.), Noida

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Int'l Yoga Day

Over the years, it has gained popularity and is an occasion for unity and bonhomie

Yoga, India's most precious export, is now cherished the world over as the biggest gift to mankind. It has now become synonymous with well-being, unity and harmony in the true spirit of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam.' As we celebrate June 21 as International Yoga Day, it marks an extraordinary occasion to feel proud to be an Indian. This annual commemoration of the ancient practice of yoga serves as a reminder of its profound significance and its potential to transform lives. Since its inception, International Yoga Day has grown into a platform for promoting holistic well-being, fostering unity among diverse cultures, and addressing various health issues and mental challenges faced by individuals. The roots of International Yoga Day can be traced back to ancient India. Though there were many exponents of yoga, Patanjali stands out as the most revered and popular exponent whose style of yoga is widely practiced today. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed the idea of celebrating yoga on a global scale. His proposal received overwhelming support from the United Nations General Assembly, leading to the official recognition of June 21st as International Yoga Day. This momentous decision highlighted the universal appeal and relevance of yoga, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural differences. Yoga is a holistic practice that nurtures the body, mind, and spirit. It encompasses a wide range of techniques, including physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), meditation, and ethical principles. The benefits of yoga are manifold. It promotes physical strength, flexibility, and balance, while also fostering mental clarity, emotional well-being, and inner peace. By embracing yoga, individuals can enhance their overall health and cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness. It can be practised by anybody as it is essentially a religionless practice.



International Yoga Day provides a unique opportunity to address various challenges that exist in today's world. It serves as a common thread that connects people from different backgrounds, religions, and nationalities. By embracing yoga together, individuals can celebrate their shared humanity and create an inclusive global community. International Yoga Day encourages cultural exchange, mutual respect, and the recognition of the inherent interconnectedness of all beings. It serves as a reminder that despite our differences, we are united in our aspirations for peace, harmony, and well-being. However, as we celebrate International Yoga Day, it is essential to address the challenges that exist within the practice itself. Yoga, originally rooted in Indian philosophy and spirituality, has been commercialised and sometimes stripped of its deeper meaning. As we celebrate International Yoga Day, let us embrace yoga as more than just a physical exercise routine but as a powerful tool for personal and societal transformation. Let us recognize its potential to heal, unite, and uplift humanity.

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PICTALK

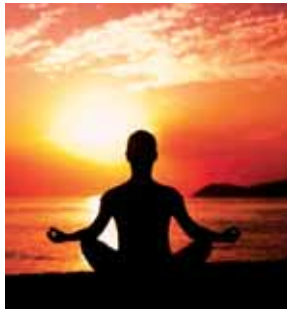


Children perform yoga in the backdrop of Taj Mahal on the eve of the International Day of Yoga, in Agra

Embrace unity on the International Yoga Day

Rooted in society for centuries, the saga of yoga paves the way for individual and universal consciousness

Vasudeva Kutumbakam is a famous saying that delineates that "the world is one family." Interestingly the phrase is so valuable that it has been engraved on the entry to our country's parliament building. As a notion, it emphasizes values like compassion, mutual respect, unity, strength in diversity, inclusivity and traditions.



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam transcends all barriers including geographical, political, social, religious, origin, community etc, supporting unity and interconnectedness through the blending of traditional practices. A classic paradigm of blending traditional practices in our modern way of life is the practice of Yoga. Yoga has famously been the catalyst of social change, science and advancement, the interconnectedness between people and establishing a balance between body, mind and spirit, fostering both physical and mental health. In a fast-moving world, today, staying rooted is essential to maintain the balance we desire in our lives. Yoga has been practised for thousands of years and has been seen as a way to experi-

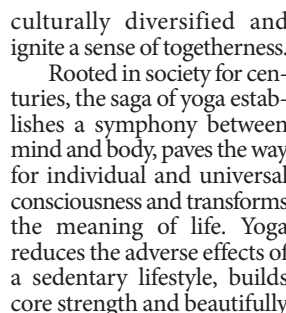
ence tranquility and attain higher levels of consciousness. In recent decades, yoga has gained popularity in the West as a way to enhance physical and mental well-being. Traditional yoga practices integrate physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation. Postures (asanas) help to unblock the pores in the body and create a stronger connection between body and mind. Pranayama (breath control) techniques help to reduce stress, balance the nervous system, and bring the body into a state of equilibrium.

Meditation helps to cultivate mindfulness and helps to bring the mind into the present moment. Alongside physical and mental benefits, the science and practice of yoga create harmony within,

& also foster and disseminate peace around us. Beautifully amalgamating diverse people across the globe, the practice of yoga resonates with the core idea i.e. a sense of unity and interconnectedness.

Every year on June 21, people around the world come together to celebrate International Day of Yoga, which was taken to the global pavilion by our Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2015, which signifies India's contribution to global well-being and harmony. It is mesmerising to witness each corner of the world demonstrating yoga asanas on this grand day of celebrations. The day serves as an opportunity for individuals to come together and reflect on the physical and mental benefits that yoga can offer.

It is a great way to improve overall well-being and can be practised by people of all ages and abilities. This year the celebrations will involve a huge variety of performances with a touch of cultures right from Indian dance shows, Tibetan singing bowls, Native American drum circles, and many more beautiful forms which are



ISHWAR BASAVARADDI

culturally diversified and ignite a sense of togetherness. Rooted in society for centuries, the saga of yoga establishes a symphony between mind and body, paves the way for individual and universal consciousness and transforms the meaning of life. Yoga reduces the adverse effects of a sedentary lifestyle, builds core strength and beautifully nourishes the body. Not only does it create wonders for the physical aspect of living, but also fosters self-awareness, promotes a positive outlook, instills a sense of gratitude towards life and Watching yoga demonstrations in itself provides serenity, leading us to imagine the magnitude of solace it shall bring on performing it ourselves.

The glow that yoga brings to faces is unparalleled and incomparable to any other lustre. Such is the power of yoga- golden & visionary! A precious gift from our ancestors, we must pass it to our future generations which can help them strengthen the core of their lives.

(The writer is the Director, of Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush)

Understanding past to know the now

It is also important to understand how one has reached where one is, and this cannot be done without understanding history



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

May 27, 2023, was a landmark day in the history of India. The inauguration of the Parliament building upscled the facilities of the Parliament, which has seen historic and tumultuous changes of an unprecedented variety. The changes were not just historical, technological, and in the nature of representation. It was a conceptual breakthrough. Just one event was unprecedented and memorable enough to be forever remembered. The event was the midnight of August 14 and 15, 1947, when India, as a union, evoked its right to self-rule in an unprecedented manner. The sub-continent of India had been larger and unified many times in history before August 15, 1947.



Since time immemorial, if nothing else, from the land of Gandhara (present-day Afghanistan) to the deep woods of the northwestern region depicting what is present-day Myanmar, one had seen political unity in various tranches of time. It was not just from west to east but also from north to south. What is today known as Kashmir is clearly traceable to the efforts of the legendary ascetic better known as Rishi Kashyapa in an era where the present concepts of documentation of time on the calendar did not have the crux of a reference to BC (Before Christ) or AD (Anno Domini the "Year of Christ" in Latin). The chronology of time was in a different order because the documentation of time was different from the present fashions of history. It cannot be assumed that those times did not exist. That may be another story. It is popularly believed that the northern region of what it is today, Jammu and Kashmir, was reclaimed by Kashyapa Rishi from the lakes and subsequently named Kashmir.

In the limitations of space of this writing, it is not possible to trace the historical sequence from those times to the present, but there are narratives available through various centuries. The area acquired strategic significance because the European empires who had occupied the Indian sub-continent and more,

needed a buffer from the Russian and Chinese empires.

The efforts of the Dogra King, Gulab Singh, enabled the emergence of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, with Ladakh as a useful territory on the eastern front. That too is another story. The British went along with this interpretation in the mid-19th century because it suited their political purpose. Those were not the days when boundaries were marked by 'fences'. The alignments on the frontier of what is now known as Aksai Chin, in the east, had clear linkages with Tibet. Tibet then had its clear identity.

From Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, cultural unity was very often manifested through the borders of empires in the South Asian sub-continent. This landmass represented a cultural idiom that was best represented by the travels of Shankaracharya. He travelled on foot from Kerala to Kashmir and from Gujarat to Orissa. This is symbolised by the 'Four Dhams' in the name of Shankaracharya. The union of the sub-continent in that process could, obviously, only be intrinsic. Heritage was common. Political boundaries kept shifting with various efforts of unification, given the various millennia that they spanned. The British Empire,

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 1947 WAS REPRESENTED BY PARLIAMENT, WHERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, PEOPLE GOT TOGETHER TO DECIDE UPON THEIR FATE THROUGH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

which lasted for less than 100 years, was a blip on the screen. To attribute Indian unity to the British can be a fanciful notion whose origins are in the School of African and Asian Studies at London University. It was a 'school' that would not bear the scrutiny of historical analysis.

The significance of 1947 was represented by the Parliament, where for the first time in history, a people got together to decide upon their fate through elected representatives. The event was of millennial significance. It was a much 'smaller' India because of partition and more. However, the soul of India was still intact. The body was held together by the four pillars of the four Peethas which Shankaracharya had set up.

The events in the days following May 27, 2023, have been significant.

As one goes to print in mid-June, for the first time in history, there is agitation among some of the most outstanding performers in the field of athletes and sports, that this country has produced. There has been a rail accident in eastern India with various theories about what led to it. Among the more disturbing is the suggestion of sabotage of electronic systems. Something happened which distributed the automatic switch for the train movement and the signal

system. The truth takes time to emerge, but ultimately it does.

Somewhere, there is a reference to the technological system under which so much of the safety of life, is being increasingly brought under. Talk of digitalization is merely the front end of the penetrating system of the onward march of technology. Like much else in this write-up, definitive conclusions would be difficult to compile. However, a few areas of concern are clear. One of them is that it takes time, and involves an approach to understand the parameters and constituents of history. Periodically, history has to be rewritten because the previous facts factored in are found to be incomplete.

It is also important to understand how one has got to, where one is, and this cannot be done without understanding history. History all over the world is periodically rewritten, and that is the essence of historiography. Similarly, no intervention or experience is an unmitigated blessing. Not even technology. Like everything else, it has to be holistically understood and selectively screened to get operative insights. The efforts have to continue.

(The writer is an internationally acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CHARGES AGAINST BRIJ BHUSHAN

Sir — The charges against Brij Bhushan Sharan, the wrestling federation's president, have sent shockwaves through the wrestling community. The allegations underscore the importance of accountability in sports leadership and maintaining the integrity of the sport. The wrestling community must prioritize transparency, protect the interests of athletes, and take decisive action to address the charges and rebuild trust. By doing so, they can emerge stronger and reaffirm their commitment to the principles that define the sport of wrestling.

Sadiksha Agrawal | Ujjain

NO END TO MANIPUR VIOLENCE

Sir — Perhaps no other Indian State had ever been in the thick of raging ethnic violence and engulfed by fire like what we have been witnessing in Manipur for well over a month now. With no other better option, the uneasy situation in Manipur forces the Union government to rise above partisan considerations and impose President Rule in the State. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been obdurately reticent and yet to utter a single word on the violence plaguing the State, Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Imphal has done little to quell the tensions. The State is in anarchy not seen in any part of India for decades. Precious lives have been lost, many have been injured in clashes, villages were burnt, over 47,000 people have been evacuated, and shops and properties have been destroyed and looted. Does Manipur warrant anything more to clamp PR?

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

BAN ADIPURUSH

Sir — The Maharashtra Congress Party on Monday demanded a ban on the Bollywood film "Adipurush" for insulting Hindu religious idols. Even the national President of Sarva Brahmin Mahasabha, Suresh Mishra, has also demanded a ban on the movie with immediate effect as the question is being

Gandhi Peace Prize for Gita Press



It is unfortunate that the honour of India's one of oldest and most renowned Gita Press meets a political controversy. The selection of Gita Press for the Gandhi Peace Prize is worth taking a decision, as this press house did exuberant service to the people of India, by meeting their reading needs, not only mythological textbooks but also other peculiar traditional books. Despite the press is home at Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur, it is rare that any Indian house will not have Bhagwad Gita from this press house.

The Ministry of Culture had rightly honoured this press house, for its exceptional service as per Gandhian values. But the way Congress leader Mr

Jairam Ramesh blamed the honoured for being politically motivated as this Press House, purely propelled the publish ing of the books based on Hindu relevance, Sanatan Dharma particularly, is regretting. Mr Ramesh being such a senior Indian politician, could indicate the decision to honour this press house to be politically motivated. In its answer, the Gita Press, declined to accept the prize money of Rs. 1 crore.

Putting questions in a democracy is a need, but relating everything to a political narrative is not a good approach. There are not many privileged ones, who love respect more than that money. If Gita Press is renowned for publishing books based on Hindu relevances, it is their vision and choice, we can't call them anti-social because they don't publish books for other religions. We need to respect their work, rather than questioning them why we do not publish books for non-Hindus.

Opposition leaders must not question in such a manner. Rather they too, cheer the honours of such social doers. They can't confer with such houses when they were in power.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

asked whether the Censor Board was sleeping while clearing the film. Maharashtra Congress president, Nana Patole, said that Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman have been 'insulted' in the film that was released and sparked outrage in different states.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party always keeps shouting that it is a pro-Hindutva government, but when it concerns a movie that heaps abuse on Lord Ram and Shri Hanuman, it has kept silent." The film is sending a very contradictory message to the society. Movies impact people's minds. That's why special care should be taken so that films don't tamper with religion and culture.

The looks of the mythological characters and their dialogues in the film are sub-par. The film wrongly depicts the characters of Lord Rama, Hanuman, Sita

and Ravan. The film is an insult to Ramayana. It is like playing with the faith of crores of Hindus. The character of Shri Hanuman has been given 'slang dialogues' in the name of making the Rs 500-crore budget movie. Besides, many of the scenes are in bad taste and must be done away with as they hurt the sentiment of the people. Adipurush' has sparked off strong protests in different parts of India, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Rajasthan and other states, with several Hindu groups taking strong umbrage over the dialogues. But hurt sentiments should not result in vandalism and that must be avoided at all costs.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS IS A MUST FOR PEACE

When we see each other as children of one Supreme, it leaves no room for suspicion



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is said that humanity is one big family sharing a common abode – the planet Earth. Similarities in culture, values, feelings and aspirations are often cited to highlight the commonalities among all humans. Similarly, the rich diversity in culture, traditions and even physical appearance of people from different countries is celebrated during international events such as the Olympics and various global festivals. However, despite the bonhomie that prevails during such events, conflicts based on race, religion, caste, nationality and ideology continue in the world. Why is that so? Feel-good slogans and talk, it seems, do not bring people together. Even institutionalised measures to remove barriers among nations and foster integration do not remove the feeling of 'Us' and 'Them', which lies at the root of a lot of ill feelings and conflict among people of different nationalities, races, religions and ideologies. Thus, conflicts in various parts of the world, be they sectarian clashes in some countries, disputes between indigenous people and industrial firms in various parts of the globe or fighting between insurgents and security forces in many countries – show the numerous divisions that exist among humans. The root cause of all this is that people are unaware of their true relationship with their fellow humans, which in turn is the result of their ignorance of their spiritual identity.



Almost all of us have heard or read that we are souls. But this piece of information remains just that, and it is mostly relegated to the back of the mind. Very few people are aware of this fact in their daily lives and fewer still make the effort to think, speak and act with this awareness all the time. So, what difference does it really make? One might ask this question. Well! It makes all the difference. Because, the soul is a tiny, sentient point of light that is the source of life in a living being. It is when a soul takes birth in a human body that it comes to be called a human being. Though it resides in a perishable body, the soul is imperishable and it cannot be destroyed and it does not die. The soul has no caste, nationality, race or gender. It gets labelled on these lines according to the circumstances of its birth and its later life. The eternal religion of all souls is peace and their eternal relationship is of brotherhood in a spiritual family. But this spiritual identity, qualities and relationship have been forgotten by most of us. As a result of this, we identify each other by the labels we have created: gender, nationality, religion, race etc. Which creates feelings of rejection, mistrust, fear, hostility and hatred towards others' i.e., those who do not carry the same labels as 'Us'. National boundaries and social divisions are the results of these feelings, which cause people with the same labels to band together to protect what they see as their common interests.

All conflicts in the world can be traced to such negative feelings and every effort, be it political or social, to resolve these conflicts fail or succeed only superficially because they do not address the root causes of these problems. When we see each other as souls, as children of one Supreme, it leaves no room for suspicion or hostility. When we realise that every other person on Earth is our soul brother, good wishes and feelings towards them automatically arise in our minds. At the same time, the knowledge that every soul has a unique role in this world helps us appreciate differences of opinion, nature and inclinations. When we interact with others with this knowledge, we are able to create harmonious relationships where everyone can express his or her unique qualities and is accepted and respected unconditionally. When this realisation affects a critical number of people, it will bring about change on a global scale. The world will then become a place of lasting peace, harmony and happiness - fulfilling the deepest yearning of every human being.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & a columnist)

India charted a neutral path despite pressures



JS RAJPUT

India stands with its head high because its political leadership displayed courage and futuristic vision in remaining out of the NPT and CTBT



The Russia-Ukraine war impacts practically every nation in one way or the other. Ukraine gets its aid, support and weapons from NATO nations. Sanctions by the US and its allies no longer create any major concerns amongst the targeted nations which have learnt to face such sanctions. India has solved its oil import issue and is in a much better position than before. The War has already lasted for around sixteen months but there seems to be no leeway in peace efforts, if at all these are underway!

Common people are unaware of any concrete steps being undertaken in this regard.

Apart from the fact that every war invariably inflicts misery, death and destruction, the tragedy is that the Ukraine war stands routinized in the eyes of common people. All of the UN agencies and human rights initiatives appear strikingly helpless in such situations. Think of Afghanistan which has suffered for decades together, throwing thousands of survivors into inhuman misery. Generations continue to suffer, Russians came, and Americans came, both pretending to be their saviours. They left with heads bowed down, leaving Afghans in a state of perpetual misery, with no signs of any redressal in future.

Think of children, particularly girls, most of whom lost not only their childhood but also the most creative and contributing years of life, without education or skill acquisition. There are other nations also that suffer uninterrupted internal strife and rampant violence. While the scholars of the global political scenario may be deciphering the intentions of the warring nations, the suffering citizens, children and women of Ukraine would take decades together to return to normalcy even after the war and internal strife could be managed.

The reconstruction would take an unfathomable measure of resources and time.

At present there is no hope of a thaw. This war stands routinized for the print media.



THE NPT IS A MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH 189 STATES AND FIVE 'OFFICIAL' NUCLEAR NATIONS. THE CTBT WAS APPROVED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 1996. INDIA IS NOT A SIGNATORY TO BOTH OF THESE

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity)

Electronic media offers content and helps them run 24X7 shows. Even when Alexander Lukashenko, the President of Belarus warned on June 13 of 2023 that he will not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if his country faces aggression, not many paid much attention to it. In an attempt to warn the US and NATO nations of their support to Ukraine, President Putin made his intentions clear to everyone that he intends to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus Russia's ally in this war. The threat of a nuclear war could be a reality!

It is also time to reflect on the global farce going paraded in the name of the NPT - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; CTBT. In December 1953 US President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented his proposal on "Atoms for Peace" to the UN General Assembly to create an international organization that may guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It led to the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency - IAEA - in 1957. Amongst several developments, The NPT was opened for signatures in 1970. It is a multilateral agreement with 189 States and five 'official' nuclear nations.

The CTBT was approved by the UN General Assembly on September 1996 and opened for signatures on September 24 of 1996. India is not a signatory to both of these. CTBT and NPT indeed remain discriminatory not only in percept but also the practice. Does it not astonish that a couple of nations appropriate certain privileges for themselves that they could conduct nuclear tests - but expect others not to enter that privileged area? India has consistently continued its research in areas of its choice

and has never surrendered to the bullying nature of certain well-known pressures. Today, India stands surrounded by two rouge nuclear nations that have all along been a security risk.

The US was the first to have successfully conducted an atomic explosion on July 16, 1945. It was also the first and the last to have dropped atomic bombs on the civilian population, that too within a month; August 6, 1945, on Hiroshima and on August 9, 1945, on Nagasaki. Almost four years later, USSR conducted its atomic explosion on August 29, 1949. The UK became a member of this club on October 30, 1952; and France on February 13, 1960. All four were members of the UN Security Council with Veto rights. China conducted its first nuclear explosion on October 16 of 1964. It could get an entry only in 1971. One must appreciate the Indian political leadership for having realized the nature of NPT and CTBT that are the creations of the imperialists of yesteryears. They were and remain keen to explore and insert such treaties and provisions that would shackle the developing nations that were just out of the yoke of colonialism. During the one-year period, the numbers for US and Russia came down; 5428 to 5244 for the US and from 5977 to 5899 in the case of Russia. Numbers remain the same in the case of France and the UK; at 290 and 225 respectively. India and Pakistan possess 164 and 170 nuclear weapons at this stage. Israel and South Korea are the other players at 90 and 30 only. The estimated number of Atomic Weapons globally is 12,512 in January 2023. Of these, 9576 were ready for the use of respective defence forces.

It is also estimated that 3844 of these are fitted to missiles and

fighter planes, ready to strike ahead the moment they receive the command! Apart from the fabulous-five, India and Pakistan are also nuclear nations. So are Israel and North Korea.

There could be one or two more also that remain permanent suspects in the eyes of the US and Israel. Imagine the vulnerability of India's security if it had not become a nuclear power. India now stands with its head high only because its political leadership, irrespective of opposite political ideologies, did not compromise on national safety and security, and displayed courage and futuristic vision in remaining out of the NPT and CTBT. In June it was noted that India could take its own stand - in national interest - and NATO powers could not intimidate it by imposing sanctions.

One could also time to recall with gratitude the role of Dr Homi Jahangir Bhabha in envisioning the nuclear needs of free India, and persuading the Tatas to establish the first and only research institute in nuclear physics in India in 1945; The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - TIFR. He was also responsible for the creation of the Department of Atomic Energy - DAE - in 1958. Several other initiatives followed. Under the leadership of Dr Bhabha, India created its own high standards of research in nuclear sciences. The experience of the 1971 war with Pakistan made Indian political decision-makers think afresh. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi approved nuclear tests, and these, now known as Pokhran-I were conducted on May 18, 1974. Atal Bihari Vajpayee made it happen again, and the Pokhran-II happened on May 11, and May 13 of 1998. It is the preparedness achieved by India that stands guarantee against its belligerent neighbours.

The BJP must go to the drawing board to pull off a hat trick

The BJP must woo its allies and redesign its strategy to win over the masses next year; the defeat in Karnataka Assembly elections was a wakeup call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP are reassessing their 2024 Lok Sabha poll strategy to perform a hat trick. As the Opposition parties try to build a united platform against the BJP, it has become necessary to begin negotiations with its erstwhile allies and find new partners.

The NDA had 19 allies in 2019. After the loss in Karnataka last month, the BJP is in power in ten states and shares power in four states. But the situation in 2024 looks different. Apart from the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction), Rashtriya Lok Jan Shakti Party (Pashupati Paras faction), Apna Dal (Soney Lal faction) and AIADMK, no major party is part of the NDA that completed 25 years of its existence



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist)

on 15 May.

The BJP leadership has already resumed alliance talks with the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab. It has also reaffirmed its ties with the ruling Shiv Sena faction in Maharashtra and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu.

The BJP has to put its house in order and contain factionalism and indiscipline before this year's three Assembly polls. What better way than to assuage the departed allies' feelings and lure them back? BJP had four important partners since 2014. Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, and Telugu Desam might return except JD(U).

Significantly the Party has weakened in Bihar (40 parliamentary seats) after breaking up with Janata Dal (United) and in Maharashtra (48 seats) after splitting.

Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena. With these losses and a united Opposition, the BJP has a potential fight at hand. Hence the need for an alliance.

Firstly, the Party must recover from losing Karnataka in recent Assembly polls. The BJP thought a hung Assembly would emerge, but the Congress won a landslide victory. Therefore, strengthening the Karnataka unit is crucial. Secondly, the impact of these results has energised Congress and the Opposition. The BJP would naturally prefer a weak Congress and divided Opposition.

Thirdly, the BJP has reached the maximum it can win on its own in the 2019 elections. It scored 100 per cent of seats in states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, MP and UP. The Party could lose some seats in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh. BJP must increase the seats in the South to cover the likely losses. But penetrating the South has been challenging due to different ideologies and the emergence of solid regional satraps.

Telugu Desam chief Chandrababu Naidu recently met top BJP leaders Amit Shah and J.P.Nadda and held talks for re-entry. He was encouraged when Modi paid homage to TDP founder N T Rama Rao on his 100th birth centenary in his Mann ki Baat

address last month. TDP left NDA in 2018. If things work out, the two may become partners in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The BJP will have a tough choice, as the current chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy also had good relations with the BJP.

As for Akali Dal, the oldest ally of the BJP, the Prime Minister recently went to Chandigarh to pay homage to the departed Akali Dal patriarch Badal, who passed away at 95. The two parties parted ways in 2021 when SAD opposed the three farming laws which it considered anti-farmer. Although the laws were withdrawn, the SAD and BJP fought the elections separately.

Nitish Kumar broke the alliance in Bihar last year. He

became the chief minister again with the help of RJD. Bihar is a critical state. The BJP has some small partners and is hoping for defections from JD(U). Nitish has been busy mobilising the Opposition with a Prime Ministerial ambition. But the JD(S) may return after its miserable performance in the recent elections winning just 19 seats. Its founder and former Prime Minister, Deve Gowda, is ready for a short-term alliance in Karnataka. The BJP rides piggyback on the AIADMK after the death of its leader J.Jayalalithaa in December 2016. Strains developed after the state BJP chief Annamalai recently made unsavoury remarks about the former AIADMK supremo J. Jayalalithaa. The enraged AIADMK threatens to leave

the coalition.

The BJP must hold on to its allies in Maharashtra, Haryana, Bihar, the north-eastern states and the South to do well in the polls. It must also keep channels open with parties equidistant from BJP and the Congress, such as the Biju Janata Dal. The BJP's target is to get 350 seats. While Modi's magic might still work, it needs a Modi plus. The Party, which is actively involved in expanding NDA, understands this aspect.

It is a question of whether the BJP needs allies or the allies need the BJP. It might work if the BJP manages to keep a divided Opposition, an expanded NDA, and a new narrative. After all, 2024 may not be the same as 2014 or 2019.

UK MPs endorse report against Boris Johnson over 'partygate'

PTI ■ LONDON

British MPs have voted overwhelmingly to approve a damning House of Commons committee report that found former prime minister Boris Johnson deliberately misled Parliament about Covid lockdown law-breaching parties at Downing Street.



Now lose the privilege of special access to Parliament accorded to former MPs. Many of his colleagues and Opposition members gathered in the Commons on Monday to debate the report's findings and a majority condemned the former prime minister's actions.

contempt of Parliament by 354 votes to seven. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, along with several other Tory MPs, chose not to attend the debate or comment on the report's findings, something several Opposition Labour Party MPs called out during the session that ran into hours.

must kowtow," Tory MP and former minister in the Johnson Cabinet, Jacob Rees-Mogg, said. He insisted that it is "absolutely legitimate" to criticise the conduct and make-up of the Privileges Committee, which wrote the report, because "our politics is adversarial".

EU unveils plan to protect economies from rivals

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union unveiled a proposal Tuesday to protect the bloc's economies from risks posed by unreliable suppliers in countries that do not share its values, like China, after the war in Ukraine exposed Europe's dependency on Russia for oil and gas.

von der Leyen told reporters. She said the EU must be "more assertive" in using the tools that it has to tackle the problem and develop new ones. The plans are being promoted as "country agnostic" because no target nations are mentioned by name, but they dovetail with the commission's new drive to "de-risk" its relations with China without completely "decoupling" as it relies on the Asian giant to tackle global challenges like climate change.

and supply chains more resilient to threats - to resist problems like energy or inflation hikes produced by the war - while keeping trade flowing. Under the scheme, the EU would work with countries that share its economic security concerns. "We cannot treat a supply dependency on a systemic rival the same as we would treat that dependency on an ally," commission Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager said.

Palestinian attacker kills 4

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A Palestinian attacker opened fire at a gas station near an Israeli settlement in the West Bank on Tuesday, killing at least four people and wounding several others, Israeli medics said, as violence continued to roil the occupied territory.



Palestinian officials said as the death toll from clashes earlier in the city of Jenin rose to six. The fatalities were the latest in a surge of violence that has wracked the region. The Palestinian Health Ministry said late Monday that 21-year-old Zakaria al-Zaoul was shot in the head in the town of Husan, west of Bethlehem.

Meloni, Macron meet following spat over migration policies

AP ■ PARIS

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni is set to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday in Paris to mark the improvement of relations between the two countries after their latest dispute over migration issues.

in February. The trip comes weeks after Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani abruptly cancelled a visit to Paris in protest of the French interior minister's criticism of his country's migration policy. On May 4, Gerald Darmanin blamed Meloni for being "incapable of resolving the migration problems for which she was elected".

British explorer, Pak bizman & son on missing Titanic sub

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/LONDON

UAE-based British billionaire-explorer Hamish Harding, who collaborated with the Indian government to reintroduce eight wild cheetahs from Namibia to India, and two Pakistani businessmen are among five people who went missing in the Atlantic Ocean aboard a tourist submersible on a mission to view the wreckage of the iconic ocean liner the Titanic.



Hamish Harding

Harding is the chairman of aircraft firm Action Aviation and a renowned adventurer who has flown to space and holds three Guinness World Records. In September last year, the 58-year-old flew on one of his aircraft from Namibia on a mission to relocate cheetahs to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. "This is an amazing project, an amazing aircraft, we can fly direct from southern Africa to India with a Boeing 747-400... we are all very, very excited to get going and get the cheetahs to India," he said in a video posted on social media just before take-off from Namibia at the time.

Tornadoes sweep through Mississippi, 1 dead, many hurt

Louin (AP): Multiple tornadoes swept through Mississippi overnight, killing one and injuring nearly two dozen, officials said Monday. State emergency workers were still working with counties to assess the damage from storms in which high temperatures and hail in some areas accompanied tornadoes. The death and injuries were reported by officials in eastern Mississippi's Jasper County.

Australian senator invites ICC to probe officers in war crime allegations

AP ■ CANBERRA

A senator invited the International Criminal Court to investigate what Australian military commanders knew about war crime allegations in Afghanistan in a bid pressure Australia into launching its own review. Sen. Jacqui Lambie, an influential independent legislator, sent an Article 15 Communication to the Hague-based court on Tuesday because she argues military commanders have not been held accountable for their soldiers' alleged war crimes.

the bus," Lambie told Senate. "Digger" is a colloquialism for Australian soldier. "There is a culture of cover-up at the highest levels of the Australian Defence Force. It is the ultimate boys club," added Lambie, a former army corporal. The ICC has an obligation to prosecute war crimes committed by Rome Statute signatories, including Australia, when such a state is "unwilling or unable" to prosecute, according to the Australian government.

former elite soldiers face criminal investigation. The first criminal charge for an alleged illegal killing in Afghanistan was laid in March. Former Special Air Service Regiment trooper Oliver Schulz, 41, was charged with the war crime of murder in the death of an Afghan who was shot in 2012 in a wheat field in Uruzgan province. Ben Roberts-Smith, Australia's most highly decorated member of the armed services when he left the SAS in 2013, is also under police investigation.

Europe, US urged to investigate type of AI that powers ChatGPT

AP ■ LONDON

European Union consumer protection groups urged regulators on Tuesday to investigate the type of artificial intelligence underpinning systems like ChatGPT, citing risks that leave people vulnerable and the delay before the bloc's groundbreaking AI regulations take effect.

led the world in efforts to regulate artificial intelligence, which gained urgency with the rise of a new breed of artificial intelligence that gives AI chatbots like ChatGPT the power to generate text, images, video and audio that resemble human work. The EU is putting the finishing touches on the world's first set of comprehensive rules for the technology, but they are not expected to take effect for two years.

articles and illegally using vast amounts of personal data scraped off the internet. The consumer groups, in countries including Italy, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Greece and Denmark, warn that while the EU's AI Act addresses some of the concerns, they won't start applying for several years, "leaving consumers unprotected from a technology which is insufficiently regulated in the meantime, and developing at great pace".

Rwanda genocide suspect to claim asylum in South Africa

Cape Town (AP): One of the last remaining suspects accused of orchestrating the brutal killings of some of the hundreds of thousands of people massacred in the Rwandan genocide nearly 30 years ago will apply for political asylum in South Africa after he was finally tracked down and arrested, his lawyer said on Tuesday. The move will potentially further delay Fulgence Kayishema's extradition to his home country to face long-awaited justice at a genocide trial. Kayishema, a former police officer in Rwanda, is one of the last four fugitives being sought by the United Nations' International Residual Tribunal for genocide and crimes against humanity related to the 100 days of horror that unfolded in the East African nation in 1994.

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR Tender Notice Reference No. 535/DR The Department of Director of Research invites online bids for the following

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that my client Saran Equipments and Engineers Private Limited is in process to avail the loan facility with the KMBL against the land admeasuring 3460 Sq.Mtrs.

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E-Tender Enq No. 465 /P-3/EMP-12337 dated 16.06.23 DY-Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2023_POWER_104264_1 for the work of Breakdown/Preventive Maintenance of Boiler, Airpreheaters and their of 4X210 M/W Unit-III to VI (Stage-II & III) at GGSSTP, Ropar.

APPENDIX- IV A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

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MBAPPÉ ECLIPSES FONTAINE AS FRANCE BEATS GREECE

AP ■ PARIS
Kylian Mbappé's twice-taken penalty moved him one goal behind Michel Platini on France's all-time scoring list as Greece was beaten 1-0 in European Championship qualifying.
Platini won the Ballon d'Or three straight times from 1983-85 during his heyday with Juventus and France, for which the gifted playmaker scored and created goals with a casual brilliance that became his trademark.
"It's huge when you know what Michel Platini represents for France," Mbappé said. "He's a legend."
The win was a fourth straight for World Cup runner-up France without conceding a goal in Group B — all with Mbappé as the new captain.
"Let's hope it lasts. I'm learning every day," Mbappé said. "It's an enriching experience to have this responsibility."
Mbappé also reached 54 goals over the season combined for France and Paris Saint-Germain to beat the overall mark set by the great Just Fontaine in the



1957-58 season — the year Fontaine set an individual scoring record with 13 goals at the '58 World Cup. Mbappé almost turned provider when his cross from the left was headed wide by Randal Kolo Muani midway through the first half.

That allowed the Greeks to settle easier on a humid night at Stade de France, and coach Gus Poyet's side started to look comfortable bringing the ball out from the back.
Another fluffed chance from the French saw defender

Jules Koundé volley straight at the goalkeeper from Kingsley Coman's cross on the stroke of halftime.
Early in the second half, veteran forward Antoine Griezman took defender Konstantinos Mavropanos' boot to the

left side of his head. Griezman was bleeding below his ear but smiled as he had thick strapping placed around his head like a rugby player.
Mavropanos was issued a yellow card. For the penalty kick, Mbappé looked tense in his run-up and goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos guessed the correct way — to his right — for a comfortable save.
But referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz ordered a retake, seemingly for a Greece player encroaching before the kick, and Mbappé made no mistake as he curled it into the right corner for his 40th goal for France.
Mavropanos, who fouled Griezman, was shown the red card for hauling down Kolo Muani in the 70th.
France missed further chances, not least when Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé broke from midfield with only Vlachodimos to beat. But Mbappé passed up the chance and tried to give Dembélé a tap-in, only to put too much power on his pass.
Ireland beat last-placed Gibraltar 3-0 in Dublin in the other group game.

Joselu delight at 'dream' return to Real Madrid

AFP ■ MADRID
Spanish international Jose Luis Mato, known as Joselu, said Tuesday it was a "dream" come true to return to Real Madrid, 11 years after he left. "I've been dreaming of this moment since the day I left, I'm very excited," Joselu, 33, told a press conference in the Spanish capital.
The forward has scored three goals in four appearances for his country and arrives from Espanyol on a year-long loan with option to buy to help Madrid reinforce a depleted attack.
Karim Benzema, Eden Hazard, Marco Asensio and Mariano Diaz have left, leaving room for major reinforcements.
"We all know Karim's level at this club, but I'm here to do a different job," he said.
"I'm going to give my all for this club, it's the club of my life, when you step onto the pitch, especially at the Bernabeu, you want to score goals."
Joselu is the club's fourth signing after midfielder Jude Bellingham, defender Fran Garcia and the return of Brahim Diaz.
The journeyman striker, who has played for 10 clubs in Spain, Germany and England, previously played for the Real



Madrid B team and has one La Liga appearance for Los Blancos, in the 2010-11 season, without managing to break into the first team.
This season Joselu finished as La Liga's third top goalscorer with 16 goals despite Espanyol's relegation, earning

him a call up to the national team squad for the Nations League final four. The targetman scored a last-minute winner in the semi-final against Italy and appeared from the bench again in the final against Croatia on Sunday as Spain triumphed in the Netherlands.



Messi set for July 21 debut

AFP ■ MIAMI
Inter Miami are targeting a July 21 debut for superstar signing Lionel Messi as the club plans to bolster the squad with as many as five new players, owner Jorge Mas said. In an interview with the Miami Herald published Tuesday, Mas said Messi was likely to play his first game for Inter against Mexican side Cruz Azul in the regional Leagues Cup competition.
Argentina captain Messi confirmed on June 7 that he plans to head to Major League Soccer after ending a two-year stint with Paris Saint-Germain.
The deal has yet to be finalized, but the Herald, citing a source with knowledge of the negotiations, said Messi was joining on a two-and-a-half-year deal worth up to \$60 million a year.
The deal also included an equity stake in Miami "upon the end of his playing days," the Herald report said.
Mas, meanwhile, told the paper that Messi's contract would conform to MLS roster

rules.
"There are no categories or anything that is being changed to incorporate Lionel Messi onto Inter Miami's roster," he said.
Mas said Messi's arrival in MLS would prove to be a "seminal moment" for the history of football in the United States.
"I think there will always be a before and after Messi when we talk about the sport in the United States," Mas said.
"I have a very, very strong held belief that we can create in North America and the United States if not the greatest league, one of the top two leagues in the world. I cannot over-emphasize the magnitude of this announcement."
"Having the world's greatest player here is something that is significant for our league, and for the football ecosystem in the United States. Lionel Messi is coming to this country to win cups and make a difference.
"I think it's incumbent upon myself and my partners in the league, the other owners, to seize the moment."

Rudi Garcia massive challenge at Napoli

AP ■ ROME
Unable to achieve the desired results with Cristiano Ronaldo at Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr, Rudi Garcia is facing an even bigger challenge as the new coach of Italian champion Napoli.
Garcia was hired to replace Luciano Spalletti, who is taking a year off from soccer after guiding Napoli to its first Serie A title since the days when Diego Maradona played for the club.
"Any coach who sits on Napoli's bench next season knows that it's a difficult job. Because when you win the title, in order to improve you need to repeat, and that won't be easy," Garcia said on Monday at his presentation at the Capodimonte national museum on a hill overlooking Naples.
"The players know they need to make an even bigger effort," Garcia added. "I'm not going to revolution-

ize everything but I'll make my imprint. For instance, the 4-3-3 seems to fit this team like a glove. But you also need to know how to change during games. I want intelligent players who can without relying only on Plan A. ... The good thing about this team is that everyone runs. I've got to make sure they keep running - with and without the ball."
Garcia signed a two-year contract with an option for a third season. The 59-year-old Frenchman is no stranger to Italian soccer, having coached Roma from 2013-16.
"It's destiny. I was replaced by Spalletti at Roma and now I'm following him after his great season at Napoli," Garcia said.
Garcia left Al Nassr by mutual agreement in April after failing to secure first place despite Ronaldo's arrival in January.
Napoli fans have just as high expectations, as demonstrated



when Garcia was greeted by a large banner from Napoli's hard-core "ultra" supporters that read: "Benvenuto in vetta Monsieur. Difendiamola" — "Welcome to the top Monsieur. Let's defend it."
Garcia said the fans have every right to think that way.
"When I arrived in the city and saw all the banners, I realized how proud the fans and the city are for their team," Garcia said. "And I hope that happens in the future, too."
Known for employing similar tactics to Spalletti with a heavy emphasis on speedy wingers — see Gervinho and Mohamed Salah at Roma — Garcia appears to be the perfect fit for a Napoli team that likes to work through Georgia dribbling wizard Khvicha Kvaratskhelia on the left wing.
"I hope so," Garcia said. "I'm not a chef but I've got to keep this group going on the fire."

India to open ACT campaign against China

PTI ■ CHENNAI
The Indian men's hockey team will open its Asian Champions Trophy campaign against China on day one of the tournament, to be played here from August 3 to 12.
Hosts India and China will face each other in the last match of the opening day of the tournament at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium.
After China, India will play Japan on August 4. The hosts will then cross swords with Malaysia on August 6 followed by the game against Korea a day later, as per the schedule released by the Asian Hockey Federation on Tuesday.
India will then take on arch-



rivals Pakistan in the final league stage match on August 9.
The six-team tournament will see South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, China, and India battle it out for top honours. All the teams are part of one pool and the positions on the points table will be decided by a league system.
Defending champions South Korea will clash against Japan in the tournament opener.
The semifinals are scheduled for August 11 while the

summit clash will take place on August 12. The Indian men's hockey team (2011, 2016 & 2018) and Pakistan (2012, 2013 & 2018) have both won three titles each, and are the most decorated nations in the history of the tournament.
"We are absolutely delighted to be hosting the Hero Asian Champions Trophy Chennai 2023 and announcing the schedule is a landmark day, as it sets the ball rolling for the tournament," Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said.
"While I would surely love to see the Indian Men's Hockey Team come out on top, I am certain that all the nations will put their best foot forward and treat us with exceptional hockey during the tournament," he added.



Indian announces tennis squad for Asian games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Doubles specialist Rohan Bopanna will once again be India's flag-bearer in the tennis event at the Asian Games as All India Tennis Association (AITA) on Tuesday announced a 12-member squad for the continental quadrennial games.
The Asian Games will begin in Hangzhou on September 23.
Sumit Nagal — who made his Asian Games debut in the 2018 edition competing in doubles alongside Ramkumar Ramanathan — and Sasikumar Mukund are the likely singles players in the side for the Games.
The 43-year-old Bopanna will most probably pair up with Ramkumar. Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni, the other two players in the squad, are already playing as a pair on the ATP Tour.
The women's contingent will be led by 2018 Asian Games bronze medalist in singles, Ankita Raina.
The other members are inform Karman Kaur Thandi,

Rututaj Bhosle, Sahaja Yamlapalli, Vaidehi Chaudhari and Prarthane Thombare.
India had won a gold and two bronze medals at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, where the Bopanna-Divij Sharan pair had defeated Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik and Denis Yevseyev to clinch the doubles gold. In the men's singles Praneesh Gunneswaran had won bronze in men's singles.
Former India player Rohit Rajpal has been named captain of the men's squad while Ankita Bhambri will be the captain of the women's team.
The core of the Indian contingent in both men's and women's sections largely remains the same, with Ramanathan, Nagal and Bopanna also featuring in the side that competed in the Jakarta Games.
Among women, four players who competed in Jakarta five years back — Ankita, Karman, Ruturaj and Prarthana — are also in the current side, while Sahaja and Vaidehi are the new additions.

Satwik-Chirag rise to career-best World No. 3

IAN ■ NEW DELHI
India's star men's doubles pair Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy achieved their new career-high ranking on Tuesday after their historic BWF Super 1000 title at the Indonesia Open.
The duo toppled the reigning world champions Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in the final to win India's maiden BWF Super 1000 on Sunday.
Satwik and Chirag have enjoyed a remarkable 2023 thus far, emerging victorious in two world tour tournaments which include the Swiss Open, and Indonesia Open along with securing a gold medal at the Badminton Asia Championships. In men's singles, Kidambi Srikanth climbed three places to enter the top 20 with world rank of 19 while Lakshya Sen jumped two places to be ranked 18.
HS Prannoy, the highest-ranked Indian men's singles player in the world, retained his position at number 9 in the world rankings following his semifinal run at the Indonesia Open.
Additionally, emerging talent Priyanshu Rajawat achieved a career-best ranking of 30, making him the fourth Indian



player to enter the top 30 rankings.
In the women's singles, two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu climbed two places to secure the 12th position in the world rankings. Despite her limited participation in tournaments, Saina Nehwal also managed to advance by one place, now occupying the esteemed position of world number 31.
Women's doubles pair Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand maintained their position in 16th spot in the rankings. On the other hand, Ashwini Bhat and Shikha Gautam experienced a slight decline, moving down two positions to settle at 41st place. In mixed doubles, Rohan Kapoor and Sikki Reddy climbed two places to be world number 33. Tanisha Crasto and Ishan Bhatnagar slipped one place and are now world number 38.
Rohan Kapoor and Sikki Reddy made an ascent in the mixed doubles category, rising by two places to secure the 33rd spot in the global rankings. Conversely, Tanisha Crasto and Ishan Bhatnagar experienced a minor setback, slipping down one place to reach the world number 38 position.

IHFF took Delhi by storm

PNS ■ DELHI
The International Health, Sports, and Fitness Festival (IHFF), second in the series and Asia's biggest event in the fitness world which concluded recently here at Pragati Maidan was a huge draw particularly among the fitness enthusiasts.
Legendary American bodybuilder Flex Wheeler, body-

building icon Kai Greene, iconic American coach and pro bodybuilder Dennis James Vlad, Cuban-American bodybuilder Sergio Jr, son of legendary bodybuilder Sergio Oliva, social media sensation Just Sul, singer Sukbir, and Rannvijay Singha, a popular face on television left the visitors in a thrilling mode during the three-day mega festival.

AUSTRALIA GO 1-0 UP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hosts Zimbabwe produced a second big chase in succession to continue their fine start to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 in Harare.

Sikandar Raza's unbeaten century as Australia won a thrilling Ashes opener by two wickets at Edgbaston on Tuesday as captain Pat Cummins' six-smashing 44 not out and Usman Khawaja's patient 65 combined to give England's "Bazball" cricket revolution a lesson from Down Under.

Cummins hit two sixes and four fours, and he shared a match-winning ninth-wicket partnership of 55 with Nathan Lyon (16 not out) in the last hour of the final day.

Chasing 281 to win, Cummins hit the winning boundary against Ollie Robinson and Australia finished on 282-8 to disappoint a raucous crowd that sensed another memorable victory at the Birmingham ground after a two-run win in the second Ashes test in 2005.

Khawaja, who hit his first test century in England in the first innings, faced 197 deliveries as he anchored most of Australia's successful run chase before being dismissed by England captain Ben Stokes. Australia needs 98 more runs to win the Ashes opener after reaching tea at 183-5 on Tuesday as the cricket thriller heads into its final session on the last day at Edgbaston.

Usman Khawaja is patiently moving Australia toward its winning target of 281. The opener, who scored his first test century in England in the first innings, has so far hit 56 runs from 159 balls. Allrounder Cameron Green is 22 not out in a 40-run partnership that England needs to end quickly. Forced to leave the field the day before with a painful blistered finger, England spinner Moeen Ali (1-50) returned earlier to give England a key wicket of third-ranked batter Travis Head (16). The 36-year-old bowler was hugged by joyful teammates after Head edged to slip fielder Joe Root. That left Australia at 143-5 before Khawaja and Green came together.

The morning session was lost to rain and players took an early lunch at the



Birmingham ground. The umpires have given the teams a total of 67 overs for the day. There are 38 overs left and the test is now unlikely to end in a draw.

Australia earlier resumed on 107-3 with Khawaja and nightwatchman Scott Boland at the crease. With fielders up close, Boland ducked Broad's bouncer in the eighth over of the day before nicking the next ball behind to Bairstow with Australia at 121-4.

BEN STOKES COMMENTS

Very proud of the team to take it till the end, go through all those emotions. That's another great game we have been part of, I'll be very surprised if we haven't kept people at the edge of their seats

throughout this Test. Good reason for more people in England and Australia to follow the Ashes.

A loss is a loss, we said we are going to keep playing this way. This is the way we will continue playing, going hard at Australia, taking certain decisions that feel right. (On declaration regrets) Not at all, I saw it as a chance to pounce on Australia. Never easy for someone to go out and bat 20 minutes. Who knows? Maybe Root and Jimmy could have got out and we would have been in the same place. (On Root) Magnificent, the way he played yesterday was massive.

The bravery he showed in the first half an hour was unbelievable. Credit for Australia for sticking through the game

throughout. The efforts that Broad and Robbo put in was incredible, running in with the three lions on your chest always gives you extra motivation

KHAWAJA, PLAYER OF THE MATCH

So heart-wrenching. When you're playing you're fine. Hard to watch. Definitely one of my favourite Test matches. I couldn't watch it with the guys. Was too much nervous energy there. Was watching in the change room on the delayed feed. Personally for me, even now, I've never felt like this. The ebb and flow of the whole game. It was no one's Test match until it was won. Last Test series was pretty tough work for the batters in general unless you were Steve Smith..



'Forever grateful': Kohli commemorates completing 12 Years in Test Cricket

SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian batting stalwart Virat Kohli on Tuesday completed 12 years in Test cricket and expressed his gratitude with a short post on social media.

The former India captain made his Test debut on June 20, 2011, against West Indies at Kingston and since then played 109 Tests scoring 8,479 runs at an average of 48.72 including 28 hundreds and the same number of half-centuries, breaking numerous records along the way.

Taking to Twitter, the 34-

year-old commemorated his completion of 12 years in Test cricket and wrote: "12 years in Test cricket today. Forever grateful."

He was handed over the Test reigns as India's Test captain after M.S. Dhoni announced his retirement from the longest format. During his captaincy tenure of 68 matches, Kohli guided the team to an impressive 40 victories, while experiencing 17 losses and 11 draws with a commendable win percentage of 58.82.

Under his leadership, India reached the Test rankings sum-

mit and also won its first-ever Test series Down Under in 2019 and also registered big Test wins in England and South Africa.

However, his scoring rate dropped drastically in the past few years as he went century-less for 41 innings since scoring a hundred against Bangladesh in 2019.

After a wait of 1205 days, Kohli finally registered a Test century, bringing up three figures during the fourth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia in Ahmedabad earlier this year.

WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Raza was spectacular with the bat in his 54-ball knock

ZIM MAKE IT TWO FROM TWO AS NEPAL GET ON THE BOARD

Hosts Zimbabwe produced a second big chase in succession to continue their fine start to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 in Harare.

Sikandar Raza's unbeaten century carried his team to a six-wicket victory over the Netherlands as Zimbabwe successfully chased down the target of 316 set by the Dutch.

That follows an opening victory over Nepal in Group A, leaving Zimbabwe in a good position in the race for a spot in the Super Six.

Nepal bounced back from that opening loss to record their first win of the campaign, as they beat the USA by six wickets.

Bhim Sharki was the star of the show, making 77 not out, as Nepal chased down 211 against the USA, who have now lost twice in as many matches.

ZIMBABWE BATTERS STEP UP IN CHASE AGAIN

Two days after chasing down 291 against Nepal, Zimbabwe found themselves with an even bigger target to achieve against the Netherlands.

But an unbeaten 102 from Sikandar Raza saw them home in comfortable fashion, reaching 319 for four with 55



balls remaining. Raza reached his century off just 54 balls, the fastest ever by a Zimbabwean in ODI cricket.

Raza was spectacular with the bat, smashing eight sixes in his 54-ball knock as he carried on the good work of skipper Craig Ervine (50) and Sean Williams (91).

The Dutch had looked in good

position at the halfway stage, making 315 for six as Vikramjit Singh (88) and Scott Edwards (83) gave them a dream start to their tournament.

Singh and Max O'Dowd (59) put on 120 for the first wicket before Raza bowled O'Dowd, before getting Wesley Barresi out in the same way.

A 96-run partnership between Singh and Edwards continued the

Netherlands' fine batting effort with Raza again the man to find the breakthrough, removing Singh, on the way to figures of four for 55.

Richard Ngarava (2/40) chipped in with a couple of useful wickets, including the skipper, but Saqib Zulfiqur's 34 not out off 31 balls ensured the Dutch went into the interval feeling good.

Zimbabwe needed to start quickly and they did just that, Ervine and Joylord Gumbie (40) putting on 80 for the first wicket before the captain was removed by Singh.

Gumbie and Williams then added another 62, and while Shariz Ahmed claimed the wicket of the former, as well as Wesley Madhevere, Zimbabwe were comfortably keeping up with the asking rate.

Raza joined Williams and the pair added 84 in ten overs to ease any tension, and while Williams eventually departed, it was left to his partner to complete a magnificent all-round performance to see the side home.

NEPAL UP AND RUNNING WITH US SUCCESS

Having suffered the same fate as the Dutch against Zimbabwe, Nepal were in need of a win against the USA, and got it by six wickets.

Karan KC (4/33) did the damage

with the ball to restrict the Americans to 207, before Bhim Sharki carried Nepal home with seven overs to spare.

Karan was sensational early on after Nepal had chosen to bowl first, taking four wickets in the first ten overs to reduce the USA to 18 for four.

Sushant Modani (42) and Gajanand Singh (26) started to rebuild, adding 47 before the latter edged Dipendra Singh Airee to slip.

That brought keeper Shayan Jahangir to the crease and he counter-attacked in style, making 100 not out from just 79 balls as wickets continued to fall at the other end.

Gulsan Jha (3/52) finished the job with an over to spare, rattling through the tail to leave Nepal with 208 to win, despite Jahangir's maiden ODI century.

Despite Aasif Sheikh falling leg before to Saurabh Netravalkar for 12, that total never looked like being enough, Kushal Burtel (39) and Sharki adding 49 for the second wicket.

Skipper Rohit Paudel and Kushal Malla both made starts before falling, leaving Nepal on 137 for four as Airee joined Sharki.

Any danger of a collapse was quickly averted though as the pair added 74 to carry Nepal to a comfortable win.



SL to host Pak for two-match Test series

SIANS ■ LAHORE

Pakistan will travel to Sri Lanka for the two-match Test series, starting from July 16, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Tuesday.

The first Test will commence at the Galle International Cricket Stadium on July 16 with Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo hosting the second Test from July 24-28.

Babar Azam's side will arrive in Sri Lanka on July 9 and will play a two-day warm-up game on July 11. The venue for the warm-up fixture is yet to be confirmed, as per PCB release. During Pakistan's tour of

Sri Lanka in 2022 for the two-match Test series, the South Asian team scaled the target of 342 to register the best run chase at the ground and win the first Test by four wickets. The hosts pounced back in the second Test to level the series with a 246-run win as the series resulted in 1-1 draw.

Pakistan last played a Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club, Colombo in 2014. They have played six Tests at the ground, winning one, losing one with four matches ending in a draw.

The Sri Lanka series will be Pakistan's first assignment in the 2023-25 cycle of the ICC World Test Championship.

Najam pulls out of race to be next PCB chairman

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan Cricket Board's interim chief Najam Sethi on Tuesday said he will not seek a permanent position in the PCB after pulling out of the race to be its next chairman.

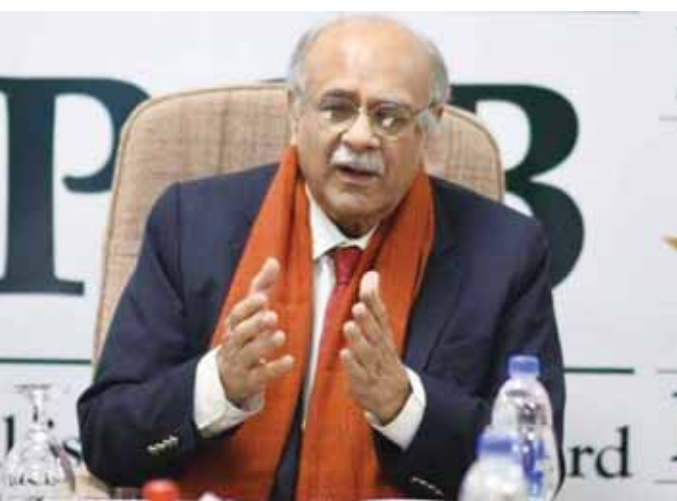
Sethi said he didn't wish to be the "bone of contention" between the country's top political leaders -- Pakistan Peoples Party president Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The announcement clears the way for Zaka Ashraf to again take over as PCB chairman.

In a late night tweet, Sethi said: "Salaam everyone! I don't want to be a bone of contention between Asif Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif. Such instability and uncertainty is not good for PCB. Under the circumstances I am not a candidate for chairmanship of PCB. Good luck to all stakeholders."

The late night announcement clears the way for Zaka Ashraf to again take over as PCB chairman.

The development could have implications on the upcoming Asia Cup and the ICC World Cup. The PCB found itself in a spin in recent times because both the parties in the ruling coalition government at the centre -- Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Pakistan Peoples Party -- wanted their nominees as chairman of the board. The PPP has been pushing for Ashraf pointing out that Sethi was



brought in as a chairman of the cricket management committee to run PCB affairs and hold fresh elections and restore the 2014 constitution. They said it would be a conflict of interest if he contested the elections, while Sharif had indicated Sethi would continue.

Sharif who belongs to the PML N, in fact, recently twice held meetings with Sethi which indicated Zaka would not be nominated by the Premier for the chairman's elections.

Ironically both Sethi and Zaka had also faced off in court in 2013/14 for the hot seat when both were backed by their parties with Sethi eventually winning the battle.

Pakistan wants venues swapped for World Cup matches

In an extraordinary move, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has requested the ICC to swap venues for two of their league matches in the 2023 ODI World Cup. Pakistan are currently scheduled to play Australia in Bengaluru on October 20, and then Afghanistan in Chennai on October 23 but they have asked for a change where they play Afghanistan in Bengaluru and Australia in Chennai.

It is learnt that the PCB offered no specific reason to the ICC for the request, but an internal note accessed by ESPNcricinfo says the venue swap would "make" Pakistan "favourites"

in both matches. "Australia in Bengaluru and Afghanistan in Chennai are the two which we should look to get changed as much as possible," the PCB's internal note said. "Ideally, we can switch these around. Australia in Chennai and Afghanistan in Bengaluru would make us obvious favourites in both matches."

It could not be confirmed whether the ICC had responded to the PCB request, or whether it would even consider it. Pakistan are also scheduled to play Afghanistan in one of their warm-up matches, and it is learnt that the PCB has asked the ICC if they could play one of South Africa, England, New Zealand or Australia instead.

Normally, security is the primary reason for a venue change at an ICC event. For example, during the 2016 T20 World Cup, the original schedule had the India-Pakistan match on March 19 in Dharamsala, but in the absence of a water-tight security assurance from the Indian government, the match was moved to Kolkata.

There is no mention of a security threat in the PCB's internal note, which was prepared as part of an assessment of the grounds where they will be playing during the World Cup. It suggests looking into changing the venue for all but three of Pakistan's matches, including the one against India on October 15.

Ashraf nominated for PCB's Board of Governors

SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf along with Supreme Court lawyer Mustafa Ramday, has been nominated by the country's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday to join the PCB's Board of Governors (BoG).

The development, which comes after the PCB interim Management Committee chairman Najam Sethi pulled out of the race to become the board's next chief, is a significant step for Ashraf, as it brings him one step closer to regaining the chairmanship of the PCB.

Announcing his withdrawal on Twitter, Sethi said: "I don't want to be a bone of contention between Asif Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif. Such instability and uncertainty are not good for PCB. Under the circumstances, I am not a candidate for the Chairmanship of PCB. Good luck to all stakeholders."

As per reports, Sethi and Ashraf have a history of competing for the PCB's leadership. In 2013 and 2014, they were embroiled in a protracted legal battle over the position.

In Pakistan cricket, the Prime Minister's appointment to the PCB board of governors is typically the person who usually becomes the board chairman for a three-year term and



Ashraf is the favourite to be elected to the position.

The two nominations would complete the 10-member BoG with the remaining eight members of the body almost decided with four representatives each from regions and departments.

The body will vote for the PCB's new chairman and put an end to the tenure of the board's interim Management Committee, which took charge in December last year after the ouster of former chief Ramiz Raja to revoke the 2019 constitution of the board and replace it with the 2014 charter, according to a report in Pakistan's leading daily Dawn.

Madushanka, Wellalage, Arachchige added to SL squad as injury covers

SIANS ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Tuesday announced that Dilshan Madushanka, Dunith Wellalage, and Sahan Arachchige will fly to Zimbabwe to join the squad as stand-by players for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier.

The three players will join their team on June 23, the day Sri Lanka takes on Oman in their second game of the event.

Madushanka and Wellalage are capped international players, with a combined experience of 23 games for Sri Lanka. The uncapped Arachchige is a top-order left-hand batter who can also contribute a few handy overs of right-arm off-break.

The 27-year-old Arachchige has played nearly eight years in domestic cricket, scoring 1454 runs at an average of 29.67 in 66 List-A games while also picking up 38 wickets.

Sri Lanka are looking to shore up their options after their pace spearhead Dushmantha Chameera missed their opening match with a shoulder injury.