

OPINION 6
MUCH ADO ABOUT
RENAMING EDIFICES

WORLD 9
ACT BEFORE RUSSIA HITS
N-PLANT: ZELENSKY

MONEY 10
INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES JUMP
USD 2.35 BN TO USD 596 BN

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 33 Issue 173
*Air Surchage Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JUNE 24, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



IND ANNOUNCES
SQAUD FOR WI
TOUR
12 SPORT

www.dailypioneer.com

No ifs or buts in acting on terror: Modi at Capitol Hill

Biden, Modi in joint statement resolve to fight terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON

Flagging the challenge of terrorism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said it is an enemy of humanity and there can be "no ifs or buts" in dealing with the scourge. He also sought action against its State sponsors, in an oblique attack on Pakistan.

Making this assertion in his address to the joint meeting of the US Congress late Thursday, the Prime Minister said more than two decades after 9/11 and over a decade after the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, radicalism and terrorism still remain a pressing danger for the whole world.

"These ideologies keep taking new identities and forms, but their intentions are the same. Terrorism is an enemy of humanity and there can be no ifs or buts in dealing with it. We must overcome all such forces sponsoring and exporting terror," Modi said in his 60-minute address in English.

In the India-US joint statement released after the talks between Prime Minister Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a joint meeting of Congress at the Capitol in Washington on Thursday AP/PTI

and US President Joe Biden, the two countries also expressed their resolve to fight terrorism and extremism.

"The US and India stand together to counter global terrorism and unequivocally condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations," it said.

Modi and Biden reiterated the call for concerted action against all UN-listed terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the statement said.

"They strongly condemned cross-border terrorism, the use

of terrorist proxies and called on Pakistan to take immediate action to ensure that no territory under its control is used for launching terrorist attacks. They called for the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks to be brought to justice," it said.

Continued on page 2

17 Opp parties resolve to fight against BJP in 2024

AAP skips meet, raps Cong, queers Opp front pitch

PNS ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

Setting aside their bitter differences and regional ambitions, 17 Opposition parties, including the presidents of major political entities like Congress, have resolved to join forces and present a united front for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections. However, fissures emerged as the AAP skipped the meeting and slammed the Congress.

The top Opposition leaders, along with Chief Ministers from six States, convened in Patna on Friday and laid the groundwork for a collaborative strategy to defeat the BJP.

The meeting, hosted by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, witnessed the participation of 32 leaders who expressed their commitment to working together and setting aside their differences to challenge the BJP's dominance.

The joint effort aims to bring about a complete turnaround in the election landscape and restrict the BJP, currently enjoying a strong majority, to less than 200 seats.

The Opposition leaders emphasised their determina-



West Bengal CM & TMC chief Mamata Banerjee interacts with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a joint Press conference after Opposition parties' meeting, in Patna on Friday. SP president Akhilesh Yadav, Jharkhand CM and JMM leader Hemant Soren and Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge are also seen PTI

tion to protect the country's interests and safeguard their ideology while uniting against the BJP-led Government.

However, the meeting didn't discuss name of anyone to be projected as the joint Opposition candidate for the post of Prime Minister. "No decision taken on PM candidate at Patna Opposition parties' meet," said Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

With their combined strength currently accounting for less than 200 out of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, the Opposition leaders anticipate a complete turnaround in the electoral landscape if they join forces, potentially limiting the ruling BJP to less than 200 seats. This united effort is aimed at dethroning the BJP, which currently enjoys a for-

midable majority with over 300 seats.

Continued on Page 2

Get married, Lalu tells Rahul

PTI ■ PATNA

RJD president Lalu Prasad on Friday gave a paternal reprimand to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his refusal to tie the nuptial knot, pointing out the consternation it was causing to his mother Sonia Gandhi.

"You do not heed our advice to get married," said Prasad while complimenting 53 years old Rahul for wearing a half sleeved shirt.

In Delhi, AAP slams Cong over ordinance

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Friday hit out at the Congress for not opposing the Centre's "black ordinance", saying the grand old party's silence raises suspicions about its real intentions.

"It is 'high time that Congress decided whether it stands with the people of Delhi

or the Modi Government," the AAP said in a statement.

"Unless the Congress publicly denounces the ordinance passed by the Centre, which was promulgated in Delhi to take control of governance away from the elected Government, it would be 'very difficult' for the party to be part of any alliance that includes Congress," it said.

Indo-Pacific stability central to India-US ties, asserts Modi

PM flags 'threat, coercion' in region in his joint US Congress address

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has issued a stern warning about the growing threat of coercion and confrontation in the Indo-Pacific region. In his address to the joint meeting of the US Congress, Modi expressed concerns over the tense border situation in Ladakh and China's aggressive posture in the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The PM emphasised that the stability of the region has become a central concern for the partnership between India and the United States.

Modi underscored the importance of upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter, peaceful dispute resolution, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity in maintaining the global order. He urged for a region where all nations, regardless of size, can freely make choices without fear, where progress is not hindered by unsustainable debt burdens, and where connectivity is not misused for strategic purposes.



The Prime Minister's remarks come against the backdrop of economic crises faced by countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan, attributed to China's substantial but unviable infrastructure investments. Modi reaffirmed the shared vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, interconnected by secure seas and grounded in international law while preserving ASEAN centrality.

The joint statement issued after talks between PM Modi and US President Joe Biden also stressed the importance of respecting the rules-based international order. Both leaders highlighted that the contemporary global order is built on the principles of the UN Charter, international law, and the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

Continued on Page 2

PM, POTUS regale guests with some light moments



PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the stellar achievements of Indian-Americans in his remarks at the state dinner in which he had his high-profile guests often in laughter.

Both President Joe Biden and Modi regaled their guests with some light moments while also being generous to each other, with the prime minister ending his speech with a toast to his wonderful hosts, including first lady Jill Biden, and the bond between the two countries. With Modi having a busy day attending several events, he said he had forgotten the count of speeches he made on Thursday.

Apparently referring to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol who surprised guests by singing during a similar state

dinner hosted for him in April, Modi said Biden's hospitality has moved his guests to sing, evoking laughter from the guests.

Modi then wished that he too had the singing talent.

"I know your hospitality has moved your guests to sing. I wish, I too, had the singing talent," Modi joked.

"I could have also sang before you all," he said.

Modi also recalled that during a dinner hosted for him in 2014, he could not eat anything as he was on a Navratri fast while Biden, then vice-president, often enquired with concern that if there is anything he can eat during the fast.

"Well today, I'm making up for it. Your wish to feed me is now being fulfilled today," Modi said.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

GOVT EMPLOYEES TO MARK AADHAR-ATTENDANCE

New Delhi: The Centre on Friday asked all its departments to ensure that employees working under them mandatorily mark their attendance through an Aadhaar-enabled biometric system. The move came after it noticed laxity on the part of government departments and the employees who are not marking attendance despite being registered on the system.

NO HEATWAVE IN DELHI SO FAR, SAFE TILL JUNE END

New Delhi: Delhi's primary weather station, the Safdarjung Observatory, has not experienced any heatwave this summer season. In fact, it is expected that there will be no heatwave until the end of June.

NIA chargesheets 13 Pak ultras for arms, drugs smuggling to fund terror in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday chargesheeted 13 accused, all Pakistani nationals, in the 2022 case related to the smuggling of weapons and contraband drugs from Pakistan via Gujarat for funding terrorist activities in India.

Ten of the 13 chargesheeted were arrested in December 2022 with a huge consignment of drugs and arms, hidden in gas cylinders, from a Pakistani fishing boat. The seizure included 40 kg of drugs (heroin), six pistols (foreign made),



six magazines and 120 9mm live cartridges, along with documents/Pakistani identity cards, mobile phones, and Pakistani currency.

The chargesheet was filed on Friday in the NIA Special Court, Ahmedabad (Gujarat). It names all the 10 arrested accused, identified as

Kadarkbakh Umetan Baloch, Amanullah Musa Baloch, Ismail Sabzal Baloch, Allahbakh Hatar Baloch, Goharbakh Dilmurad Baloch, Ammal Phullan Baloch, Gul Mohammad Hatar Baloch, Andam Ali Boher Baloch, Abdulgani Jungiani Baloch and Abdulhakim Dilmurad Baloch, the NIA said in a statement.

The remaining three Pakistani accused charge-sheeted by the NIA are absconding. They have been identified as Hazi Salim, Akbar, and Karim Baksh.

Continued on Page 2

GROW YOUR FUNDS

WHILE BEING INSURED

Introducing LIC's

DHAN Vridhhi

UIN: 512N362V01 | Plan No.: 869

A Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual, Savings, Life Insurance Plan

Option to choose Policy Term (10/15/18 years)

Multiple Benefits

Options to choose the Sum Assured (1.25 times or 10 times of Tabular Premium)

Also Available Online: Download LIC Mobile App Visit: licindia.in

Our WhatsApp No. **8976862090**

Say 'Hi'

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch/visit www.licindia.in or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 56767474

Call Centre Services **(022) 6827 6827**

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Har Pal Apke Saath

Follow us: LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

Beware of spurious phone calls and fictitious/fraudulent offers. IRDAI is not involved in activities like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums. Public receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

Xinxiang terrorists attack Syrian palace with artillery

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese terrorists hailing from Xinxiang launched an attack on the Syrian palace in Damascus using artillery fire.

The Turkistan Islamic Party, also known as Hizb-Islami-al-Turkistan, a group comprising Uyghur fighters, claimed responsibility for the assault on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's palace on Thursday evening. Experts monitoring the situation in Syria reported that the attackers utilized three to four tanks to target the palace.

During the operation, at least three Chinese fighters of Uyghur origin lost their lives, including Umair Gazi and Mohammad Sadir.

This attack marks the entry of Chinese terrorism onto the international stage. The incident comes shortly after China vetoed a joint proposal by India and the United States at the United Nations seeking to impose a ban on Sajid Mir, the Pakistani terrorist responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.



Experts speculate that the Chinese assault may be intended to complicate the geopolitical situation and discredit Russia, which is targeting the banned terrorist group ISIS in Syria to support the Assad regime.

The Uyghurs have been engaged in a struggle for their legitimate rights against Chinese oppression. However, China has consistently denied the existence of any oppression against the Uyghur communi-

ty, leading to suggestions that the Uyghur fighters may have the support of the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese state, both of which are known to enforce communist policies and principles upon the community.

In an attempt to mask their involvement, the Chinese government recently dispatched a purported assistance shipment to the Assad regime in Syria.

There is a noticeable shift in China's policy of backing

terrorists based in Pakistan, as evidenced by its repeated use of technical holds to block proposed sanctions and efforts to ban notorious Pakistani terrorists.

Interestingly, China seems to be positioning itself as a victim of terrorism concerning the issue of Uyghur human rights.

Pakistan has long been accused of harboring terrorists to target India as part of its state policy, particularly in the region of Jammu and Kashmir.

55-yr-old held for impersonating army officer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 55-year-old man was arrested for allegedly impersonating an army personnel and duping a wire manufacturer on the pretext of doubling his investment in a scheme.

Ali Mohammad, a resident of Nuh district in Haryana, has been found involved in 15 instances of online cheating across several states, they said, adding, money trail of more than Rs 22 lakh has been found.

According to police, the matter came to light when a wire manufacturer from Shahdara filed a police complaint. In his complaint, he alleged that on June 8 he got a call from a man who said he was calling from an Army officer School and wanted wires for the school, police said.

After discussion, a deal was struck for Rs 47,790 for a certain length of wire. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Rohit Meena said



Mohammad with his other associates searched for traders online to dupe.

Members of his gang called these traders posing as army officers of different ranks, but would later convince them to invest in some scheme promising them double the amount of investment, he said.

Once the target would transfer the money to them, they would withdraw and distribute among themselves, the officer added.

The DCP said Mohammad was identified on the basis of call records and was arrested from Nuh. Police have seized two mobile phones used in the crime from his possession

Man stabbed by friend over ₹500 in Wazirabad

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Thursday with the caller saying a man was stabbed in Wazirabad.

Mohd Faizan, the victim, who was stabbed below chest, was rushed to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital where he was declared brought dead, they said.

According to police, after he stabbed Faizan, Mashad fled on a motorbike with a friend who was waiting for him nearby.

Preliminary investigation revealed Faizan and Mashad knew each other for over a year and allegedly used drugs together often, Kalsi said.

All-round development in JK since Article 370 abrogation: Shah

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

All-round development has come to Jammu and Kashmir ever since the abrogation of Article 370, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday, as he exhorted the youth of Kashmir to ensure that they carry pens and laptops instead of stones.

Shah also said that during the rule of the previous governments in Jammu and Kashmir, democracy was limited to 80-85 people only and three families -- the Abdullahs, Muftis and the Gandhis -- had taken control over democracy but now its future is decided by 35,000 elected representatives.

Addressing an event after the inauguration of the three-day Vitasta Festival here, Shah said those who have known only the history of Jammu and Kashmir in the last four decades think that this is a disrupted or disturbed area.

"But Kashmir is a land

which has borne the brunt of bloodshed in the past and emerged victorious and more stable and peaceful," he said, adding this land saw nearly 40,000 deaths due to terrorism in the last three to four decades but today the same Kashmir is celebrating Vitasta Festival and marching ahead.

The home minister chose the occasion to call upon the youth of Kashmir to think about the rich cultural heritage of the valley.

"Those who handed over arms and stones to you, they were never your well-wishers. You should have pens, laptops and books in your hands and not stones," he said, in an apparent reference to stone-pelting protests in the past.

He compared Kashmiri culture with the Vitasta (Jhelum) river and said, "If one knows the right history of Kashmir, hate has never been its part. Whosoever came to Kashmir was welcomed with



open arms."

The home minister also highlighted the all-round development in Jammu and Kashmir since abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which accorded special status to the erstwhile state, in 2019.

Attending another function, where Shah inaugurated or laid the foundation of 84 development projects of about Rs 586 crore, he said during the

rule of the previous governments in Jammu and Kashmir, democracy was limited to 80-85 people only and three families had taken control over democracy.

Shah said there is democracy in Jammu and Kashmir now because 35,000 elected representatives are deciding the future of their village, tehsil and district themselves. He said that in the coming days,

the MPs, MLAs and new leaders will emerge from these people only.

However, the home minister said, there was a time when democracy was held "hostage" by three families -- Abdullahs, Muftis and Gandhis.

"They did not allow the elections of panchayats to take place preventing people from becoming Panchs and

Sarpanchs," he said.

Shah said that the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done the work of percolating democracy and strengthening it by bringing panchayati raj to the grassroots level in Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah said the panchayati raj system in Jammu and Kashmir was a reality now.

"Whenever the (assembly) elections take place, whoever forms the government, but the start we have made of Panchayati Raj, no one can abolish it. The panchayat elections are now a reality forever. This change is possible only when the heart is full of commitment to democracy," he said.

Referring to the situation in the Union territory, Shah said the incidents of stone-pelting and strikes calls have been brought under control.

"We have seen incidents of stone pelting in J-K, bandh

incited by Pakistan, and destroying peace and development here, bomb blasts and bullets, all these incidents have been bought under control. I do not want to give out the figures, but you all know and feel it. Today schools, colleges, industries are running, 1.88 crore tourists visited Jammu and Kashmir in 2022, which is the biggest figure since independence," he added.

The home minister said with such a large number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir, in the next five years, the number of hotel rooms in the region, especially the Valley, would be more than three times of the current figure.

This change, he said, happens when there is dedication to bring about a change.

"If someone comes to rule and enjoy the power, then he cannot bring about any change. Changes happen if mind is connected with the happiness, sorrow and progress of the peo-

ple," he said.

"The youth of Jammu and Kashmir, especially of the Valley, should come forward and lead the process of change and work towards taking Jammu and Kashmir to new goals and height.

"Those who put stones and weapons in your hands are not you well-wishers. The government is trying to improve your future by providing laptops, electricity, building roads, promoting tourism," he said.

Shah said change is the need of the hour and the youth from the valley should join hands with it.

"The change is waiting for you, the whole country is ready to take you forward, and the market of the whole world is open for the youth of the valley. You should come forward and be a part of the change and take pledge to fulfil the resolution of the Prime Minister to build a new Kashmir," he said.

PM, POTUS regale guests with...

From Page 1

In his comments, Biden said light-heartedly that both leaders raising the toast do not drink. He dwelt on the two countries' historic ties and praised the contributions of Indian Americans.

The President also spoke about Rabindranath Tagore's visit to the US, and his impact on the ideas here and invoked his famous poem "Where mind is without fear".

In his address, Modi said Indian-Americans have played a significant role in the all-round development of the nation they live in and also in strengthening the India-US relationship.

The State Dinner was hosted in his honour by Bidens at the North Lawn of the White

House. More than 400 guests were invited for the dinner and they included big names in the tech world and billionaire industrialists such as Mukesh Ambani, Anand Mahindra, Google CEO Sunder Pichai, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Apple CEO Tim Cook.

During his address at the dinner, Modi raised a toast for his "wonderful" hosts.

He raised it for good health, prosperity and the pursuit of happiness to liberty, equality and fraternity, and to the ever-lasting bonds of friendship between India and the US.

"With every passing day, Indians and Americans are getting to know each other better.

We can pronounce each

other's names correctly. We can understand each other's accents better. Children in India become Spider-Man on Halloween, and America's youth are dancing to the tune of 'Naatu Naatu,' the prime minister said.

Americans love baseball, but cricket is also becoming popular in the US, he said.

"The American team is trying its best to qualify for the Cricket World Cup to be held in India later this year. I wish them good luck and success," the prime minister said.

Modi told Biden that he has gathered a group of exceptionally talented and remarkable people tonight.

"I must commend you for that. These people symbolise so much about India-US rela-

tions, our energy, our dynamism and our nation," he said.

"Indian Americans have come a long way in the US. They are proud of India's values, democratic traditions and culture and have always found a respectful place in America's melting pot.

Indian Americans have played a significant role in further strengthening the inclusive society and economy of the US," Prime Minister Modi said.

"Be it hospitals or hotels, universities or research labs, gas stations or logistics management, they are making their mark everywhere," the prime minister said.

Modi spoke in Hindi with the speech being translated to English.

No ifs or buts in acting on terror: Modi at...

From Page 1

They noted with concern the increasing global use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), drones and information and communication technologies for terrorist purposes and reaffirmed the importance of working together to combat such misuse.

In his address to the US Congress, Modi also made a veiled reference to China, saying the global order is based on respect for the principles of the UN Charter, peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Noting that the Ukraine conflict is causing great pain in the region, Modi said he has said directly and publicly, "This is not an era of war. But, one of dialogue and diplomacy." Representing 1.4 billion Indians, Modi said it is always a great honour to address the US Congress and an exceptional privilege to do so twice.

Modi became the first Indian leader to address the joint session of the US Congress twice on Thursday. He first addressed a joint meeting of the US Congress in 2016.

"Now, when our era is at a crossroads, I am here to

speak about our calling for this century," he said.

Modi said as there have been many advances in AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the past few years, at the same time, there have been even more momentous developments in other AI -- America and India.

"We were strangers in the defence cooperation at the turn of the century. Now, the US has become one of our most important defence partners," said Modi, who is currently on his maiden State visit.

His words received a standing ovation from US lawmakers.

Indo-Pacific...

From Page 1

As China continues its military maneuvers and territorial claims in the South China Sea, India, the US, and other global powers have been advocating for a free, open, and thriving Indo-Pacific region. Modi called attention to China's actions, including the construction of artificial islands and military installations, and expressed concern over disruptive developments, such as the Ukraine conflict, which has reintroduced war in Europe.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the current era should be one of dialogue and diplomacy, not war.

17 Opp parties resolve to fight against...

From Page 1

The outcome of the meeting and the indication that the Opposition would be able to come together to take on the BJP is a major development that could, make the next year's Lok Sabha contest exciting.

Addressing a joint Press conference after an extensive four-hour meeting during which leaders expressed their views, Nitish, "We had a good meeting, and several leaders expressed their views during the meeting. Seventeen parties have decided to work together and contest the Lok Sabha elections unitedly." He was flanked by his alliance partner RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, and Chief Ministers Mamata Banerjee, Hemant Soren, and M K Stalin, among others. The meeting is viewed as the beginning of Opposition unity ahead of the crucial Lok Sabha polls, with the aim of collectively challenging the BJP-led Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Nitish emphasised that their

efforts were driven by the national interest, accusing the BJP of working against the country's welfare and attempting to rewrite India's history.

"Very positive talks were held today and we have decided to contest (Lok Sabha polls) together. Another meeting of all the (Opposition) parties will be held to decide the next course of action. In that meeting, almost everything will be finalised. Kharge will chair that meeting early next month," on his part, Nitish told media.

About the proposed Shimla conclave, Kharge said, "We have decided to prepare a common agenda and will take decisions in the next meeting on how to move forward. We will have to evolve separate plans for every State, and we will work together to

dethrone the BJP at the Centre." Congress leader Rahul Gandhi stated, they may have some differences but they have decided to work together with flexibility and will work to protect the country's ideology. "It is a battle of ideologies. Indeed, there will be differences amongst us but we have decided to work together and protect the ideologies shared by us," he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee said, "The first meet was organised in Patna as 'whatever starts from Patna, takes the shape of the public movement.' If this dictatorial Government (NDA) returns this time, there will be no elections in the future." She added, "We all are united and will fight unitedly against BJP. The BJP wants to

change history, but we'll ensure that history is saved."

Mamata, whose stand is significant and crucial for the sake of Opposition unity, also asserted that they were not opposition parties but citizens of the country who are patriotic and love 'Bharat Mata.' Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM leader Hemant Soren said, "Today's beginning will prove to be a milestone for the country, and all leaders will move together with a positive thinking."

SP leader and former Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav said, "The message from the Patna meeting is clear for all of us that we need to work together to save the country."

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar said, "Just like JP

movement, our united front will get blessings of public".

PDP leader and former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir Mehbooba Mufti after the Opposition meet said, "We can't let Gandhi's India to become Gode's country."

"17 parties from Kashmir to Kanyakumari have come together not for power, but for principles. We have met to save the country from devastation and to bring democracy back. I and Mehbooba belong to that part of the country where democracy is murdered...Yesterday in America there were discussions about democracy in the White House...why this democracy doesn't reach Jammua nd Kashmir...," NC leader Omar Abdullah said after Opposition meet.

NIA chargesheets 13 Pak ultras for arms, drugs...

From Page 1

"As per NIA investigations, the consignment of sophisticated/imported weapons was being smuggled into India by the 10 arrested accused, in connivance with Hazi Salim, Akbar and Karim Baksh, for delivery to India-based absconding accused Harun. Harun had hatched the conspiracy to illegally smuggle the consignment of weapons and contraband from Pakistan to India to provide funds to terrorist outfits and gangs operating in Punjab and North India," the agency said.

The conspiracy was exposed after the Anti-

Terrorist Squad (ATS), Gujarat, received credible inputs that one Pakistan-based drug mafia Hazi Salim was trying to smuggle huge consignments of contraband drugs and illegal weapons through Okha shore from Pakistan.

The ATS was tipped off that the said consignment would be reaching the Indian waters on December 27 or 28, 2022, near Okha Jetty (150 Nautical Miles west of Okha Jetty) through a fishing boat named "Al-Soheli".

The Okha Coast Guard was informed by the ATS and in a joint operation, the two agencies seized the boat.

Mobile tower norms in Lutyens' Delhi issued

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has issued a 37-point guideline giving detailed rules and regulations that need to be followed while installing communication towers in the Lutyens' Delhi. There are around 240 unauthorised cellular towers. Out of these, 140 are located on government buildings and the rest on private buildings.

In a document issued by the Council on Thursday, the civic body laid down the NDMC policy regarding the installation of communication towers to bring "uniformity" in the area.

According to the NDMC, there are four main aspects of the policy — regularisation of unauthorised towers, increase in one-time tower installation fee, renter fee for towers situated on NDMC buildings (no change), and process to install new towers.

The installation of towers or antennae should be in a manner that they do not disturb the heritage and aesthetic aspects of the New Delhi area, the document mentioned. No unauthorised Cell On Wheel (COW) will be allowed



in the NDMC area, it said. Installations of towers and antennas, either ground-based or on the rooftop, will not be permitted within Central Vista, however, if necessary, a committee will decide the issue on a case-to-case basis. The committee will be chaired by NDMC Chairperson with members to be co-opted from Central Vista Committee.

The mobile towers installed without permission post issuance of this policy may be regularised as per rules along with a penalty of Rs 10,000 per month from the date of installation of the tower. For cellular towers existing before the issue of this policy, the telecom company and service provider may apply for regularisation within 30 days of notification of this Policy by

paying arrears from the date of their existence.

The policy also increases the one-time permission charge from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 lakh for five years. No change has been introduced to the monthly licence fee. "A monthly licence fee of Rs. 292 per sq. Ft. Plus service tax subject to a minimum of Rs 50,000," the policy mentioned.

"The NDMC issues the policy for installation of mobile communication towers and related infrastructure to bring uniformity, based on the advisory guidelines issued by the Department of Telecommunication and by considering all connected factors," an official said.

The antennae and towers, including appurtenances and equipment, should be located

at the rear end of the plot and not be visible from the main entrance and road, the document said, adding no diesel generator sets are allowed at the tower site to cater to the power requirements of the antenna.

NDMC will e-auction the sites for installation of COWs in the NDMC area on designated places on approved rates initially for three years, which may be extended further for two years, they added.

For cellular towers existing before the issue of this policy, the telecom company and service provider may apply for regularisation within 30 days of notification of this policy by paying arrears from the date of their existence failing which NDMC will take action against those towers as per policy.

Similarly, permission to install towers or antennae on the campus of NDMC schools including Navyug Schools and buildings of hospitals and dispensaries will not be given. "However, in case there is a technical requirement for installation on these buildings, the matter shall be referred to the Chairperson NDMC for seeking exemption on a case-to-case basis," the document mentioned.

Dog sterilisation centre soon to curb canine woes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to curb stray dog menace, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved the allotment of land for setting up a dog sterilisation centre cum veterinary hospital and dispensary in southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj area.

According to Raj Niwas official, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will allot a plot of land measuring 483 square metres to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for developing the facility in public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

While approving the proposal, the LG directed the DDA to ensure that since the proposed facility comes under essential municipal services, the sterilisation of stray dogs should be done free of cost. Revenue generated from the centre through other means, like services and treatment of pets should be used for running the facility, officials said.

The centre will be set up in build operate and transfer mode with the conditions that all expenses for construction, medical equipment, operations and payment to employees shall be borne by the PPP partners selected through a bidding process, they said. The successful bidder will pay an annual license fee to the MCD.



According to officials, the proposal for setting up the centre was pending since 2019. The Raj Niwas, in light of the growing incidents of dog bites and the rising menace of stray dogs in the city, had said that the land being allotted by DDA to the MCD should be on the condition that it provides free services for the sterilization of stray dogs. In the recent past, there have been several incidents where stray dogs have attacked people leading to deaths in some cases.

The Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rule, 2001, deals with the population control of strays. It provides for the neutering strays to achieve population stabilisation, as opposed to killing them. Improper implementation of this law is also seen as a major reason behind the growing menace of stray

dogs. MCD officials said 57,000 stray dogs were sterilised till May in 2022-23 and it had raised the target to 80,000 this year.

While five dog sterilisation centres under MCD are owned and operated by NGOs and 11 by organisations and private veterinary doctors, five centres are yet to be allotted to NGOs, said officials.

"The NGOs and private veterinary doctors are reimbursed Rs 1,000 per dog captured, neutered and released. If the dog is captured by MCD and handed over to the NGO, the payment is Rs 900 per dog," said an official. The Animal Welfare Board of India had designated over 200 feeding points in Delhi-NCR from 2014 to 2022, which was considered too few for the number of colonies in the region.

Man driving car shot at in CR Park, injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man driving a car was injured while his friend seated on the front passenger seat escaped unhurt after two bike-borne masked assailants fired a bullet at them on a street at Chittaranjan Park in south Delhi on Thursday night. The car driver was hit by a bullet in his finger after it pierced through the windowpane of his vehicle.

The incident took place around 8 pm Thursday when Sachin Gupta and Waseem Ahmad were in a car in CR Park's C Block, they said. A police team that rushed to the spot discovered that a single round of shots were fired at Sachin from the driver's side of the vehicle.

According to the police, Gupta was driving the car and was talking on the phone. All of a sudden, a single round was fired from the driver side. The bullet pierced through the driver side window and scraped Gupta's finger. Ahmad who was seated on the front passenger seat was unhurt, police said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the shot was fired by one of the two people following Gupta on a bike. They had their faces hidden behind a muffler, a police officer said.

City sees 1st summer sans heatwave

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Safdarjung Observatory has not experienced any heatwave this summer season. In fact, it is expected that there will be no heatwave until the end of June. According to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) data, this is quite unusual because since 2011, the observatory has always recorded at least one heatwave in summer.

The Safdarjung Observatory has not recorded any heatwave this summer season so far. Also, there will be no heatwave in the next seven days. Since 2011, this is the first summer without a heatwave in Delhi," said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre.

Meteorologists attribute the absence of heatwave days to excess rainfall due to higher-than-usual western disturbances -- weather systems that originate in the Mediterranean



region and bring unseasonal rainfall to northwest India -- this summer season (March to June).

According to the IMD's data, Delhi recorded 111 mm rainfall in May, 262 per cent more than the long-term average of 30.7 mm and the fourth highest in the month since the Met office started maintaining records. The city logged more than 20 mm rainfall in April, the highest in the month since 2017, and heatwave conditions

at isolated pockets. The Met department has forecast intermittent rains over the next six to seven days, with the intensity peaking between June 25 and June 27.

Maximum temperatures are predicted to hover around the 35-degree Celsius mark during the period. Though the IMD's extended range model guidance shows an upswing in rains over northwest India in the last week of June, the Met office is yet to announce a date

for the arrival of monsoon in Delhi. Normally, the rain-bearing system reaches the capital by June 27.

The national capital witnessed sultry weather conditions on Friday as the maximum temperature of 37.7 degrees Celsius coupled with no rain resulted in uneasiness for people. The maximum temperature recorded was one degree below the normal. The humidity oscillated between 92 and 53 per cent.

Mahesh Palawat, a meteorologist at private forecasting agency Skymet Weather, however, said monsoon may reach Delhi on June 28-29. The IMD on Friday said monsoon has further advanced over some more parts of Karnataka, Telangana, the remaining parts of Andhra Pradesh, some parts of Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, the remaining parts of Odisha and Gangetic West Bengal, some more parts of Jharkhand and Bihar and some parts of east Uttar Pradesh.

Court acquits MLA for protest at BJP leader's house

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court has acquitted the Patel Nagar MLA and now Delhi Minister Raj Kumar Anand and an MCD councillor Ankush Narang in a case related to a protest held near the residence of former Delhi BJP president Adesh Kumar Gupta in March last year, saying there were innumerable lapses in the investigation.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vidhi Gupta Anand was hearing a case against Anand and Narang -- who were accused of participating in a protest near the residence of Delhi BJP chief Aadesh Gupta in West Patel Nagar without prior permission and without maintaining social distancing or wearing masks on February 26 last year.

Anand is a minister for Social Welfare, Labour, Employment, SC & ST, Land & Building, Cooperative, Gurudwara Elections in Arvind



Kejriwal led Delhi government. The AAP leaders were booked under Section 188 read with 34 of IPC for disobedience of order duly promulgated by a public servant.

Delhi Police accused them of marching while shouting slogans without any prior permission from the Competent Authority and not maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.

At the time of the alleged protest, an order issued by the assistant commissioner of police, Patel Nagar was in force. The order said though social restrictions were lifted on

account of a declining number of Covid cases, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, as mandated in the National Directives for COVID Management, would continue, the prosecution said.

"There are innumerable lapses in the investigation conducted by the investigating officer (IO) -- not conducting inquiries from public witnesses, no preparation of site plan, not recording statements of the station house officer or the assistant commissioner of police and other eyewitnesses, to mention a few," the court said.

It said the most glaring omission was not bringing the video of the incident on record, despite it being available with the IO. "Mere statement of the IO that he has changed his mobile phone and therefore, does not remember receiving the video of the incident appears to be nothing more than a flimsy excuse and it is a separate question as to why the

IO did not produce the most clinching piece of evidence in the court despite having received it," the court said.

"There is no specific number of the persons who participated in the protest march. While one witness says it would be around 50-60 persons, the other says that it would be around 100-150 persons and despite that, only two persons have been made accused in this matter," the court said.

It said the time of the protest remained unclear as the witnesses gave different answers and that no police witnesses were examined apart from a constable.

"It is held that the prosecution has failed to discharge its burden of proving the guilt of the accused persons. Hence, both the accused persons are held not guilty and acquitted for the offence under IPC sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 34 (common intention)," the court said.

Panel to submit report in 2 months for 'mohalla buses'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The committee assigned to study the routes for 'mohalla' buses in Delhi will take at least two months to submit its report. A technical committee was constituted by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot in May to decide routes and operational characteristics of the new bus scheme.

According to officials in the transport department, the committee is currently collecting data that will serve as the basis for formulating the routes for the bus service. "These buses will serve areas that are underserved. We had issued an email id for receiving suggestions from public on the scheme. The suggestions are

still coming in and we hope to get more by the month-end," he said. "On the other hand, 23 of our teams are on ground to carry out a survey by talking to people to know about their feedback and suggestions for possible routes," he added.

The teams are also examining the options for last-mile connectivity in areas, their fares, status and availability of e-rickshaws along with other aspects, the official explained. The dedicated teams are visiting high-potential metro stations, bus terminals, stops, and various localities in Delhi as part of the mandate.

The technical committee had been given the time of three weeks to submit its recommendations.

AAP has no importance in Opp front: Sachdeva after CM misses Patna meet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the AAP skipped the Opposition parties Press conference held post the meeting in Patna, Delhi BJP slammed the Arvind Kejriwal saying the Delhi ordinance was neither discussed nor any support announced.

"After the Patna meeting, 16 of the 17 parties held a joint press conference with the Congress and only the AAP was left out of it, which shows that it has no importance in the Opposition alliance.

AAP is like an unwanted intruder in the political corridor of the country," Delhi BJP



president Virendra Sachdeva said. The AAP convener and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has met several Opposition leaders to garner support against the ordinance.

His campaigns are also aimed at halting any move by the Centre to turn its ordinance into a full-fledged law in Parliament, particularly in the Rajya Sabha.

Sachdeva said that oppo-

sition parties have shown mirror to Kejriwal at the meeting. "After the Patna meeting, 16 of the 17 parties held a joint press conference with the Congress and only the AAP was left out of it, which shows that it has no importance in the opposition alliance," he said.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said Kejriwal and AAPians can not be trusted. "That's the reason, the opposition parties have distanced from Kejriwal and his party.

Actually, Kejriwal was trying to project himself as Prime Minister face for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. He was fooling opposition parties in the

name of Ordinance. First of all ordinance is valid for six months and Central government can extend it three times so they don't need to bring it in Parliament," he said.

The BJP leader said that Kejriwal is talking about Ordinance and trying to get support from Opposition but the fact is he needs protection of Opposition parties to prevent him going to jail in the liquor scam sooner and later.

The Delhi BJP Spokesperson Harish Khurana dared Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal to announce that he would go head-to-head against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

DJB to make paying water bills hassle free

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to make the process of paying water bills by the consumers in a hassle free manner, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is set to introduce a range of new facilities for its consumers in the near future.

Besides this planned move, customers will have access to a chatbot provided by the DJB, enabling them to easily register complaints and apply for new water connections. Moreover, to enhance accuracy and prevent issues with billing, the DJB plans to connect water meters with GIS and assign a unique ID to each meter using a QR code. This initiative will effectively address problems related to incorrect or inflated billings.

Furthermore, the DJB is committed to improving its mobile application by incorporating numerous new features. These updates will not only enhance the speed and quality of services but also ensure greater convenience and transparency for DJB consumers. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be leveraged to eliminate loopholes in the billing system and combat corruption, further advancing the board's commitment to providing advanced and consumer-friendly services.

Vice Chairman of the Delhi Jal Board Somnath Bharti emphasised the implementation of cutting-edge technologies to offer superior facilities and enhance transparency for the people of Delhi.

G'gram admin plans steps to prevent flooding of streets during monsoon

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Identifying hotspots, handling traffic jams due to waterlogged roads and installation of new drainage pumps are among the measures planned by the district administration here to check flooding of streets during rains.

The action plan to check waterlogging in the city was decided during a meeting of District Collector Nishant Kumar Yadav with officers of the Haryana Civil Services (HCS) on Thursday. Yadav inspected the drainage system on the Delhi-Jaipur highway, Manesar and other parts of the



city. After visiting all the water logging spots with Yadav on Thursday, the officials identified 112 such spots.

A meeting was held later in the day, where 20 HCS officers were appointed as nodal officers for monitoring at least five spots each. These officers will also have to ensure that commuters do not face problems

due to waterlogging and monitor traffic jams caused due to flooding of streets. "When it rains, the officers will have to visit their assigned spots and oversee the drainage work. They will also have to ensure smooth traffic management for the commuters with the help of traffic police," Yadav said.

JNUTA condemns suspension of 4 SAU faculty members

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Several teachers' associations, including the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association (JNUTA), have condemned the "arbitrary" suspension of four faculty members of the South Asian University, saying the action is an attempt to "intimidate and silence" them.

The SAU suspended the faculty members on Wednesday in connection with the 2022 student protests against the downward revision of monthly stipends for Master's students. Office orders placing the four faculty members under suspension over allegations of misconduct and violation of the varsity's code of



conduct were passed on June 16. The university has accused the faculty members of instigating students to protest, failing to perform appropriate duties, and having association with a Marxist study circle, a faculty member claimed on the condition of anonymity. The teachers' groups from across the country demanded that the suspension orders be "immediately withdrawn".

Apart from the Jawaharlal

Nehru University Teachers' Association, other groups who have issued a statement in support of the suspended faculty members are the All India Forum for Right to Education, the State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN) and the University of Hyderabad Teachers' Association (UHATA).

The teachers' bodies expressed solidarity with the suspended faculty and said the institution "should be run transparently and democratically keeping the interests and well-being of its different constituents in mind". In a statement, the JNUTA strongly condemned what it termed as "unprecedented harassment, coercion, and intimidation of

the SAU faculty" by the administration. "The suspension order served to four faculty members by the SAU administration is an attempt to intimidate and silence the faculty and the students who raise their voice against the arbitrary and authoritarian actions of the administration," the JNUTA alleged. The JNUTA asserted that it stands in complete solidarity with the faculty of SAU in defending their rights to speak truth to power.

"The JNUTA demands that the suspension orders of SAU faculty and rustrication/expulsion order of SAU students be immediately revoked and the administration starts a dialogue to discuss the demands for an agreeable resolution at

the earliest," the statement read. The SPCSS-TN, a body of educators and activists, said the administrative actions of the SAU, an institution facilitated by SAARC, are not in "consonance with the international understanding of human rights and democracy". "SPCSS-TN appeals to the member countries of the SAARC to uphold the freedom of thought and expression of every individual and come forward to advise the administration of SAU to give up the authoritarian attitude and to adopt a democratic process to resolve the issues raised by the students and provide all necessary help needed for the administration to fulfil the legitimate demands of the students," the SPCSS-TN said.

'Modi's US trip path-breaking'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US has been extremely rich in form and equally, if not more, rich in substance, and the trip was "path-breaking," Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said. The substantive outcome of his talks with President Joe Biden was co-operation in technology in all the domains including defence and space, he added.

Modi also discussed all pressing challenges confronting the global community with Biden and exchanged views on how India and the US could cooperate to mitigate, address and deal with terrorism comprehensively, Kwatra said in Washington during an interaction with the media.

Highlighting the takeaways from the visit, Kwatra said besides the reference in the US Congress to the challenge of terrorism, the prime minister said even after the two decades of 9/11 and a decade of 26/11, the problem of terrorism remains a pressing challenge for the global community.

He said Modi was clearly highlighting the need for "the international community to recognise that the people who sponsor terrorism, support terrorism, they continue to pose a serious challenge to the safety and security of our societies and have to be very sternly and firmly dealt with."

He said when Prime Minister Modi and President Biden held their discussions, "all aspects of such global challenges were discussed between the two and how India and US could cooperate to mitigate, address and try and deal with this challenge as comprehensively as possible."

"That was also discussed between the two leaders. And going forward, it would be our effort to see how some of those discussions can translate into concrete cooperative decisions between India and the US," he said. In his address to the US Congress on Thursday, Modi said, "These ideologies keep taking new identities and



forms, but their intentions are the same. Terrorism is an enemy of humanity and there can be no ifs or buts in dealing with it.

"We must overcome all such forces sponsoring and exporting terror" Kwatra also said technology cooperation featured prominently in the discussion between India and the US and described it as one of the most substantive outcomes of Prime Minister Modi's visit.

"Very clearly, technology, in particular, advanced technology, across all domains ranging from defence to space and energy is one of the most important substantive outcomes," he said.

"Technology featured in talks, not in a limited way but technology cooperation across the ecosystem. This included technology transfer, services and working together in research among other domains," he added.

Kwatra said one theme which has run through the visit is the "exceptional warmth and hospitality" US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden extended to Modi.

"The visit has been extremely rich in form and equally, if not more, rich in substance," he said, describing the trip as "path-breaking." He referred to various deals, including in defence, to highlight the visit's achievements.

US-India partnership will serve global good, say Modi, Biden

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Given the robust ties between the two countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden affirmed a vision of the US and India as among the closest partners. They also said the diverse partnership between the two nations will serve the global good.

These pointers were highlighted in the joint statement issued after the summit between the two leaders late Thursday.

It said the US-India Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership are anchored in a new level of trust and mutual understanding and enriched by the warm bonds of family and friendship that inextricably link the two countries together.

The statement also highlighted the scourge of terrorism in apparent reference to Pakistan and China's aggres-

sive stance in the Indo-Pacific. "The United States and India stand together to counter global terrorism and unequivocally condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations," the joint statement said.

"Together, we will build an even stronger, diverse US-India partnership that will advance the aspirations of our people for a bright and prosperous future grounded in respect for human rights, and shared principles of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law," said the joint statement.

Our cooperation will serve the global good as we work through a range of multilateral and regional groupings — particularly the Quad — to contribute toward a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific. No corner of human enterprise is untouched by the partnership between our two great countries, which spans the seas to the stars," said the statement.

Upbeat about the rela-

tionship, Prime Minister Modi told reporters during a news conference that now even the sky is not the limit.

"In fact, in short for India and America partnership, even this — even the sky is not the limit. Friends, the most important pillar of our relations is our people-to-people ties," he said. "Two of the world's largest democracies, India and America can together make an important contribution to global peace stability and prosperity. I'm confident that based on these values, we will be able to fulfil the expectations and aspirations of not only the people of our two countries but of the entire world," he said.

Affirming that technology will play the defining role in deepening our partnership, the joint statement said the leaders hailed the inauguration of the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) in January 2023 as a major milestone in US-India relations.

Foreign medical grads left in lurch



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There seems to be no end to the agony of the Foreign Medical Graduates (FMGs) who had to return to India midway following the Covid pandemic. In spite of completing their mandatory two years internship as mandated by the National Medical Commission (NMC), many are yet to get the certificate of permanent registration from their respective state medical councils, leaving them in limbo.

Now, the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) has taken up their cause and complained about the disparities in permanent registration of FMGs post internship adopted by many State medical councils.

In a letter to the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on June 20, the Association said that many state medical councils have misinterpreted the notice released by the NMC dated July 28, 2022, and were refusing to issue permanent registration status to the students.

It said that many state medical councils have misinterpreted the notice released by the NMC last July that said that Indian students who were in the last year of their undergraduate (UG) medicine course and have completed the final year online, on or before June 30, 2022, will be eligible for registration only after completing the Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship (CRMI) for two years. "There were stu-

dents who had qualified June 2022 FMGE exam before NMC notice came in. There are a few state medical councils that have given permanent registration to these candidates after one year of internship and they have moved on in their career or taken up PG courses as well. Meanwhile, a few candidates are still waiting for their registration," pointed out Dr Aviral Mathur, President, FORDA. Dr Mathur explained that there are discrepancies in the way different states have interpreted and implemented the NMC notice.

"This is very unfair that students who are from the same batch and qualified for the same exam are being treated differently. "Now, taking back permanent registration of students who have already been given is not way forward. We want to see uniformity across all states and for permanent registration numbers to be provided to rest of FMGs as well," he added.

The FORDA has brought to attention of Union Health Minister that states such as Delhi, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have denied or withheld permanent registration for FMGE candidates with one year of internship experience. "This has put future of many medical students at stake. The Ministry needs to come forward to resolve the issue by talking to States. We just cannot leave students fending on their own," said FORDA General Secretary Dr Sarvesh Pandey.

US Cong introduces legislation to fast-track weapons sale to India

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

With defence ties between the two countries now on the upswing, a legislation to fast-track weapons sales to India has been introduced in the US Congress, with a group of lawmakers saying strengthening the strategic partnership of the nations will safeguard their shared security interests.

This comes amid Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US. The legislation introduced in both the House of Representatives and the Senate late Thursday, seeks to place India on equal footing



with other partners and allies of the US by streamlining and accelerating the review and sales process for foreign military sales and exports under the Arms Export Control Act.

While in the House of Representatives, it was introduced by Congressmen Mike Waltz, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Andy Barr and Marc Veasey, in the Senate,

it was Mark Warner and John Cornyn.

"The United States and India are bonded by our shared national security interests and democratic values which is why it is so important we continue to strengthen our global partnership to address the threats of today," Waltz said.

The Congressman said as "our militaries continue to conduct joint military exercises and coordinate through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, streamlining military sales will help our two nations bolster security in the Indo-Pacific region."

"By removing the red tape around military sales, we are

recognising India as the key partner it is. Together, the United States and India will continue to cooperate and safeguard our shared national security interests and promote stability in the Indo-Pacific region," Barr said.

Barr said as the world's largest democracies, "strengthening our global partnership is paramount in addressing the challenges of today and securing a safer future for all".

Strengthening the US-India strategic partnership is vital to the prosperity and security of not only both the nations, but also other democracies around world, Krishnamoorthi said.

BJP terms Opp meet as 'wolves in pack'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Making a scathing attack on the Opposition parties attempt to join hands against the Modi-government, the BJP on Friday compared them as "wolves preying in pack" and their "prey being future of India" as it also said the Congress seeking the help of other parties is an admission of the fact that it was "incapable of defeating Prime Minister Narendra Modi alone".



Top leaders of Opposition parties went into a huddle in Patna on Friday to chalk out a roadmap for the formation of

an anti-BJP front for next year's general elections. The meeting was hosted by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of the JD(U) and his deputy Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD. Hitting-out at the opposition parties for attempting to forge a united front against the Modi-government, Union Minister and BJP leader Smiriti Irani said the Congress seeking the help of other parties is an admission of the fact by it that was "incapable of defeating Prime

Minister Narendra Modi alone". Irani took a dig at JD(U) and other opposition parties, saying it was "ironic" that some of the leaders who witnessed the "murder of democracy" during the Emergency have assembled under the Congress' parasol in Patna.

Pointing-out the alleged mismatch between the opposition leaders, she referred to the white paper brought by Mamta Benerjee against the RJD in the past and Left front meting-out humiliating treatment to Banerjee during the former's rule. Irani said old foes are gathering together only to defeat Modi. "Wolves prey in pack and their prey is future of India", said the BJP leader adding "Nishane pe Modi nahin bharat ki tijori

hain". They have sent out a message that they are unable to take on Modi on their own, she claimed. "I want to especially express gratitude to the Congress for openly announcing that it is incapable of defeating Modi alone. It needs support."

"Power has moved from the palace to the people. That's why people who take pride in their political legacy now have to go to those whom they had put behind bars during the Emergency," Irani said.

In a veiled attack on Bihar Chief Minister Kumar, she referred to the recent bridge collapse over the Ganga in the state's Bhagalpur district, and asked, "What kind of democratic bridge will they make who can not even build a bridge."

Mark attendance through Aadhaar-enabled biometric system, Centre directs staffers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday asked all its departments to ensure that employees working under them mandatorily mark their attendance through an Aadhaar-enabled biometric system.

The move came after it noticed laxity on the part of government departments and the employees who are not marking attendance despite being registered on the system.

During a recent review of the implementation of the Aadhaar Enabled Biometric Attendance System (AEBAS), it has been observed that a large

number of government employees posted across ministries/departments/organisations of the Government of India (GOI), are not marking their attendance using the system, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Taking a serious note of the inattentiveness/laxity on the part of ministries/departments/organisations and the employees (who are not marking attendance despite being registered and active), it has been decided that "ministries/departments/organisations (MDOs) shall ensure that the employees posted there to mark their attendance using AEBAS without fail", it said.

All ministries and departments have been asked to ensure that the biometric machines remain functional at all times; and heads of departments (HODs) shall periodically monitor the marking of attendance to ensure punctuality and sensitise their employees to adhere to the instructions relating to office hours, late attendance etc., said the order issued to all central government ministries.

"Habitual late attendance and early leaving of office should be viewed seriously and essentially discouraged and action against the same may be initiated under the extant GOI rules," it added.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number | Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession | Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) | Name of Branch |
|---------|--|---|--|----------------|
| 1. | Baljeet Kumar/ Raupwati/ LBGUR00004037935 | Flat No.1052, Ground Floor, Type-Ews-II, Housing Colony Sector 51 Gurgaon, Haryana/ June 20, 2023 | June 19, 2021 Rs.16,54,760/- | Delhi/ NCR |
| 2. | Sanjay Mittal/ Shruti Mittal/ LBGUR00002420358/ LBGUR00002420470/ Vill. Silokhera, Jharsa Tehsil and Distt, Gurgaon/ June 20, 2023 | Plot No.122, Block D, South City 1, Silokhera, Jharsa Tehsil and Distt, Gurgaon/ June 20, 2023 | January 30, 2023 Rs.91,62,075/- | Delhi/ NCR |

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : June 23, 2023
Place : Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number | Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession | Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) | Name of Branch |
|---------|---|--|--|----------------|
| 1. | Shri Trading Company/ Babita/ Neeraj Yadav/ Jitender Yadav/ *159005002868 | Commercial Property Located At Khewat No. 91,92,93,94,95,96,97,98,99 Kita 15 Total Measuring Area 45 Kanals 7 Marlas Having Its 104/863 Share I.e 11 Marla 5 Sarsai Situated At Nooni Kalan, Tehsil Narnaul Distt Mahendragarh Vide Registered Transfer of Immovable Property Within Blood Relation Deed No. 2163 Dated 30-10-2020 Immovable Property Issued By Sub Registrar Office Narnaul Mutation Number 1544 Dated 9-11-2020 Issued By Revenue Authority Nooni Kalan/ June 20, 2023 | December 06, 2022 Rs. 20,85,916.00/- | Narnaul, Delhi |

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : June 23, 2023
Place : Delhi

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

BJP to rethink alliance with Chautala's JJP

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is doing a rethink on its alliance with Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) in Haryana, as it believes the alliance may not yield positive results in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections for the state's ten seats. A decision on the coalition's future is expected by the end of this month, coinciding with the conclusion of the BJP's month-long "Sampark see Samarthan" campaign across the country.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during a recent public rally in Sirsa, had declared that the BJP would win all ten Lok Sabha seats in Haryana. Subsequently, Shah held a meeting with top BJP leaders from Haryana, including Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana BJP-in-charge Biplab Kumar Deb, and Haryana BJP President Om Prakash Dhankar, to assess the effectiveness of the BJP-JJP alliance in the lead-up to the Lok Sabha polls.

Sources indicate that the feedback received in the meeting was against continuing the alliance with the JJP, as the party is seen to have a "tainted" image

in the state, which does not align with the BJP's anti-corruption agenda.

The strained relationship between the BJP and the JJP became apparent when Dushyant Chautala, soon after Shah's rally in Sirsa, countered the BJP's claim of winning all ten Lok Sabha seats in the state. Chautala asserted that his party is also preparing to contest and win all ten seats, stating, "Neither can we stop the BJP, nor can the BJP stop us." He went on to add that his party is also preparing to contest and win all 10 seats.

The future of the coalition government in Haryana has been under discussion for the past few weeks, particularly after Haryana BJP-in-charge Biplab Kumar Deb met with five independent MLAs in the state.

The future of the coalition government in Haryana was being discussed over few weeks after the state-in-charge Deb met five independent MLAs in the state. BJP has 41 MLAs, JJP 10 and seven MLAs are independent and the saffron party requires five more MLAs to reach the magical figure of 46 in the 90-strong Haryana assembly.

SC turns down anticipatory bail to Pooja's husband

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to grant anticipatory bail to Abhishek Jha, the husband of suspended Jharkhand cadre IAS officer Pooja Singhal, in a money laundering case arising out of the alleged MNREGA scam in the State.

Singhal, a 2000-batch IAS officer, is the main accused in the alleged scam involving embezzlement of public funds of Rs 18.07 crore when she was the deputy commissioner of Khunti district. A vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and MM Sundresh declined to grant relief to Jha and posted the matter for hearing on July 5.

Jha has challenged the May 18 order of the Jharkhand High Court denying him bail in the case. His lawyer had earlier mentioned the matter seeking an urgent hearing. On May 18, the High Court dismissed anticipatory bail plea of Jha and had asked him to surrender before court in four weeks.

CBI raids cities in ₹100 crore PNB scam

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) announced on Friday that it has carried out searches in three cities following the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against IL&FS Energy Development Company Limited for allegedly defrauding Punjab National Bank (PNB) of Rs 100.30 crore.

The CBI has charged the company and its directors under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) pertaining to criminal conspiracy and cheating, as well as provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act for the diversion of funds and other irregularities in the utilization of loans obtained from the bank.

"In the course of the investigation, the CBI conducted searches at the offices and residences of the accused, including the private company, in New Delhi, Dehradun (Uttarakhand), Mumbai (Maharashtra), and other locations, leading to the recovery of incriminating documents and articles," stated the CBI in a released statement.

It has been alleged that the accused conspired to defraud Punjab National Bank (formerly United Bank of India).

"In pursuance of the said conspiracy, the accused misappropriated the sanctioned credit facilities through acts of cheating, utilization of loan funds contrary to the terms and conditions of the sanction, diversion of sale proceeds to related and sister concern companies, and other means, resulting in a loss of Rs. 100.03 crore plus interest to the bank," explained the agency.

On December 28, 2017, United Bank of India sanctioned a term loan of Rs 100 crore to IL&FS Energy Development Company Limited under a multiple banking arrangement.

However, the account turned into a non-performing asset (NPA) on December 31, 2018. To investigate possible fraudulent activities, a forensic audit was conducted by Haribhakti and Company for the period from December 1, 2013, to April 30, 2020.

PNS

BJP running parallel Govt from Raj Bhavans: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Two days after Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose returned the joining report of State Election Commissioner Rajiva Sinha -- a former Chief Secretary considered close to Mamata Banerjee --- and days after he celebrated West Bengal Foundation Day against the wishes of the State Government the Chief Minister on Friday lashed out at Raj Bhavan for running a parallel government in the State.

Speaking to the media at the close of the all- Opposition meet at Patna, Banerjee said that the Governor's house had become a tool of BJP's "autocratic" rule. "They are running an alternative Government from the Raj Bhavan," she said, adding how "for the first time West Bengal Foundation Day was organized without consulting the State Government ... we had never heard of a thing called Foundation Day of West Bengal."

The Chief Minister which

had been opposing the concept of West Bengal Foundation Day calling it a saffron agenda to rekindle the past memories of Partition of the State along communal lines had written a strong letter to the Governor asking him to desist from celebrating such a programme that could ignite communal feelings among the people.

Bose however, went ahead with his plans.

In her letter she wrote, "the state was not founded on any particular day, least of all on June 20... Contrarily, the state was formed through the infamous Radcliffe Award, which was given legitimacy by the departing colonial/imperial government," adding "Since Independence, we in West Bengal have never commemorated or celebrated any day as the Foundation Day of West Bengal. Rather, we have seen the Partition as a result of the unleashing of communal forces that could not be resisted at that point of time."

She further said that the Governor's decision "would hurt the sentiments or poodle and insult and defame the

millions of people in West Bengal today... We strongly protest against this unconstitutional and unilateral decision of the Government of India to commemorate the so-called Foundation Day of West Bengal on June 20."

Alleging that the BJP was imposing its wish through the Governor's House, Banerjee said, "Vice Chancellors are being appointed arbitrarily without consulting the State Government."

The Chief Minister also attacked the Centre for stopping her State's legitimate dues; they are not giving money for the 100-days work scheme ... they have blocked the funds meant for the construction of the rural roads ... and if you protest" central agencies were sent at the Opposition leaders' doors.

On the issue of the Governor's returning the SEC's joining report the Chief Minister earlier said that such measures would have no impact on his career as he could be removed only by impeachment. "Election



Commissioners cannot be removed by not accepting their joining letters ... they have to be impeached like the judges of the High Court and Supreme Court," she said.

Reacting to the Chief Minister's allegations, senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha said that her remarks in Patna had proved that her government was failing and she had no control over her departments.

"She is opposing the celebration of West Bengal Day because such celebrations will eventually reveal the history of the Great Calcutta Killings and the communal partition of Bengal ... it will awaken the people --- a fact that will jeopardize her position," Sinha said, adding Banerjee had failed on every front.

"She has given nothing to Bengal except bombs, guns, syndicates, cut money and corruption ... people have decided to throw her out of power and that she knows full well that she will soon become an ex-Chief Minister," the BJP leader said.

TMC candidate files nomination from Saudi Arabia: HC asks how

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court has taken strong exception to the alleged "ghost nomination" of a Trinamool Congress candidate in the upcoming panchayat elections.

Taking strong note of the incident, the Bench of Justice Amrita on Friday directed the State Election Commission to inquire into the matter and submit a report by June 25.

Ghost nomination had been filed in the name of Mohiruddin Gazi a TMC panchayat candidate --- from Minakhan block in North 24 Parganas --- who is presently touring Saudi Arabia. Though Gazi left India on June 2 --- much before the election dates were declared --- and was supposed to return on July 16, his nomination was filed along with his credentials and a sig-

nature of the proposer between June 10 and 15 the time given by the Commission for filing nominations.

As there was no provision for online nomination a thorough investigation into the matter needed to be done, the Judge said.

Besides, the same Judge has also ordered a CBI investigation against a Block Development Officer (from Bengal cadre executive services) for allegedly tampering with the documents of two CPI(M) candidates eventually disqualifying them from contesting the polls.

The State Government has moved the Division Bench against Justice Sinha's order. Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday referred to the same High Court order for CBI investigation while speaking to the media in Patna.

Passenger arrested for saying 'hijack'



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A passenger on board Vistara flight was arrested by the police ON Thursday evening, after he was overheard talking over phone by a crew member and a few co-passengers about a "hijacking plan" some time before the aircraft took off from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai for Delhi.

Acting on a complaint lodged by the crew members, the Sahara police arrested 23-year-old passenger from Haryana -- identified as one Ritesh Sanjaykumar Juneja, who was heard saying over phone: 'Hijack ka sara planning hain. Uska sara access hain, chinta mat karna.' (All planning has been done for hijacking. There's an access for it, don't worry?)"

IIT-B breakthrough: Solar cell gives 26% efficiency

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A team of students from the National Centre for Photovoltaic Research and Education (NCPRE) at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) has fabricated a novel semi-transparent perovskite solar cell (PSC) which together with silicon-based solar cell, has demonstrated an efficiency of more than 26 per cent for such a cell.

The team from IIT Bombay's NCPRE has overcome the stability issue by combining their PSC with a silicon solar cell in what is called a tandem configuration.

"Combining the two different types of solar cells allows the device to convert more of the light falling on it into electricity. Apart from the higher efficiency, the tandem architecture also provides greater stability to the device, while driving its overall lifetime costs low. The first experimental demonstration of a 4T- silicon-perovskite tandem with a solar cell from India showed with efficiency greater than 26 per cent," Prof. Dinesh Kabra, a professor at IITB and an author of the new study, said.

Though the prices of solar panels have dropped significantly in recent years, there is still a need for more affordable

solar energy solutions to make it truly ubiquitous. "This is where perovskite solar cells (PSCs) come in, promising an able alternative to traditional silicon solar cells due to their low fabrication costs and high efficiency," Prof. Kabra said.

Perovskites have gained a lot of attention since 2009, when the first perovskite solar cell (PSC) was fabricated. Perovskite crystals are one of the most abundant types of crystal structure families, with many compounds with different properties adopting such a crystal structure. PSCs are also highly efficient at converting light into electricity and cheap to produce.

Ashraf's brother-in-law returns from Dubai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A wanted criminal with a reward of ₹1 lakh on his head, Saddam, brother-in-law of Atiq Ahmad's younger brother Khalid Azeem alias Ashraf has returned from Dubai and his last location was traced in Delhi. A police team has been despatched to Delhi to ensure his arrest. The last location of Ashraf's wife Zainab was also found in Delhi, so the police drew a conclusion that brother and sister Saddam and Zainab were hiding somewhere in Delhi. Though Saddam had left for Dubai before the killing of Umesh Pal by the Atiq-Ashraf gang, he had played a vital role in this murder conspiracy by arranging a meeting of the shooters with Ashraf on February 11 in

Bareilly jail. When things were finalised, he left India knowing it well that after the elimination of Umesh Pal, the police will arrest him. Umesh, prime witness of BSP MLA Raju Pal murder of 2005, was killed on February 24. Saddam managed all VIP facilities for Ashraf, husband of his sister Zainab, in Bareilly jail. Immediately after the shifting of Ashraf to Bareilly jail, Saddam also reached there and lived in a rented house. He managed all facilities for Ashraf in jail besides providing him an iPhone to be in contact with gang leader Atiq and other members. Those who wanted to meet Ashraf in Bareilly jail, stayed at Saddam's rented house. Criminals used to meet Ashraf in jail and this frequency increased in

February. The top shooters of the gang Asad, Guddu Muslim, Gulam, Sabir, Arman and Usman had met Ashraf in Bareilly jail on February 11 to give a final shape to the murder plot which was executed on February 24. Besides Saddam, his sister Zainab, who is the wife of Ashraf, was also involved in this conspiracy along with Shaista Parveen, wife of Atiq. All of them are absconding. The police are keeping a track and recently the location of Saddam and Zainab was found in Delhi.

FEARED DROWNED: Three teenagers got trapped in the strong current of Ganga at Chhatnag Ghat in the Jhansi police station area late on Thursday evening. The people around saved two of them but the third one could not be

saved. The third teenager is feared drowned in the water. The divers kept searching for him till late at night, but failed to trace him. The SDRF and team of divers also made lot efforts to search him since morning but failed to do so till last reports received here said.

According to a report, Mohd Faiz alias Faizu (16) alias Guddu of Havelia ward in Jhansi police station area of the city, New Jhansi, had left home on Thursday evening with two of his friends, Abdul Ahad (16) and Alfaiz (18). They had gone somewhere and from there went to Chhatnag Ghat to bathe in the Ganga. While taking bathing they got trapped in the strong current of water. On seeing them drowning, people raised an alarm. Sanjay Nishad of Chhatnag and others rushed

to save the teenagers. After a lot of effort, people saved Abdul Ahmed and Alfaiz. But by then Mohd Faiz was feared drowned in the water. People searched for him a lot, but without any success. Faiz's both companions drowning got scared and from there, instead of informing the police, went straight to their homes. When they went home late in the evening and told their family members about the incident, they were shocked. They told Faiz's family members and the police was informed. Everyone reached Chhatnag Ghat and police engaged divers. A search for Mohd Faiz was made till at late night but to no avail. Jhansi Chhatnag chowki incharge Naveen Singh said divers have been deployed again in search of Faiz on Friday.

UP Board releases schedule for improvement/compartment exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The UP Board of Secondary Education popularly known as UP Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) has released the schedule for the improvement and compartment examination of High School and Intermediate. This exam will be held on July 15 in two shifts. The first shift was from 8 am to 11 am while the second shift from 2 pm to 5:15 pm. Secretary of the Board of Secondary Education, Divyakant Shukla said the examination will be held at the examination centres determined by the District Inspector of Schools (DIOS) at the district headquarters.

The entry of outsiders other than the examinee / centre administrator / teachers and non-teaching staff at the examination centre will be completely prohibited. The centre administrators will ensure such arrangements, so that unnecessary crowd of examinees did not gather at the entrance of the examination centre. Similarly, such arrangement should be ensured even after the completion of the examination.

The candidates are strictly prohibited from carrying mobile, pager or any other electronic device inside the examination hall. CCTV cameras with voice recorders and routers etc. installed in the rooms during the examination period will be fully active. The overall arrangement for the maintenance of question papers at the examination centres will be done in the same double-locked almirah in the designated strong room as in the main examination.

The strong room will be under CCTV Surveillance with Voice Recorder working 24X7. Packets of question papers will be opened and distributed in the presence of centre administrator, external centre administrator and static magistrate only under the surveillance of CCTV cameras.

The examinees concerned may download their admit card from the Board's website www.upmsp.edu.in or establish contact with the principal of the registered school and obtain their admit card after getting it countersigned by the principal of their school and must reach the school 45 min-

utes before the commencement of the examination on the scheduled date so that arrangements can be made to make the examinees sit in the examination halls in a planned and controlled manner.

NIRF RANKING: The Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology (MNNIT)-Allahabad's reputation and quality education is exemplified by its recent ranking in the NIRF report.

According to the newly released NIRF ranking, on combined metric for Placements and Higher studies (GPH), MNNIT stands as the second best among all NTIs and the seventh best among all engineering colleges, including IITs.

The MNNIT also rolled out maximum number of offers and on the basis of median salary of the placed students for the year 2021-22, MNNIT bagged third position among all NTIs as per the NIRF data 2023. A record breaking 382 students were offered packages exceeding ₹20 lakh per annum (LPA), 114 above ₹30 LPA, 37 above ₹40 LPA and 33 above ₹50 LPA in 2023.

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 **MOHAMMED MAQDOOM MOHIUDDIN / RUMANA KHADRI** (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBND00002406178** located at **Flat No 604, 6th Floor Tower-C, Plot Bearing No Gh-07A, Casa Grande, Sector-Chi-V, Greater Noida- 201307**. 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 **July 18, 2022** informing that **EARTHCON CONSTRUCTIONS 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 23, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited Place: Delhi/ NCR Sd-

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 **Hayat Karim Khan/ Farha Naim** (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBGH200002527375** located at **Flat No C-1403, 14th Floor, Tower-C, Casa Grande, Plot No.7A, Sector-Chi-V, Greater Noida-201307**. 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 **Aug 11, 2022**, informing that **EARTHCON CONSTRUCTIONS 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 23, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited Place: Delhi/ NCR Sd-

₹18K cr dev works finished in 9 years, says UP Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Registration Fees Ravindra Jaiswal said the last nine years tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been unmatched for the countrymen, especially the people of Kashi. "Ambitious Phulwara four-lane road will be completed in July," he said while addressing a press conference here on Friday. "During the last nine years, development works worth ₹18,000 crore have been completed in Kashi," he said.

According to him, apart from this, the foundation stone of development projects worth ₹9,000 crore has been laid and the work is in progress in all these projects.

Earlier, Ravindra Jaiswal conducted a surprise inspection of the road construction being done by the PWD department from Kali Mata Mandir, Pandeypur to Bypass Ring Road under City North Vidhan Sabha constituency on Thursday night.

During his inspection, he found the road is being made 2.5 metres high due to which colonies situated on the road-side will go down considerably and there will be water-logging in the rainy season.

tricity poles and other works were done from the year 2014 to 2023 in his constituency. He also gave the details of all the projects.

Earlier, Ravindra Jaiswal conducted a surprise inspection of the road construction being done by the PWD department from Kali Mata Mandir, Pandeypur to Bypass Ring Road under City North Vidhan Sabha constituency on Thursday night.

During his inspection, he found the road is being made 2.5 metres high due to which colonies situated on the road-side will go down considerably and there will be water-logging in the rainy season.

GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD
(GOVERNMENT OF GOA UNDERTAKING)
1st LIFT 3rd FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE, PANAJI-GO-403001
Ph. 0832-2421728 FAX: 08322421728 email: mdgfdco@gmail.com
No. III/Part-P-Salaulim/GFDC/23-24/596 Dated:- /06/2023

BRIEF TENDER NOTICE (E-TENDERING MODE ONLY)

The Managing Director, Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd Invites "EOI for Development of Yoga, Naturopathy & Wellness Center at Salaulim, south Goa on PPP Basis" open tender on e-tender mode only. The Last date and time for online submission of tender bid is **21/07/2023** upto 5.00 p.m. For detailed tender notice and for participation in e-tender please visit our e-tender website <https://eprocure.goa.gov.in>. Tender notice is also available on www.gfdco.goa.com for reference.

DI/Advt/2022-23/673/560

| Description of the property to be sold | Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof | Details of any encumbrance to which property is liable | Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property, and any other known particulars bearing on its nature and value. |
|--|--|--|---|
| 2121 D, 1st Floor, Tilak Bazar, Delhi-110006 | Not known | Not known | Not known |

Matter be listed on 14.07.2023 for filing affidavit of service of E-auction sale notice with proofs of service (including track results qua speed post and courier) and dasli, original proofs of publication in newspapers and wider publicity including website for the purpose of e-auction.

(Dattatrey Bajpayee)
Recovery Officer-II,
DRT-II, Delhi



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Titanic tragedy

The death of five explorers while on an expedition to the *Titanic* shipwreck raises uneasy questions

Five days of fervent prayers and hoping against hope ultimately didn't achieve anything other than the worst fears coming true: The deep-sea submersible carrying five persons to the century-old wreck of the *RMS Titanic* in the North Atlantic has been found in pieces following a "catastrophic implosion" that killed everyone aboard. Five major fragments of the *Titan* submersible, different from a submarine in that it can't navigate on its own and has to be dropped at and retrieved from the appointed spot, were discovered on seabed 1,600 feet from the bow of the ship that was termed "unsinkable" at the start of the second decade of last century. The *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank during its maiden voyage in 1912, killing more than 1,500 people aboard 640 km south of Newfoundland but the romance surrounding it lives on. The search for the missing *Titan* grew increasingly desperate since Thursday, when the submersible's estimated 96-hour air supply had been expected to run out if it were still intact. Apart from Stockton Rush (the founder and chief executive officer of OceanGate, the company owning the *Titan* and its pilot), the other four were British billionaire and explorer Hamish Harding, 58; Pakistani-born businessman Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his 19-year-old son Suleman, both British citizens; and French oceanographer and renowned *Titanic* expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77, who had visited the wreck dozens of times and went by the nickname of 'Mr Titanic'. The undersea expedition to the wreck, which OceanGate has been operating since 2021, cost \$250,000 per person.

Mystery shrouds the implosion's timing when *Titan* met its fate. During the five-day searches, sonar buoys had been deployed without detecting any loud, violent noise that would characterise the implosion. However, the US Navy said that an analysis of its own acoustic data had detected "an anomaly consistent with an implosion or explosion" near the submersible's location. To this, filmmaker James Cameron, who directed the Oscar-winning movie *Titanic* and has himself ventured many times to the wreck in submersibles, said he learned of the acoustic findings within a day and "knew what it meant". It's pertinent for the industry to draw exigent lessons from this tragedy, which must now look inwards and scale up the culture of safety and accountability. Calls must be raised for additional safety regulations, though industry experts say any new measures may be impossible to enforce given the international nature of the business. They also cite as a reason the murky regulations on waters for deep-sea exploration, comparing the submersible operation with that of the time when aviation was in its infancy period. Moreover, experts say the *Titan* tragedy was an outlier, given that its maker opted against certifying the vessel, thus defying convention. Sombre as the thought may be, there is a small consolation: The five explorers perished doing, with a distinct spirit of adventure, just what they loved.

PICTALK



A youngster jumps into a canal to beat the heat on a hot summer day, in Amritsar

Much ado about renaming edifices

If any memorial is desired by the family or kin of a deceased leader, it should be built in tune with his or her character as well as achievements



PRAFULL GORADIA

One fails to comprehend why there is so much hullabaloo over the Nehru Museum being renamed as the Prime Minister's Museum and Library. In any case, it was rather incongruous, to say the least, to house Jawaharlal Nehru, then newly crowned India's Prime Minister after the British left in 1947, in the residence of the British Indian Army. Nehru of course, led with delight the taking over of the reins of power from the British Empire. However, he disliked the armed forces greatly. When General Sir MacDonald Lockhart, the British Commander-in-Chief of our army asked Prime Minister Nehru in the early days of Independence as to his broad intentions about the scope of the Indian army's missions, so that he (Lockhart) could begin planning the size and equipment of the force, Nehru's quick retort was that India believed in peace and therefore did not need any army. The police that were then available in the country were adequate to protect us.

Prime Minister Nehru remained consistent in these views. He did not expand the armed forces nor did he acquire any new weaponry for them. The result was the disaster in Ladakh and N.E.F.A. (now Arunachal Pradesh). The Chinese Radio boasted that its troops look forward to celebrating the Christmas of 1962 in Calcutta. Their invasion began on 20 October and ended with a unilateral withdrawal on midnight of 20 and 21 November. During those unfortunate months, thousands of our army jawans laid down their lives in trying to resist the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Many more were wounded by frostbite because those soldiers who were dispatched in a hurry after the invasion began were ill-equipped. They went up the high mountains with one thin pullover, a pair of thin woollen socks and no gloves. The footwear our soldiers had were no more than ordinary canvas shoes. Thus, many unfortunate soldiers suffered frostbite by the thousand.

Prime Minister Nehru was so shaken at this national humilia-



tion that he wept on the radio while addressing the nation. His heart went out to the people of Assam, he cried in English. "Assam khatre mein hai", he wept in Hindi. It was a comprehensive route presided over by General B.M. Kaul, who had not seen action throughout his career, and whose only qualification for being appointed army chief was that he happened to be related to Nehru. Yet a captive establishment and fawning media shielded India's first Prime Minister from any fallout; his loud-talking and irascible, though intelligent, defence minister V.K. Krishna Menon was made the scapegoat for the 1962 disaster and made to resign to pacify national anger.

The mother of parliaments, namely Britain's Westminster, does not provide apartments or houses to its Members of Parliament. House rent allowance is part of the basket of allowances given to the MPs. Quite contrary to what is often loudly claimed by his acolytes, democracy in our country is in no way a gift bequeathed by Nehru or his dynasty. It flourished in ancient India in myriad forms. For instance, Krishna, who is worshipped as an avatar of Lord Vishnu, was a Republican



LET THERE ALSO BE NO DOUBT THAT GIVEN THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE REGION, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE CHINESE COMMENCE POURING OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS

himself. He was the de facto president of the Vrishni league, one among the numerous Yadava clans that made up the Confederacy of Mathura. Krishna's struggle against the rampaging Magadhan titan Jarasandha, a ruthless imperialist, was a struggle to protect and preserve the republican way of life against the aggrandizement of a superpower.

Democracy in India wasn't confined to Krishna and Mathura. Northwestern India had many republics that valiantly fought the invading Alexander, like the Mallas and Kshudrakas. Greek sources admit that Alexander could overcome them only after suffering considerable casualties. Vaishali, a neighbour of Magadha and at loggerheads with the latter was home to the renowned Vajji republic inhabited by the Licchavi people.

If any memorial is desired by the family or kith and kin of a deceased leader, it should be built in tune with his or her character as well as achievements. In this context, the two bungalows at Safdarjung and Akbar Road in India's capital, converted into a sort of memorial for the late Indira Gandhi is a shabby effort. One, because the bungalows were state property for ministers or officials of the state to live in; Secondly,

the two neighbouring bungalows in no way reflect the life and work of the distinguished lady. A place at Janpath occupied by the descendants of India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri is another instance.

One of Jawaharlal Nehru's admirers claims that the library situated in the palatial bungalow of the former British commander-in-chief of the Indian Army of the colonial era has contributed a great deal to the intellectual life of the country. Now, no matter where this library might have been situated, it would have served the same purpose. Architecturally, it detracts from the majesty of the commander-in-chief's palace.

It has no memorial value, unlike the 17th century Mughal prince Dara Shikoh's library, which is a reminder that had he ruled India, there might have been no Partition. It has been an appropriate step taken to convert this library into a Partition Museum to enable India's present and coming generations to know about what transpired in those years.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SELF-REGULATION IS VITAL

Sir—Self-regulation plays a pivotal role in fostering autonomy and accountability within educational settings, bestowing upon students the invaluable opportunity to embark on a personalized journey of knowledge and growth. This approach cultivates an enriching environment that nurtures intrinsic motivation, thereby yielding an elevation in academic prowess. By endowing students with the capacity to make well-informed decisions about their education, they are empowered to embrace the mantle of responsibility for their achievements. This autonomy catalyzes the development of a profound sense of ownership and pride in their educational endeavours, giving rise to heightened engagement and unwavering motivation. When students actively seize the reins of their educational trajectory, they are destined to reap a multitude of positive outcomes, including elevated levels of involvement, passion, and scholarly proficiency. Moreover, the cultivation of autonomy instils within students a deep-rooted sense of ownership over their intellectual pursuits, fostering an unwavering sense of self-esteem and resolute self-confidence. In essence, as students assume a leadership role in their learning, they become the architects of their destiny, fostering unparalleled self-efficacy and forging a path towards remarkable academic excellence. Imdadullah | Faridabad

WALKING A TIGHTROPE

Sir—Given a history of bipartisan support to India by the US, the current visit by Modi should come as an extension of the same. This time though the content of discourse is qualitatively heavier, in particular the US willingness to share technology, a rarity arising out of its need to find an alternative to ceasing Chinese manufacturing and trade pre-eminence. The convergence of Indo-US interests is perhaps far greater today than before. That said, such Indo-US economic bonhomie must ruffle Chinese feathers to induce some belligerence. China must view

Mamata's foray into Rath Yatra



The sacred Rath Yatra of Odisha's Puri had attracted a gigantic count of devotees to the traditional festival of pulling Lord Jagannath's chariot. From CM Mamta Banerjee to Odisha's Head of the State, to the mighty count of locals and devotees made this annual yatra, once again, a point of attraction. Puri holds specific significance for this Rath Yatra, where the mammoth Chariot is pulled by the devotee's section. Interestingly, Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee was also

captured by the media pulling the chariot via ropes with his other party's peculiar faces.

Despite Rath Yatra being a centric festivity of Odisha traditionally, Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee did not find any awkwardness in marking her presence there. Although when it comes to any festivity of another god, particularly Lord Ram or Lord Hanuman, she had a different reaction altogether. During her political rallies, she has been criticising 'Jai Shri Ram' as well as 'Jai Bajrang Bali' chantings as she finds them antisocial. She had never been observed stating anything about Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Even Jai Mata Kali or Durga Puja is predominant of her over chanting Jai Shri Ram. Her Puri appearance is welcoming. And now people wanted her to mark her presence for Ram Temple as well, without associating it with RSS or BJP. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

the exchanges in Washington as an effort at its politico-economic containment. Xi is not known to exercise reticence or patience and thus Chinese incursions into our northern borders could be more provocative than before. Moderating equations between an enthusiastic ally and a sulking adversary will be onerous. Coupled with this, we see the US paralytically setting out on defrosting its icy relations with China. In the process, the US could be circumspect on already unsteady Indo-Chinese issues. All the more that our relations with Beijing need careful handling hence onwards. R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

der and boasted that there is no discrimination in India at all. But the truth is different. PM Narendra Modi is maintaining a stoic silence on many issues. Muslims are being lynched in the name of Cow vigilantism every day in the country. The Modi Government has not taken any concrete steps to protect them. Now Manipur has been convulsed by ethnic clashes for 50 days and there are no signs of cessation of violence. In Jammu and Kashmir, attacks on Hindu minorities and migrants have gone up, even the journalists have been locked up on dubious charges. Former US President Barack Obama has rightly commented that under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi the Minorities are under threat. He rightly said the PM Modi's government has cracked down on the press and civil society, jailed political opponents and pushed an aggressive Hindu nationalism that leaves little space for India's religious Minorities. Zeeshaan | Kazipet

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Elite dining: A trend that's catching up in India

The experience combines exquisite flavours, impeccable service and luxurious ambience; the discerning enthusiasts are just digging it

India's culinary scene has witnessed a remarkable evolution in recent years, with a growing emphasis on elite dining experiences that combine exquisite flavours, impeccable service, and luxurious ambience. Discerning food enthusiasts and connoisseurs are now seeking more than just a meal; they crave immersive experiences that tantalize the senses.

So if you are looking for an authentic Mediterranean and Turkish dining experience that brings together the flavours, ingredients, and cooking methods of the Mediterranean region and Turkey right here in India you could have that experience in Delhi. That is the elite dining for you. Because it is all about creating ambience. However more than anything elite dining experience can be created only with imagination and creativity. One has to be an avid traveller and must have an eye for details and the ability to catch the cultural nuances.

India's burgeoning middle class, coupled with an increase in disposable income and a growing interest in gastronomy, has fueled the



demand for elite dining experiences across the country. While traditional Indian cuisine continues to be celebrated, the emergence of international flavours and innovative culinary techniques has added a new dimension to the dining landscape. Discerning diners are now seeking out exclusive restaurants that offer a unique blend of exceptional gastronomy, opulent surroundings, and personalized service. From immersive tasting menus to molecular gastronomy presentations, these dining experiences are designed to transport guests into a world of culinary excellence.

However, it is far more challenging than it looks as a lot of thinking and creativity along with an eye for detail goes into it. This avant-garde restaurant embodies the convergence of art, design,

and gastronomy, creating an extraordinary sensory journey for its guests. It is like teleporting your clients to another place and time and giving them an experience which they can relish for the rest of their lives. And of course, the meals you serve matters the most" says Shikha Begwani, the owner of Ophelia an elite restaurant in the heart of New Delhi which has emerged as a trailblazer in the elite dining scene in India with its authentic inspired by the realms of nature, architecture, fashion, and interiors.

The trend of elite dining is fast becoming a rage. A talented team of chefs and mixologists curate a menu that traverses Mediterranean, European, Oriental, and modern Indian cuisines, ensuring a rich and satisfying culinary journey for India. With a blend of captivating music, delectable cuisine, and a warm and inviting ambience. Take for example Cosy Box which eagerly awaits the chance to create lasting memories for its cherished guests. Meette, a progressive culinary venture rooted in the early stages of the pandemic, embraces the concept of 'edi-

ble art' as its guiding principle. Founded by Ashita Baijal Meette represents an artisan bakery and patisserie that constantly seeks to exceed limits and explore new horizons. It thrives on the creative interplay of flavours and aesthetics.

Likewise, another elite dining concept Toy Room, with its presence in nine countries has now been started in Delhi. The playful, proactive, and unpretentious ambience is what Toy Room is known for across the world. Shikha believes that the time for elite dining in India is now. "The partygoers are becoming more demanding and cut above the rest. They have travelled across the world and look for the same experience back home" says she. The first Toy Room opened in the Aloft Hotel, Aerocity, Delhi and the second in Grand Hyatt, Santacruz, Mumbai. Indeed the elite dining restaurants are going to do a brisk business in times to come as India is the most happening place for such restaurants. (The writer is a business consultant and specialises in the hospitality sector)



SHIVANI CHAUDHARY



FIRST COLUMN

HAPPINESS IS NOT A DESTINATION

It must be regarded as a journey spanning the entirety of one's life



RAVI CHANDER KOCHHAR

Similar to any other journey, whether it is by air, rail or any mode of transportation, it encompasses numerous ups and downs. The experience varies for each individual, as reactions to circumstances differ from person to person. Throughout life, we encounter many positive events. However, we often tend to swiftly forget these moments of happiness as we eagerly look forward to the next stage of our journey. For instance, when a child is born, joy is abundant. Yet, before long we shift our focus to the next milestones like crawling, sitting, standing and walking.

This tendency transcends into all aspects of life, including business, employment and personal ventures. Each time we find happiness in achievement, we quickly begin seeking the next one, inadvertently failing to fully appreciate and enjoy the present moment. Conversely, when faced with obstacles during this journey, they can often loom large, seemingly insurmountable. Even minor setbacks can feel overwhelming and consume a significant portion of our lives. However, it is vital to approach each failure or hurdle with the right mindset and allocate appropriate time for reflection. Some failures or obstacles may be inconsequential and can be safely ignored. Others, however, can be seen as valuable lessons and opportunities for growth.



Moreover, actively seeking happiness can significantly enhance our experience. Spending quality time with family can serve as an abundant source of joy. Interacting with children and even embracing our inner childlike qualities can invigorate our spirits. Engaging in activities with children not only imparts wisdom but also brings immeasurable happiness. Taking them for an outing with us can be truly rewarding.

Maintaining contact with friends can also contribute to our happiness. Reminiscing about old times and going down memory lane brings immense joy, although it may not always be possible to meet frequently, making the effort to do so whenever feasible, is quite important. Even sporadic rendezvous is better than none at all.

Pursuing hobbies is another avenue for finding happiness. Despite our busy schedule, setting aside time to engage in activities we love, is crucial. By planning our activities accordingly, we can create space for our passion. Differentiating between work and play is essential. While work may bring success, financial gains and material comforts, true happiness is not dependent on such external factors. Happiness is derived from intangible aspects of life.

Happiness is not solely confined to external circumstances or achievements; it also stems from within, cultivating inner happiness involves nurturing a positive mindset, embracing gratitude and finding contentment in the present moment. It requires recognising that happiness is not subject to achieving specific goals or the accumulation of material possessions, but rather to one's ability to appreciate and derive joy from the simple pleasures of life. Practising mindfulness can greatly contribute to our happiness journey. By being fully present in each moment and acknowledging the beauty and wonders around us, we can develop a deeper appreciation for life. In conclusion, happiness is a journey that lasts a lifetime.

(The writer is Group Pro Vice Chancellor HR)

The 'double engine' doubles up in Manipur



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

The case of the Northeastern State is a classic example of how reckless judgements and insensitive Govts can play havoc with people's lives



The fire that started in Manipur a month and a half ago could engulf the entire northeast. It has already reached Assam and Meghalaya. The situation is anything but under control and yet the seriousness that must be given to deal with such a situation seems to be missing in the BJP's incumbent state government. In fact, they can be blamed for stoking the fire in the sensitive state of Manipur which has had a long history of violence and armed struggle.

The situation remains grave in Manipur, the jewel of the Northeast, and human lives are at serious risk. The 'double engine' has failed in the northeastern state. What is sadder is that everybody in the government maintains stoic silence. From the PM to the CM no one is talking about it and even the very vocal mainstream media is subdued in its limited reporting of Manipur.

The Manipur diaspora in the US is, however, protesting in front of PM Modi who is on the US visit.

This is not to suggest that Manipur has been a peaceful state. It is not. It has been at perennially at war with itself and the country. This northeastern state is home to 39 diverse ethnic communities, each with its own vibrant cultures and beliefs. However, beneath the surface, a simmering cauldron of inter-ethnic strife is always present. The identities of various ethnic communities have long been manipulated to serve the interests of ruling elites. The seeds of discontent were sown in Manipur during its merger with India in 1949.

This unease continues even today. To quell this resistance, New Delhi introduced the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act in 1958. This act granted extensive powers to the military and paramilitary to maintain public order in "disturbed areas." Over the years army earned a bad reputation and led to further deuteriation of trust between Manipuris and New Delhi. But that is a story for another day.

While the central government claims

it is necessary to maintain order in insurgency-prone regions, human rights groups have decried its abuses.

Today, the region is a melting pot of conflicting claims to ethnic and communal homelands, guarded by armed insurgent groups. In Manipur, at least four valley-based armed groups, several Naga groups and many Kuki armed insurgent organizations are vying for control. With an estimated total of around 60 armed groups in the region, Manipur has become a war zone of sorts. Those wielding political power have taken advantage of the situation and turned Manipur into a hub of gun-running, narco- and human trafficking.

Armed groups often endorse candidates in state elections, further muddying the waters of democracy. Politicians in the Northeast face intimidation from rival armed groups. Civil society organisations lament the overshadowing of elections by "open intimidation" and violence at polling stations. Thus, democracy in this fragile region teeters under the threat of gun-wielding forces. The insensitivity of the administration with a dash of political expediency is a perfect recipe for a burning Manipur.

The present-day crisis can be attributed to an irresponsible judgement that ignited the fire and the state government in all its wisdom or voracity or both started surveying the hill areas enraging the hill people, the Kukis.

Since May 3, Manipur has become a battleground for two local ethnic communities: the Meitei and Kuki, you could also add Nagas albeit to a lesser extent. This action coupled with a trust deficit was enough to start bloody violent clashes in the state. Their

clashes have unleashed a wave of violence, leaving behind a trail of destruction. Officially over 50 lives have been lost, while 1,700 buildings, including homes and places of worship, have been reduced to ashes. More than 50,000 people are living in refugee relief camps across the state.

The catalyst of course was a court order declaring that the Meitei community, the majority population in Manipur, be granted Scheduled Tribe status. This status would provide constitutional protection and extend benefits, including reserved government seats, to the Meitei people. Protests erupted following the court's announcement, leading to a chain reaction of violence. The flames were first kindled on May 3, when reports emerged of the burning of the Anglo-Kuki War Memorial Gate. In response, the Kuki community retaliated by setting fire to several villages inhabited by the Meitei in Churachanpur.

This sparked further reprisals from the Meitei, who reportedly torched Kuki localities in the Imphal Valley. Trapped in this cycle of violence, casualties mounted on both sides. While the protests may have served as the immediate trigger, tensions within the Indigenous communities had been building for years. The state government's handling of Indigenous land rights issues, particularly those affecting Kuki communities in the surrounding hill areas, stoked discontent.

Efforts to survey reserved forests in these regions, ostensibly to curb poppy cultivation, resulted in forced evictions from Kuki villages. Meiteis are prohibited from buying land in the hill regions but have a political majority and so get more government

support, while Kukis and other tribal communities have more land to them but remain aloof from government support and development. Such disparities fuel resentment and widen the divide. The influx of refugees from neighbouring Myanmar, following the 2021 military coup, added further fuel to the fire. The presence of refugees, particularly those from the Sagaing region with strong ties to the Kukis, exacerbated the insecurity felt by the Meiteis. Amidst the chaos orchestrated by those in control of guns, drugs, and politics, it is the women and children who bear the brunt of the conflict's impact.

Essential commodities skyrocket in price, leaving vital supplies stranded on stranded trucks.

The central government's silence in the face of violence has been criticised by the opposition parties, especially Congress, accusing the ruling BJP of playing politics over the lives at stake. After nearly a month of ongoing violence, Home Minister Amit Shah finally visited Manipur, aiming to restore normalcy during his four-day visit. Additionally, the chief of army staff assessed the situation on the ground. Shah announced a judicial probe into the violence, to be conducted by a retired High Court judge, along with the establishment of a peace committee comprising members from different communities.

However, the efficacy of these measures hinges on the ongoing violence. Armed groups continue to exploit the chaos, and concerns of cross-border attacks loom large. The people of Manipur have endured unimaginable suffering as their rice fields transformed into battlegrounds, with peace ripped away by power-hungry individuals who thrive on division and violence.



THE PEOPLE OF MANIPUR HAVE ENDURED UNIMAGINABLE SUFFERING AS THEIR FARMS RESEMBLED BATTLEFIELDS, WITH PEACE RIPPED AWAY BY POWER-HUNGRY INDIVIDUALS WHO THRIVE ON DIVISION AND VIOLENCE

(The writer is a senior journalist)

No special treatment for any financial services company

The RBI guidelines establish a proper framework for corporate governance. These should be followed in letter and spirit by one and all, with no exceptions

In a surprising development, shareholders of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited had voted in favour of the appointment of Uday Kotak as a non-executive, non-independent director on the board. The bank claims that the proposed appointment of Uday Kotak, who is now MD and CEO of the bank, as a non-executive director after the end of his term is lawful and in the interest of shareholders. CFO Jaemin Bhatt said "What we did...we clearly believe is in accordance with law and regulations. We do believe it is in the best interest of all stakeholders." It seems that the Reserve Bank of India is yet to provide its clearance for such an appointment.

Kotak Mahindra Bank



KALYANASUNDARAM

(The writer is a retired banker)

Limited is among the top five largest banks in India in terms of business. It will be within the top three or four in terms of market capitalization in India. It is well ahead of even some government banks, like PNB, Bank of Baroda, and Bank of India. Hence it is important to ensure proper conduct of the bank well within the regulatory framework established by the RBI. Now let us see where the friction comes from.

Originally a Discussion Paper on 'Governance in Commercial Banks in India' was issued by RBI on June 11, 2020, to review the framework for governance in commercial banks. Based on the feedback received, a comprehensive review of the framework has been done by the RBI. To

address a few operative aspects received through such feedback, the central bank decided to issue instructions about the Chair and meetings of the board, the composition of certain committees of the board, age, tenure and remuneration of directors, and appointment of the whole-time directors. Accordingly, a notification was issued on 26th April 2021.

The revised instructions apply to all the Private Sector Banks including Small Finance Banks and wholly owned subsidiaries of Foreign Banks. In respect of the SBI and nationalised Banks, these guidelines would apply to the extent the stipulations are not inconsistent with provisions of specific statutes applicable to these banks.

As per the guideline, subject to statutory approvals, the post of the MD & CEO cannot be held by the same incumbent for more than 15 years. Thereafter, the individual will be eligible for re-appointment as MD & CEO in the same bank, if considered necessary and desirable by the board, after a minimum gap of three years.

During this period, the individual shall not be appointed or associated with the bank or its group entities in any capacity, either directly or indirectly. The upper age limit for MD & CEO and WTDs in the private sector banks has been retained as 70 years. Further, the MD&CEO or WTD who is also a promoter/ major shareholder, cannot hold these posts for more than 12 years.

In extraordinary circumstances, at the sole discretion of RBI such MD&CEO or WTDs may be allowed to continue up to 15 years. The guideline has also provided some relaxation to enable a smooth transition to the revised requirements and the banks were permitted to comply with these instructions latest by October 01, 2021.

The RBI guideline is to establish a proper framework for governance. Hence for any meaningful corporate governance, the guidelines should be followed in letter and spirit. When the guideline sets an upper limit for a position on the board, it is with a purpose. The guideline stipulates that during this three-year cooling period, the individual shall not be appointed or associated

with the bank or its group entities in any capacity, either directly or indirectly.

Appointing Uday Kotak as a non-executive director simply violates this provision. Strangely, the shareholders have been allowed to pass a resolution which is contrary to RBI guideline and even SEBI can initiate action against the Board for such a violation. The RBI as regulator must put down such appointments and establish set norms as applicable for all banks to Kotak Mahindra Bank also.

On earlier occasions, it was perceived that the RBI had accommodated Uday Kotak and Kotak Mahindra Bank. As Uday Kotak's term as CEO was coming to an end on December 31, 2020, and since he had been the founder-

CEO of the bank for 17 years (well over the 10 year-period proposed by the RBI) it was believed that he would have to step down, or the RBI would approve a short term extension to allow the bank to select his successor. However, on December 14, 2020, the regulator approved a three-year extension as CEO (till December 31, 2023) for Uday Kotak. During the same period, the CEOs of Federal Bank and DCB Bank were given just a one-year extension.

Here is another interesting piece of information. In 2017 a committee to improve efficiency in corporate governance was constituted by SEBI under the chairmanship of Uday Kotak. He was the guiding force for improving corporate governance.

Pak confirms over 350 deaths in Greece boat tragedy

PTI/AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Friday confirmed that about 350 Pakistanis were aboard an overcrowded fishing boat which sank off Greece's coast last week, killing scores of passengers in one of the deadliest incidents in the central Mediterranean Sea. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah told Parliament that the boat which sank on June 14 was carrying around 700 people when it only had the capacity to carry 400 passengers. "Among these, the number of Pakistani passengers on board — as per the information that we have received so far — is approximately 350," he said, adding that 82 deceased Pakistani victims had been recovered.

The minister said that 12 Pakistanis were among the total of 104 people who had survived. He said that the identification of the dead was going on and may take several days if not weeks and warned that the number of deceased may go up.

Sanaullah said that 281 families have contacted the government to know about the victims and the government so far has collected 193 DNA samples. The repatriation of bodies would follow once identification was completed.

The minister also rejected the idea that people from



Pakistan illegally migrate by saying that about 99 per cent leaving for Europe adopt "legal means" but upon reaching countries such as Egypt, UAE, and Libya, they tend to opt for illegal routes.

Sanaullah revealed that the prime minister has established a committee to investigate the incident.

"I assure the house that we will spare no efforts, and a comprehensive set of recommendations will be proposed by the probe committee, which the government will diligently implement," he said.

He also promised to further tighten laws to curb the practice of illegal movement of people to Europe and other countries. The minister also announced to bring to law those involved in the heinous

business of human smuggling. Meanwhile, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in its crackdown has arrested 27 alleged human traffickers and registered 70 cases against smugglers involved in the Greece boat tragedy.

The dirty business of sending young people to Europe thrives in certain areas of Punjab and the Kashmir region of the country. People spend thousands of dollars to get to Europe but not all of them make it to the desired shores.

DNA SAMPLES TAKEN FROM FAMILIES

Pakistan has collected DNA samples from more than 200 families following last week's sinking of an overcrowded smuggling vessel off

Greece that left more than 500 migrants missing, including scores of Pakistanis, authorities said Thursday.

The families had approached authorities, saying they suspect their loved ones were on the boat, spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch of the Foreign Ministry told a news conference in the capital of Islamabad.

Pakistani police, meanwhile, arrested 10 more suspected traffickers, bringing the number of traffickers detained in the nationwide crackdown to 17, she said. Nearly three dozen other suspects have also been taken into custody in connection with the case.

However, she said the government still cannot verify the number of Pakistanis among the dead or missing from the sinking.

The crackdown followed orders from Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif for security forces to dismantle human smuggling networks in the country. The overcrowded fishing trawler capsized last Wednesday with as many as 750 people on board. Only 104 people, including Egyptians, Pakistanis, Syrians and Palestinians, have been rescued and 82 bodies were recovered. An unspecified number of Afghan nationals were also on the boat. Pakistanis who tried to

'IMF chief asks Sharif to resolve differences before getting loan'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has urged Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to resolve policy differences at the global lender's staff level prior to getting a much-needed loan to stabilise the cash-strapped country's economy, according to a media report.

Georgieva said this during her meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that took place on Thursday on the sidelines of the New Global Financial Pact summit in Paris. The Express Tribune reported on Thursday. "Prime Minister Sharif met IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva. During the meeting she emphasised and insisted that all the policy matters should be resolved at the IMF staff level," the report said.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) signed a deal in 2019 to provide USD 6 billion to Pakistan on the fulfilment of certain conditions.

The plan was derailed several times and the full reimbursement is still pending due to insistence by the donor that Pakistan should complete all formalities.

During the meeting, Georgieva did not immediately concede to the demand by Prime Minister Sharif for a board meeting date for the approval of the 9th review and

Dar 'harasses' journalist over poser on IMF deal

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has found himself at the centre of a controversy for engaging in a heated exchange with a journalist, who accused the politician of slapping him over a question about the stalled IMF deal.

The incident occurred on Thursday when Dar was leaving the parliament premises after addressing a National Assembly session when he was approached by journalist Shahid Qureshi, the Dawn newspaper reported.

In a video that has gone viral on social media, the reporter can be seen asking Dar if he would be willing to talk and the minister responded he had just finished speaking.

Qureshi then inquired about the progress of the stalled International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and referred to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent meeting with IMF Managing Director

Kristalina Georgieva.

While Dar, 73, did not reply to the questions, the journalist persisted and questioned the government's failure to secure the USD 1.1 billion deal from the Washington-based global lender.

Dar then retorted that the deal could not be cracked "because people like you are in the system".

The journalist defending himself asserted that reporters were not part of the system but merely asked questions.

At this point, Dar became visibly angry and confronted the journalist, asking him what he wanted and telling him to "fear God". Dar then attempted to snatch the journalist's mobile phone and even instructed security personnel to seize and throw away the mobile phone, the report said. The finance minister's security personnel then intervened and escorted Dar towards a vehicle in the parking lot.

the release of the third last loan tranche of USD 1.2 billion, the report said.

The report, quoting sources, said that Prime

Minister Sharif also underscored that all prior actions for the ninth review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) had been completed and the

government of Pakistan was fully committed to fulfilling its obligations as agreed with the IMF.

A member of the federal cabinet joined from Paris the technical round of talks, which took place in Islamabad after the meeting between the IMF MD and Prime Minister Sharif.

Both sides again discussed all the outstanding issues and the government appeared to accept the IMF's views on a few budgetary numbers, the officials said.

They continued that another round of talks might take place soon.

It was the second time in less than a month that Prime Minister Sharif has directly talked to the IMF MD in addition to sending her at least three letters regarding the loan that debt-ridden Pakistan desperately wants, the report said. The meeting took place a week before the expiry of the current four-year-long programme ending on June 30.

Pakistan's efforts to unlock access to the already agreed USD 6 billion loan package are in a quagmire as the budget needs to satisfy the global lender to secure the release of more bailout money for the cash-strapped country. It is feared that Pakistan might default on external financing commitments without the active support of the IMF.

Israel arrests 3 over Palestinian town attacks

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's security agency said on Friday it had detained three Israeli settlers on suspicion of involvement in mass rampages through Palestinian towns in the occupied West Bank this week following the killing of four Israelis. While rights groups welcomed the arrests, the small number of suspects given the scale of the attacks have revived criticism of the wider lack of accountability for Israeli settlers. The arrests fuelled concerns that the Israeli military is not doing enough to stop and prevent settler attacks. "We didn't expect much," said Roy Yellin, of the Israeli rights group B'Tselem. "The rule is impunity from justice."

Israel's Shin Bet security agency did not identify the



An international delegation examines a torched building as they tour the West Bank town of Turmus Ayya, days after a rampage by Jewish settlers on Friday. Agencies

three Israelis detained or offer further details, saying only they were suspected of partic-

ipating in "violent incidents". Over the past three days, Jewish settlers have torched and

vandalised dozens of Palestinian homes and cars throughout the occupied West Bank. Their ferocity echoed a deadly settler rampage in February in the northern Palestinian town of Hawara. Some Israeli settlers were detained following that attack, but swiftly released without indictments. The Israeli rights group Yesh Din on Friday described the arrests as "a drop in the ocean" given the scale and intensity of the violence.

The group said it documented the burning of at least 30 Palestinian homes, 60 cars, a gas station, multiple shops, a mosque and school throughout northern West Bank villages this week. The number of homes and cars burned or vandalised, it acknowledged, is probably higher. Wheat fields outside of Ramallah were also

set ablaze, turning the hillsides of the northern West Bank into an inferno.

The group's director, Ziv Stahl, alleged that the Israeli military's inability or unwillingness to prevent the settler attacks that roiled the West Bank in revenge for Wednesday's Palestinian shooting attack was "part of an intentional policy rather than a mistake".

"(The army) had four mounts after (the attack in) Hawara to study how to deal with this and stop it," she said. "But everything happened in broad daylight. They didn't detain anyone on the scene. They allowed the settlers to do whatever they felt like doing."

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the accusations.

'More than 30 illegal miners killed in mine explosion'

Johannesburg (AP): At least 31 people were believed to have died in a gas explosion in a disused mine shaft in South Africa that happened last month but was only now coming to light, authorities said Friday.

The suspected illegal miners were believed to have been killed on May 18 and most of their bodies were still underground, South Africa's Department of Mineral Resources and Energy said.

Authorities were being prevented from sending a search team into the mine to retrieve bodies because there were still dangerously high levels of methane gas in the shaft, the department said in a statement.

It said it was considering various options to "speedily deal" with what was "a unique and strange situation."

Illegal prospecting is rife in South Africa's old gold-mining areas, where miners go into closed and often dangerous mine shafts to dig for deposits.

The government department said it had received information that three bodies had been recovered after they were brought to the surface by other illegal miners. Another 16 suspected illegal miners who were also in the shaft have handed themselves over to authorities, police said. Authorities said they believe the miners are nationals from neighbouring country Lesotho. Lesotho's foreign ministry recently passed information onto South African authorities on the incident.

Greek polls one-horse race after left-wing strongholds topple

AP ■ ATHENS

Greeks return to the polls Sunday for a second general election in five weeks, with the conservative front-runners eyeing a landslide win after toppling strongholds dominated by their opponents for decades. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the 55-year-old conservative leader, is seeking a second four-year term as prime minister. His center-right New Democracy party won by a huge margin in May elections but is heading to a second ballot to take advantage of election law changes that favor the winning party.

Sunday's vote comes days after hundreds of migrants died and went missing in southern Greece when an over-crowded fishing trawler capsized and sank, drawing criticism over how Greek authorities handled the rescue.

But the disaster did little to dent Mitsotakis' 20-point lead in opinion polls over left-wing rivals.

As Greece emerges from a major financial crisis in the previous decade and turmoil caused by the pandemic, voters are happy to return a prime minister who delivered growth and lower unemployment, according to analyst Yannis Tsirbas. "What we see here is economic voting," said Tsirbas, a political scientist at the University of Athens.

Mitsotakis, he argued, has successfully reached out to centrist voters, helped by an often-obliging private news media and by muting some prominent

right-wing voices in his own party.

"He has been building this profile of a moderate politician and an effective politician for many years now," he said of Mitsotakis, whose late father Constantine Mitsotakis was a divisive figure who served as prime minister in the early 1990s.

The younger Mitsotakis, a Harvard graduate, has vowed to rebrand Greece as a pro-business and fiscally responsible euro zone member.

The strategy, so far, has worked: New Democracy routed left-wing opponents in May, crucially winning Socialist strongholds on the island of Crete and lower-income areas surrounding Athens, some for the first time.

One of those areas to flip is the mountain-slope Athens district of Kaisariani, once nicknamed "Little Stalingrad." It has a fiercely proud tradition of support for the Communist Party rooted in World War II resistance and the ugly Cold War aftermath that included a three-year civil war.

Theodoros Sideris grew up in a shack, playing on Kaisariani's dirt roads, and volunteering to sell a left-wing newspaper on streets corners. "I come from a left-wing family, and I was a supporter of the left. I had relatives in prison for their beliefs. My mother was a communist, my father too — that's all there was," said Sideris, who spends his afternoons volunteering at an open-air cinema run by the municipality.

Malaysia to take legal action against Meta

Kuala Lumpur (AP): Malaysia's government said Friday it will take legal action against Facebook's parent company, Meta Platforms, for failing to remove undesirable and harmful content from its social media platform.

The Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission said Facebook has recently been plagued by "a significant volume of undesirable content" relating to sensitive issues on race, religion and royalty as well as defamation, impersonation, online gambling and scam

advertisements. The commission said repeated efforts to reach out to Meta to remove harmful content were of no avail. "Meta's response, which has been sluggish and unsatisfactory, has not met the urgency of the matter and has led to increasing public concern and scrutiny," it said in a statement. "As there is no sufficient cooperation from Meta, MCMC has no option but to take definitive steps or legal action against Meta as a measure to ensure that people are secure and protected in the physical sphere."

Rajapaksa accused of destroying police records of mass graves

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa reportedly destroyed police records of a mass grave discovered in the country when he was the military coordinator during the Marxist rebellion of 1988-89, an international rights group has alleged.

The report titled 'Mass graves and failed exhumations in Sri Lanka', authored by four organisations Centre for Human Rights Development (CHRD), Families of the Disappeared

(FOD), International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) and Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka (JDS) was released on Thursday. The mass graves were discovered in the Matala district of central Sri Lanka in 2013.

The report aims to analyse shortcomings in the Sri Lankan exhumations which include 155 bodies at Matala, and at Mannar where 81 bodies and 318 skeletons were exhumed. The report said that Rajapaksa's alleged action was "a prime example of political interference". The report advocated that the Sri Lanka

state should take action against Rajapaksa under Article 12 (4) of the International Convention on the Protection of People from Enforced Disappearances. "Gotabaya Rajapaksa, then Secretary to the Ministry of Defence (who had been Military Coordinating Officer of Matala district between July 1989 and January 1990, and who later became President of Sri Lanka) was reported to have ordered the destruction of all police registers and records older than 5 years at police stations in the Central Province including Matala.

Titanic expert, father-son duo among 5 killed in submersible implosion

AP ■ BOSTON

A renowned Titanic expert, a world record-holding adventurer, two members of one of Pakistan's wealthiest families and the CEO of the company leading an expedition to the world's most famous shipwreck were killed aboard the Titan submersible when it imploded in the Atlantic Ocean sometime this week.

The US Coast Guard on Thursday said there were no survivors after the catastrophic implosion deep in the North Atlantic.

The search for the submersible — as well as any clues to explain what happened underwater — continued Thursday after a deep-sea robot found debris near the Titanic shipwreck.

435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland, according to Canada's Joint Rescue Coordination Center, spurring a desperate international rescue effort. Rescuers raced against the clock because it was feared the oxygen supply could run out by approximately 6 am Thursday.

The expedition featuring the Titan was led by OceanGate, making its third voyage to the Titanic, which struck an iceberg and sank in 1912, killing all but about 700 of the roughly 2,200 passengers and crew. A pilot and four other people were on the Titan. They were:

STOCKTON RUSH

Although his background is in aerospace and technology, Rush founded OceanGate Inc. in 2009 to provide crewed submersibles for undersea researchers and explorers, according to the company's website. Rush was the Titan's pilot, said company spokesperson Andrew Von Kerens.

The private company based in Washington started bringing tourists to the Titanic in 2021 as part of its effort to chronicle the slow deterioration of the wreck.

HAMISH HARDING

A British businessman, Harding lived in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Action Aviation, an aircraft brokering company for which Harding served as chairman, said he was one of the mission specialists, who paid to go on the expedition.

Harding was a billionaire adventurer who held three Guinness World Records, including the longest duration at full ocean depth by a crewed vessel.

In March 2021, he and ocean explorer Victor Vescovo dived to the lowest depth of the Mariana Trench. In June 2022, he went into space on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket. "Both the Harding family and the team at Action Aviation are very grateful for all the kind messages of concern

and support from our friends and colleagues," the company said in a statement.

Harding's family said in a statement: "He was one of a kind and we adored him... What he achieved in his lifetime was truly remarkable and if we can take any small consolation from this tragedy, it's that we lost him doing what he loved."

SHAHZADA AND SULEMAN DAWOOD

Father-and-son Shahzada and Suleman Dawood were members of one of Pakistan's most prominent families. Their family had said in a statement that they were both aboard the vessel. Their firm, Dawood Hercules Corp., based in Karachi, is involved in agriculture, petrochemicals and telecommunication infrastructure.

In Pakistan, the Dawood-owned Engro Corporation, a fertilizer company, announced the deaths of the two men early Friday. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the Dawood

family at this tragic time. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, colleagues, and friends and all those around the world who grieve the unthinkable loss," the statement said.

When called, the company's employees said they were reciting verses from the Quran for the Dawoods.

Shahzada Dawood also was on the board of trustees for the California-based SETI Institute that searches for extraterrestrial intelligence. The Dawoods lived in the UK, according to SETI.

PAUL-HENRI NARGEOLET

Nargeolet was a former French navy officer who was considered a Titanic expert after making multiple trips to the wreckage over several decades.

He was director of underwater research for E/M Group and RMS Titanic Inc., had completed 37 dives to the wreck and supervised the recovery of 5,000 artifacts, according to his company pro-

Authorities trying to figure reason behind implosion

Boston (AP): Authorities turned their focus to determining why a submersible carrying people to the wreck of the Titanic imploded deep in the North Atlantic, as tributes poured in for the five aboard who were killed.

The announcement that no one survived on Thursday brought a tragic end to a five-day saga that included an urgent around-the-clock search for the vessel known as the Titan. The investigation into what happened was already underway and would continue in the area around Titanic where debris from the submersible was

found, said Rear Adm. John Mauger, of the First Coast Guard District. "I know there are also a lot of questions about how, why and when did this happen. Those are questions we will collect as much information as we can about now," Mauger said, adding that it was a "complex case" that happened in a remote part of the ocean and involved people from several different countries.

The first hint of a timeline came Thursday evening when a senior US Navy official said that after the Titan was reported missing Sunday, the Navy went back and analysed its acoustic

data and found an "anomaly" that was consistent with an implosion or explosion in the general vicinity of where the vessel was operating when communications were lost.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive acoustic detection system.

Those killed were Stockton Rush, the CEO of OceanGate Expeditions; two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

was expedition leader on the most technologically advanced dive to the Titanic in 2010, which used high-resolution sonar and 3D optical imaging on the Titanic's bow and stern

sections as well as the debris field. While with the French Institute for Research and Exploitation of Sea, he led the first recovery expedition to the Titanic in 1987.

Act before Russia hits N-plant: Zelenskyy

Ukraine wants other countries to heed its warning that Russia may be planning to attack an occupied nuclear power plant to cause a radiation disaster, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Members of his government briefed international representatives on Thursday on the possible threat to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. In his nightly address, Zelenskyy said he expected other nations to "give appropriate signals and exert pressure" on Moscow.

"Our principle is simple: The world must know what the situation is preparing. Everyone who knows must act," Zelenskyy said.

"The world has enough power to prevent any radiation incidents, let alone a radiation catastrophe."

The potential for a life-threatening release of radiation has been a concern since Russian troops invaded Ukraine last year and seized the plant, which is Europe's largest nuclear power station.

The head of the UN's atomic energy agency spent months unsuccessfully trying

to negotiate for a safety perimeter to protect the facility as nearby areas came under repeated shelling.

The International Atomic Energy Agency noted Thursday that the "military situation has become increasingly tense" while a Ukrainian counteroffensive that got underway this month unfolds in Zaporizhzhia province, where the namesake plant is located, and in an adjacent part of Donetsk province.

On Friday, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi met with the director of Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom to discuss the conditions at the plant. Rosatom director Alexey Likachev and other officials at the meeting in the Kaliningrad exclave "emphasised that they now expect specific steps" from the UN agency to prevent Ukrainian attacks on the plant and its adjacent territory, said a statement from the Russian corporation, whose divisions build and operate nuclear power plants.

The governor of Zaporizhzhia, Yuriy Malashko, reported Friday that Russian shelling in the southern province killed two people in the past day. An attack that hit



a transportation company in Kherson, the capital of Kherson province, killed two others on Friday, governor Oleksandr Prokudin said. Russia also fired 13 cruise missiles overnight at a military airfield in the western Khmelnytskyi province but Ukrainian air defences intercepted them all, according to the air force.

The attack came after Russian-appointed officials said that Ukrainian-fired missiles damaged a bridge that serves as key supply link to occupied areas of southern Ukraine.

Russia's air-launched Kh-101 and Kh-555 missiles were sent from the Caspian Sea, the

air force said. It did not identify the targeted airfield, but Ukraine has an air base near the Khmelnytskyi region's town of Starokostiantyniv.

The base houses fighter jets and bombers, and five years ago it hosted a training exercise with air force personnel from the United States, Ukraine and seven European countries. It has come under Russian attack previously, including within the last month.

Ukrainian forces so far have made only incremental gains in Zaporizhzhia province, one of four regions of the country that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed last year. Putin has pledged to defend the regions as Russian territory.

Zelenskyy has said that Ukraine is fighting to force Russian troops out of those regions and Crimea, which Moscow is using as a staging and supply route in the 16-month-old war.

If the counteroffensive now in its early stages breaks the Russian defences in the south, Ukrainian forces could attempt to reach a pair of occupied port cities on the Sea of Azov and break Russia's land bridge to Crimea. The Ukrainian leader's

nighttime remarks on Thursday on a possible attack on the nuclear power plant carried a tone of frustration with "countries that are pretending to be neutral even now" in the war. He accused "anyone who turns a blind eye to Russia's occupation of such a facility" of enabling Moscow to commit an act of evil and terror.

"Obviously, radiation does not ask who is neutral and can reach anyone in the world. Accordingly, anyone in the world can help now, and it is quite clear what to do," Zelenskyy said.

On Friday, Russia claimed it was the target of "an information and propaganda campaign to discredit the country in the international arena."

Russia's Federal Security Service, the FSB, said five people were arrested for trying to smuggle a kilogram of the radioactive isotope Cesium-137 out of the country under the direction of a Ukrainian citizen. The FSB said the material was to be used for "organizing staged scenes of the use of weapons of mass destruction." Cesium-137 is often mentioned as of potential use in making a "dirty bomb" that could contaminate a wide area.

Infighting among Putin's lieutenants reveals signs of 'deep dysfunction'

The video was shocking — not just for what it showed but also for what was said. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the outspoken millionaire head of the private military contractor Wagner, stood in front of the bloodied bodies of his slain troops in Ukraine and yelled expletive-riddled insults at Russian military leaders, blaming them for the carnage.

"They came here as volunteers and they died to let you lounge in your red wood offices," Prigozhin shouted.

"You are sitting in your expensive clubs, your children are enjoying good living and filming videos on YouTube. Those who don't give us ammunition will be eaten alive in hell!"

It was a disquieting display for Russians used to more than two decades of rigidly controlled rule by President Vladimir Putin — years with little sign of infighting among his top lieutenants.

Prigozhin's video in May and his other rants against the military leadership have been met with silence from Putin, as well as the brass. Some see Putin's failure to squelch the infighting as a sign of potential shifts in Russia's political scene that set the stage for more internal battles.

Prigozhin's rift with the military has been ignored by state-controlled TV, where most Russians get their news, although it is followed closely by the politically active, ultra-patriotic readers and viewers on social media networks, which share his contempt for military leaders.

While there are no indications that Putin is losing influ-



Russia may cancel July's Moscow air show

Moscow (AP): Russia is likely to cancel this year's Moscow air show, which for decades has been a major venue for showing off new warplanes and negotiating aerospace contracts, a top official of its organising agency said on Friday.

Viktor Kladov, director for international cooperation at the state-owned defence conglomerate Rostek, was quoted by the state news agency Tass as saying that the show "in all probability" won't take place this year. It had been scheduled for the end of July. Kladov did not state a reason for putting off the event, but Russian news media earlier suggested it was due to Western sanctions on Russia connected to the conflict in Ukraine that would shrink international participation and have affected parts supplies to manufacturers.

Those reports also cited unnamed sources as saying there are security worries in the wake of drone attacks that hit the Kremlin and the outskirts of Moscow in May. International attendance at Russia's annual investment showcase, the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, was notably lower than it had been prior to Russia's sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Nearly 1.5 mn foreign pilgrims arrive in S Arabia for Hajj

Muslim pilgrims streamed into the holy city of Mecca on Friday ahead of the start of Hajj next week, as the annual pilgrimage returns to its monumental scale after three years of heavy restrictions because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Saudi officials say close to 1.5 million foreign pilgrims have arrived in the country so far, the vast majority by air.

More are expected, and hundreds of thousands of Saudis and others living in Saudi Arabia will also join them when the pilgrimage officially begins on Monday.

Saudi officials have said they expect the number of pilgrims to reach pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, more than 2.4 million Muslims made the pilgrimage. On Friday, pilgrims thronged the Grand Mosque in Mecca to attend weekly communal prayers.

Many then did a ritual circuit walking seven times around the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure inside the Grand Mosque that is Islam's holiest site. On Thursday night, the vast marble court around the Kaaba was packed with the



faithful, walking nearly shoulder to shoulder — in stark contrast to scenes two years ago at the height of the pandemic, when the sparse numbers kept far from each other in the nearly empty court as they walked the circuit.

Pilgrims do the circumambulation, known as "Tawaf" in Arabic, upon arriving in Mecca, and the large crowds circling the Kaaba will last into the Hajj's first day.

Carrying umbrellas against the sun in temperatures reaching 42 degrees Celsius (107 Fahrenheit) on Friday, pilgrims walked for kilometres (miles) from bus lots into the Grand Mosque area in central Mecca, often jostling with barricades set up by security forces to direct the giant flows of people. Coming from all around

UN aid enters Syrian rebel enclave from government territory

Idlib (AP): A convoy carrying UN aid entered Syria's last rebel-held enclave from government-held territory on Friday, the first such shipment to cross battle lines since February's deadly 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria.

The convoy with humanitarian supplies crossed from a government-controlled area in the province of Aleppo, and entered Idlib, according to the UN office for humanitarian affairs or OCHA. The last aid shipment to cross the front lines in the conflict was in early January. After the February earthquake that struck Turkey and northern Syria, causing widespread destruction, convoys have been prevented from entering the province of Idlib from government-held areas by the al-Qaeda-affiliated militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which dominates the area.

The group has sought to distance itself from al-Qaeda in recent years. After the February 6 quake, an administrative arm of the group accused the government of Syrian President

Bashar Assad of trying "to benefit from the aid intended for victims of the earthquake."

In the wake of the earthquake, aid deliveries to affected areas became a political battleground, with Assad's opponents and many aid organisations pushing for the United Nations to send more aid shipments to northern Syria by way of Turkey.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government and its ally, Russia, pushed for the aid to be sent via Damascus. The UN is usually only allowed to deliver aid through a single border crossing from Turkey, at Bab al-Hawa, at the insistence of Russia, which is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

After the earthquake, Assad agreed to the opening of two new crossing points from Turkey, at Bab al-Salam and al-Rae on a temporary basis.

In practice however, most of the cross-border aid continued to come via Bab al-Hawa. The mandate for cross-border aid deliveries at Bab al-Hawa is up for renewal next month at the Security Council.

Tate to remain under house arrest

A Romanian court on Friday extended by 30 days the house arrest of Andrew Tate, the divisive social media personality and former professional kickboxer who was charged this week with rape, human trafficking, and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

The Bucharest Tribunal's decision comes days after prosecutors from Romania's anti-organised crime agency, DIICOT, formally indicted the 36-year-old social media star after filing their criminal investigation to a Bucharest court.

Tate, who has amassed

nearly 7 million Twitter followers and is known for expressing misogynist views and hate speech online, was initially arrested near Romania's capital, Bucharest, in late December, along with his brother, Tristan.

Two Romanian women are also charged in the case. All four defendants will remain under house arrest for 30 days, the court ruled, but the decision can be appealed within 48 hours. DIICOT requested this week that judges extend the house arrest measure as they filed their investigation.

Under Romanian law, judges have 60 days to decide whether the case is sent to trial, but nonetheless often takes longer. The agency alleges that the four defendants formed a criminal group in 2021 "in order to commit the crime of human trafficking" in Romania, as well as in the United States and Britain.

All four have denied the allegations against them. There are seven female victims in the case, DIICOT said, who were lured with false pretenses of love and transported to Romania, where the gang sexually exploited and subjected them to physical violence. One defendant is accused of raping a woman twice in March 2022, according to the agency.

Cambodian lawmakers approve changes to law that disqualify candidates who don't vote

Phnom Penh (AP): Pro-government Cambodian lawmakers unanimously approved changes to the country's election law on Friday that will ban anyone who fails to vote from running as a candidate in future elections, a move critics say is aimed at crippling the opposition's chances in the polls.

The measure was approved with minimal debate by all 111 lawmakers present in the National Assembly. All members of the assembly belong to Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party. Hun Sen, who has been in power for 38 years, declared last week that the law would be amended ahead of July's general election to compel

candidates for public office to prove their civic responsibility.

The amended law will take effect after approval by the Senate, a formality. Hun Sen's critics say the action is his latest tactic to marginalise his political opponents, some of whom are considering an election boycott. He announced the plan less than a month after the main opposition party was barred from participating in the polls because it could not provide all of the paperwork required for registering. The Candlelight Party said it was unable to provide one document to the National Election Committee because it had been seized in a police raid several years ago.

Zambia reaches deal with China, others to rework USD 6.3 billion in loans

Paris (AP): Zambia and its government creditors, including China, have reached a deal to restructure USD 6.3 billion in loans, the French government announced on Thursday on the sidelines of a global finance summit in Paris.

The agreement covers loans from countries including France, the UK, South Africa, Israel and India as well as China — Zambia's biggest creditor at USD 4.1 billion of the total. The deal, announced by officials who spoke anonymously in accordance with the French government's customary practices, may provide a roadmap for how China will handle restructuring deals with other

nations in debt distress. The International Monetary Fund approved the deal, meaning it's going to allow Zambia to receive more financing from the institution, the French said. A representative from the IMF did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Zambia deal came at a summit with more than 50 world leaders, finance officials and activists to discuss ways of reforming a global financial system to better help developing nations struggling with debt, climate change and poverty. Zambia became Africa's first Covid-era nation to default when it failed to make a USD 42.5 mn bond payment in November 2020.

Twitter faces 'stress test' of tough new rules

Top European Union officials in Silicon Valley to check whether Twitter is ready to comply with the bloc's tough new digital rulebook, a set of sweeping new standards that the world's biggest online platforms all must obey in just two months.

European Commissioner Thierry Breton, who oversees digital policy, is the EU's point person working to get tech companies in line for the Digital Services Act, which will force companies to crack down on hate speech, disinformation and other harmful material on their sites. It takes effect Aug. 25 for the biggest platforms. The law, along with new regulations in the pipeline for data and artificial intelli-

gence, has made Brussels a trailblazer in the growing global movement to clamp down on Big Tech.

Breton tweeted about his meeting Thursday at Twitter headquarters to carry out a voluntary "stress test" to prepare for the new rules. "The company is taking this exercise very seriously," he said, adding he had "constructive dialogue" with owner Elon Musk and new CEO Linda Yaccarino.

The mock exercise tested Twitter's readiness to cope with the DSA's requirements, including protecting children online and detecting and mitigating risks like disinformation, under both normal and extreme situations.

Despite Musk's claims to the contrary, independent researchers have found misin-

formation — as well as hate speech — spreading on Twitter since the billionaire Tesla CEO took over the company last year. Musk has reinstated notorious election deniers, overhauled Twitter's verification system and gutted much of the staff that had been responsible for moderating posts.

Last month, Breton warned Twitter that it "can't hide" from its obligations after the social media site abandoned the bloc's voluntary "code of practice" on online disinformation, which other social media platforms have pledged to support.

Under the Digital Services Act, combating disinformation will become a legal requirement. Musk has said Twitter will comply.

"If laws are passed, Twitter

will obey the law," Musk told the France 2 TV channel this week when asked about the DSA. Breton's agenda Friday includes discussions about the EU's digital rules and upcoming artificial intelligence regulations with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, whose company makes the popular AI chatbot ChatGPT.

The DSA is part of a sweeping update to the EU's digital rulebook aimed at forcing their platforms and better protect users online. For European users of big tech platforms, it will be easier to report illegal content like hate speech, and they will get more information on why they have been recommended certain content.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mrs. Bala Devi, Mrs. Bertyl Verma, Mrs. Muneesh and Mr. Manoj Kumar are the owners of Built up Property bearing No. 10/425, area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., out of Khata No. 159, Situated at Gali No. 11, Aji Nagar, abadi known as Gandhi Nagar, in the area of Village Seelampur, Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi, vide GPA, A/S & Will dated 12.07.2005. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner wants to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/claim against the said property, or any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1st Floor, 23, Shreeji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-41112827-28. Email: kumar@kumarplg.com

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
TENDER NOTICE NO. SK/ RC / 03 of 2023-24 (3rd Attempt)
"Fixed Quantity Tender"

| Sr No. | Item | Tender ID |
|--------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Supply of various items like capacitor, relay, contactor, mcb, mccb, etc for cubical control panel 3 HP upto 30 HP for Fixed quantity tender. (From Indian Manufacturers only) (3rd Attempt) | 600543 |

Last Date of Online Submission of Tender: 03/07/2023 at 18.00 Hrs
Last Date of Physical Submission of Tender: 04/07/2023 at 15.00 Hrs
Bid Opening Date: 04/07/2023 at 15.05 Hrs
Contact Office: Executive Engineer, Public Health Mechanical Store Division, "A" Block, Patnagar Yojana Bhavan, 2nd Floor, Near GH-4, Sector-16, Gandhinagar-382 016, Gujarat State. Tel./fax. No. (079) 2322284,9978493321
GWSB has all the right to cancel a tender without reason
The detailed tender notice and tender documents are available on www.nprocure.com
For Village Level Drinking water Complaint Please Contact our Toll Free No : 1916 www.nprocure.com NO/INF/VPN/2023/G/668

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that Mayank Gupta claims to be owner and in possession of Prop. No. D-886, Indraprastha, Ghaziabad, U.P. (here in after called the said property) by virtue of Mutation Letter of 27.05.2023 issued by GDA on basis of NOC from Nirmal Gupta & Rohit Gupta, being the surviving legal heirs and beneficiary of late Gulab Chand Gupta & said Gulab Chand Gupta was the owner of said property by virtue of Sale Deed Dated 06.11.2012 bearing Doc No. 39865 & said Mayank Gupta has agreed to sell the said Property to PAVAN KUMAR & Said PAVAN KUMAR has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Axis Bank Limited, CP Branch Delhi, any persons having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex
New Delhi - 110019, Mobile No. 9818399999
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pt-E. CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-11, Mob. 9810063351

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Engineering Department
Tender Notice
Tender Reference No. GNDU/ENGG/2023/06/01-02
The Engineering Department of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar invites online bids for 1 lot of Civil work and I lot of supply of steel.
Closing date & time: 10-07-2023 upto 04:00 pm for Civil work
14-07-2023 upto 04:00 pm for Supply of steel.
For details log onto www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note : Any Corrigendum/Addendum to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.
Assistant Engineer
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
NA/12/17248/2023/25302 Dated CHD :- 6/23/2023

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
website: www.pspcl.in Mobile No.96461-55252

E-Tender Enq No. 466 /P-3/EMP-12349 dated 21-06-23
By Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2023_POWER_104423_1 for the work of supply and application of insulation and allied material on boiler & its auxiliaries, turbine piping and equipments at GGSSTP 4x210MW units. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from dtd.22-06-2023/ 02:00 PM onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
RTP-72/23
76156/12/1836/2023/25300 Dated CHD :- 6/23/2023

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences
Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203 Ph. 01639-256236, 256232

E-TENDER NOTICE
E-tenders are invited for the following upto 10.07.2023.
1. Supply and installation of Active components of networking at GMC, Patiala
E-tenders are invited for the following upto 17.07.2023.
1. Up-gradation of Kutcha area opposite ATM by Kota stone faced wall & interlocking floor at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot.
2. Up-gradation of Kutcha area near main porch by Kota stone faced wall & interlocking floor at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot.
Other terms & conditions can be downloaded from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The tenders will be accepted in e-tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from university website: www.fuhhs.ac.in
NII/12/115/2023/25313 Dated CHD :- 6/23/2023
REGISTRAR

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (BHARAT SARKAR)
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAIL MANTRALAYA)
(RAILWAY BOARD)
CORRIGENDUM-IV
Subject :- E-Tender No. TM-2301 for procurement of Self Propelled Ultrasonic Rail Testing Car "SPURT CAR" to be opened on 18.07.2023
The Corrigendum-IV regarding modification of tender conditions etc. have been uploaded on website <http://ireps.gov.in>
(Vijay Singh)
Director, Track (Machines)
Railway Board (Machines)
Tel: No. 011-47845531
E-mail: vijay.singh.2017@gov.in
1938/2023
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

'Inflation slowing down personal consumption, hitting pvt investment'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Inflation is slowing down personal consumption expenditure, which in turn is moderating corporate sales and holding back private investment in capacity creation, said a Reserve Bank paper on Friday.

The paper, authored by a team led by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra, underlined the need for lowering inflation to revive consumer spending and boost corporate revenues and profitability.

The retail inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI), which remained above 5 per cent during 2022-23, is now on the decline and fell to a two-year low of 4.25 per cent in May, following RBI's monetary policy actions and government measures.



"Recent national accounts data and corporate results when read in conjunction clearly show that inflation is slowing down personal consumption expenditure. This, in turn, is moderating corporate sales and holding back private investment in capacity creation," said the article published in the RBI's latest bulletin.

The Reserve Bank, however, said the views expressed in the bulletin articles are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

The article on the 'State of the Economy' stressed that bringing down inflation and stabilising inflation expectations will revive consumer spending, and boost corporate revenues and profitability, which is the best incentive for private capex.

The article further said

global economic activity has sustained its growth momentum in the second quarter of 2023, albeit with two diverging roads.

"While economies like India are rebounding, some others are slowing or contracting," it said.

India's real GDP growth in Q4 2022-23 at 6.1 per cent was the highest among major economies of the world, and CPI inflation came down to a 25-month low of 4.25 per cent in May 2023.

Kharif sowing, it said, has begun on the back of a record rabi harvest, and the manufacturing sector has posted a pickup in net profits.

Credit growth is rebounding to more durable sources of funding, and the Indian rupee is turning out to be the most stable currency among emerging market peers.



Sensex, Nifty extend losses into 2nd day on rate hike fears

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure for the second straight session on Friday as a bearish trend in global equities and concerns over rate hikes by central banks unnerved investors.

Besides, selling pressure in index majors Reliance Industries, Infosys and L&T also dragged the benchmark indices lower, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 259.52 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 62,979.37. During the day, it tumbled 364.77 points or 0.57 per cent to 62,874.12.

The NSE Nifty declined 105.75 points or 0.56 per cent to end at 18,665.50.

On a weekly, the BSE benchmark fell 405.21 points or 0.63 per cent and the Nifty dipped 160.5 points or 0.85 per cent.

"Nifty fell for the second consecutive session on June 23 pulled lower by negative global cues. Global stocks fell on Friday, extending their declines for the week and edging towards their worst week since March, as traders worried that central banks' efforts to curb sticky inflation will lead to recessions and strengthen the US dollar," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Tata Motors was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, skidding 1.77 per cent, followed by SBI, Power Grid, Tata Steel, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries and Maruti.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints, NTPC, HCL Technologies, HDFC and Sun Pharma were the gainers. "Global central banks are currently focused on addressing inflation and have reiterated their commitment to reaching their target levels, as evidenced by the hawkish commentary from (US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome) Powell and the unexpected rate hike by the Bank of England," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 1.24 per cent and smallcap index fell 1.17 per cent.

All the indices ended in the negative territory, with commodities declining by 1.87 per cent, oil & gas falling by 1.74 per cent, consumer durables (1.67 per cent), metal (1.61 per cent), utilities (1.34 per cent), industrials (1.17 per cent), IT (0.99 per cent) and auto (0.94 per cent). "The downward revision of earnings guidance by a major US tech company Accenture has raised concerns about potential earnings downgrades in the Indian IT sector, resulting in pressure on IT stocks."

"However, the domestic market is not expected to experience a significant correction due to favourable domestic economic indicators and correction in international commodities prices to sustain earnings growth on a QoQ basis," Nair added.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

Equity benchmark indices in Europe were also trading in the red. The US markets ended on a mixed note in the overnight trade on Thursday.

India's forex reserves jump USD 2.35 bn to USD 596 bn



PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves increased by USD 2.35 billion to USD 596.098 billion for the week ended June 16, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall reserves had dropped by USD 1.318 billion to USD 593.749 billion in the previous reporting week.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused

majorly by global developments.

For the week ended June 16, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 2.578 billion to USD 527.651 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

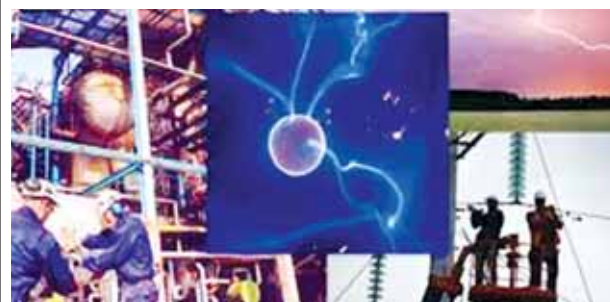
Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves dropped by USD 324 million to USD 45.049 billion, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 62 million to USD 18.249 billion, the central bank said.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was up by USD 34 million to USD 5.149 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

All ten Adani Group stocks fall; Adani Ent tumbles nearly 7%



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Group stocks ended in the negative territory on Friday, with Adani Enterprises falling nearly 7 per cent, in-line with weak trend in the broader market, amid reports that the United States authorities are looking into the representations that the conglomerate made to its American investors in the wake of allegations of stock manipulation levelled by Hindenburg Research.

Shares of Adani Enterprises tumbled 6.79 per cent, Adani Transmission plunged 6.38 per

cent, Adani Power declined 5.61 per cent and Ambuja Cements tanked 4.19 per cent on the BSE.

Adani Ports fell by 4.16 per cent, NDTV slumped 3.46 per cent, ACC declined 3.46 per cent, Adani Wilmar skidded 3.42 per cent, Adani Total Gas went lower by 3.21 per cent and Adani Green Energy dipped 1.50 per cent.

In the equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 259.52 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 62,979.37.

"Adani group stocks came under selling pressure on

Friday when the broader market was anyway under profit-taking mode. An additional reason for the group stocks to fall was the news of Adani Group drawing regulatory scrutiny in the US after a short seller report.

"The US Attorney's Office in Brooklyn, New York, has reportedly sent inquiries in recent months to institutional investors with large holdings in Adani Group. The requests for information were focused on what Adani Group told those investors," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Adani Group stocks have in the past taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg made a litany of allegations, including those about fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate.

Adani Group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

'Yes Bank's ratings, financial performance to remain stable over 12-18 months'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Friday said it has affirmed Yes Bank's ratings on the back of expectation that its financial performance will remain stable over the next 12-18 months.

The long-term foreign and local currency bank deposit ratings and foreign currency issuer rating has been affirmed at 'Ba3', with a stable outlook.

"The rating affirmation and stable outlook is driven by the improvement in India's macro profile to 'moderate+' from 'moderate', along with Moody's expectation that Yes Bank's financial performance will remain stable over the next 12-18 months," Moody's said in a statement.

The agency expects Yes Bank's asset quality to be stable as the bulk of its legacy problem assets have been resolved, while India's good economic momentum will support the performance of its newly originated loans.

The bank's gross non-performing loan ratio declined to 2.2 per cent at the end of March 2023 from 13.9 per cent a year earlier, following its sale of non-performing loans (NPL) to an asset reconstruction company (ARC) in 2022.

Yes Bank's capital improved post a capital raise from private investors in 2022, Moody's said.

LIC launches new non-linked period plan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

National insurer Life Insurance Corporation on Friday launched a new close-ended plan Dhan Vriddhi.

The new plan will be on sale from June 23 through September 30, the insurer said in a statement.

LIC said Dhan Vriddhi is a non-linked, non-participating, individual, savings, single premium life plan, offering a combination of protection and savings.

This plan provides financial support to the family in case of unfortunate death of the life assured during the policy term. It also provides a guaranteed lump sum amount on the date of maturity to the assured.

The plan comes with two options to choose from wherein the sum assured on death can either be 1.25 times or 10 times in the second option.

The plan is available for

10, 15 and 18 years and the minimum age at entry varies from 90 days to 8 years, depending on the term selected, and the maximum age at entry varies from 32 to 60 years, depending upon the term and option selected.

The plan offers a minimum basic assured sum of Rs 1,25,000 and can be opted for more in multiples of Rs 5,000.

The guaranteed additions shall accrue at the end of each policy year, throughout the policy term, and ranges from Rs 60 to Rs 75 in the first option and Rs 25 to Rs 40 in the second option for every Rs 1,000 of basic sum assured. The guaranteed additions are higher for a higher sum assured.

A settlement option is available on maturity/death in monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/yearly intervals for five years. The plan also offers liquidity through a loan facility, which is available anytime after three months from the completion of the policy.

Kotak Bank arms invest ₹732 cr in RattanIndia Power

Mumbai: Kotak Mahindra Bank on Friday said two of its arms have invested Rs 732 crore in RattanIndia Power (RIPL) to help the thermal power plant operator reduce the cost of debt servicing.

Kotak Strategic Situations India Fund II (KSSF) and Kotak Private Credit Fund (KPCF) will be investing Rs 582 crore and Rs 150 crore, respectively, in the non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of RattanIndia Power, as per a statement.

The investment is part of an overall Rs 1,125 crore infusion by a consortium of lenders, it said.

BUSINESS BRIEF

SRM CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

New Delhi: SRM Public School Celebrates International Yoga Day. The 9th Yoga Day Celebrations took off with the entire school taking the Yoga Pledge in the School assembly followed by the performance of yoga asanas and pranayama by the students and staff.



FLAGSHIP ICONIC PROJECT ANNOUNCED

New Delhi: Ashrai Infra, a new-age real estate development company announced its flagship iconic project, Golden Grande in Greater Noida (West) on Friday. Spread over an area of 25 acres, the project is an IT/ITES, The High-Street Retail and Business Hub in Delhi NCR, with state-of-the-art facilities for all working, shopping, and dining experiences. With a catchment area spanning a 5-kilometer radius and an estimated population of over 10 lakhs, Golden Grande is situated in one of the largest tech zones, with close proximity to Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and Noida International (Jewar) Airport and well connected with Delhi Meerut Expressway, FNG Expressway, DND Flyway and Kisan Chowk Metro Station. MD Ashrai Group Anand Shukla expressed his excitement about the project.

INDIA-NORWAY CO-OP IN POLLUTION REDUCTION

New Delhi: A collaborative project between India and Norway entitled India-Norway cooperation project for plastic and chemical pollution reduction in India (INOPOL) started with its Phase II to be implemented in Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand. As part of this project, knowledge, and capacity will be built amongst different stakeholders, such as scientists and experts at the State Pollution Control Boards, research and academic organisations, and Civil Society Organisations to help reduce the releases and impacts of plastic pollution and the 'new' POPs listed under the Stockholm Convention, which India has recently ratified.

MCX shares fall as exchange cancels mock trading session for new trading platform

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) fell over 3 per cent on Friday, a day after the exchange cancelled the mock trading session for the new trading platform.

The exchange is in the process of implementing a new commodity derivative platform.

In a circular on Thursday, MCX said, "the exchange had proposed a mock trading session on 22 June 2023, from 05.00 pm to 11.30 pm which

stands cancelled." The stock went lower by 3.12 per cent to settle at Rs 1,570.45 on the BSE. During the day, it fell 6.37 per cent to Rs 1,517.80.

At NSE, it declined 3.28 per cent to end at Rs 1,568.80.

Earlier this week, the exchange had proposed a mock trading session on June 19 also but cancelled the same.

The exchange had earlier also announced to conduct mock trading sessions to familiarise members with the new trading platform.

"MCX stock price fell on June 23 as media carried reports in the morning about cancellation of mock trading on the previous day. Mock trading has been cancelled on a couple of occasions," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

MCX has targeted to shift to new technology from July 1, Jasani added.

"The street is eagerly monitoring as to whether it will be able to do that smoothly. There may be a few more mock sessions and we will have a better idea by next week about the success

of the shift to new technology. Soft overall markets also contributed to the weakness in the stock price," he said.

In the equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 259.52 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 62,979.37. The NSE Nifty declined 105.75 points or 0.56 per cent to end at 18,665.50.

The exchange had in the past requested members to actively participate in the mock trading session to avoid any issue when the exchange plans to go live with the new version of trading software.

The software support and maintenance agreement between 63 Moons and MCX, which was last amended on September 27, 2014, ended on September 30, 2022, but it was extended at the last moment for a period of three months till December 31, 2022.

MCX had later extended the software contract with 63 Moons up to June this year. The technology support for MCX has been provided by 63 Moons, which was earlier known as Financial Technologies India Ltd and was its erstwhile founder-promoter.

US TO HOST EXPANDED 32-TEAM CLUB WC IN 2025

AFP ■ SPAIN
The Club World Cup 2025 will be the pinnacle of elite professional men's club football, and with the required infrastructure in place together with a massive local interest, the United States is the ideal host to kick off this new, global tournament," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino.
The dates, host cities and match schedule for the tournament will be established at a later date, FIFA said.
The US will also host the 2026 World Cup along with Canada and Mexico.
The club World Cup has been held annually in a seven-team, or sometimes six-team, format since 2005 with that year's six continental champions plus, when necessary, a representative of the host nation.
FIFA announced the enlarged format in February. The new competition is



planned to include four representatives each from Asia, Africa and CONCACAF, which includes North and Central America, as well as six from South America, 12 from Europe, including the winners of last five Champions Cup, and one each from Oceania and the host country.

In theory, the last edition in the smaller format will be played in Saudi Arabia in December.
Six of the places have already been decided with five continental champions -- Manchester City, Leon of Mexico, Egyptians Al Ahly, Urawa Red Diamond from Japan, Auckland City of New Zealand -- and Al Ittihad representing the host country.
The Copa America in South American has not yet finished.
Current plans would leave a one-year gap before the expanded tournament kicks off. Continental federations have reportedly asked FIFA to ensure that their 2024 champions have a chance to play for a global title next year.
FIFA also announced on Friday it was pushing back the decision on the host of the 2030 World Cup from September or October to the second half of next year "to ensure additional consultation with all key stakeholders."

I'm ready to do great results on grass: Alcaraz

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI
World No. 2 tennis player Carlos Alcaraz has said his expectations have changed and he is ready to go for "great results" on grass after reaching his first grass-court quarterfinal ahead of his Wimbledon tilt.
The Spaniard has undoubtedly been a dominant force on both the hard and clay courts over the past 18 months, having clinched seven of his 10 ATP titles on the clay and the remaining three on hard courts.
But his experience on the grass lays thin, having only played eight matches on the surface in his young career.
Alcaraz quickly found his footing on the surface, securing two victories in West London this week, including his triumph over Jiri Lehecka on Thursday to enter the last eight of the Queen's Championships for the first time.
"After this match, this level, the expectations change. I think I'm ready to do great results here on grass. Playing my first quarterfinal here, I'm going to enjoy it. I'm enjoying every single second here, and of course, I will go into the next round with a lot of confidence and I will go for it."



"Playing these kinds of matches, the level that I played -- I'm ok with that. I feel really comfortable here on grass so I'm really happy getting experience on grass, getting hours. Knowing that I have this level, I'm really happy about it," Alcaraz was quoted by Eurosport.
Alcaraz will next play former World No.3 Grigor Dimitrov for a place in the semifinal.
The youngster is pursuing more than his first grass-court title this week. If he triumphs at Queen's Club, he will reclaim World No. 1 in the ATP Rankings from Novak Djokovic on Monday.



India's campaign ends with Prannoy's exit

FIANS ■ TAIPEI
India's campaign at the Taipei Open 2023 came to an end on Friday after HS Prannoy bowed out of the tournament, suffering a loss in the men's singles quarter-finals, here.
Prannoy, ninth in the world badminton rankings, lost 19-21, 8-21 to Hong Kong's world No. 16 Ng Ka Long Angus in the quarters.
Playing at the Tian-Mu Arena, the third-seeded Prannoy found his footing quickly and raced to a 5-2 lead. However, Ng Ka Long Angus rallied to make it 5-5. As the match progressed, both shuttlers battled to gain the upper hand. With the scores tied at 19-19, Ng Ka Long Angus won two consecutive points to take the lead.
In the second game, Prannoy trailed 8-2 going into

the mid-game break. Ng Ka Long Angus remained in control as the Indian shuttler failed to match his opponent's intensity. The Hong Kong shuttler wrapped up the match in 38 minutes.
This was Prannoy's sixth loss against Ng Ka Long Angus in 12 meetings. In their last meeting, Prannoy beat Ng Ka Long Angus 21-18, 21-16 on the way to the semi-finals of the Indonesian Open 2023.
Earlier, Tanya Hemanth lost to world No. 4 and Tokyo 2020 Olympics silver medalist Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the women's singles pre-quarterfinals on Thursday to end India's run in the category.
The Indian shuttlers will be in action next at the Canada Open. The BWF Super 500 tournament will be held in Calgary from July 4 to 9.

2024 Olympic flame will be carried for 68 days

AP ■ PARIS
The Olympic flame for the 2024 Paris Games will pass through 64 departments - including five overseas - and 400 towns over 68 days before the cauldron is lit.
Organizers announced the route for the torch relay on Friday at a Paris university.
"Paris 2024 is the greatest collective project in our history," organizing committee president Tony Estanguet said. "The torch relay plays an important role because it has the capacity to touch so many people."
The torch will be lit by the sun's rays on April 16 in Ancient Olympia, Greece. It will then be carried around the nation before its handover in Athens.
The flame will leave Athens on April 27 aboard a three-mast ship named Belem for the French port of Marseille - a former Greek colony founded 2,600 years ago.
The Belem was first used in 1896, the same year the modern Olympics came back. It will be skippered by French navigator Armel Le Cléac'h, winner of the solo around-the-world race Vendée Globe in 2017. The



crew will reach Marseille on May 8. After leaving Marseille, the torch relay will take in heritage sites such as the imposing Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy and the 2,500-year-old medieval city of Carcassonne. It will also trail

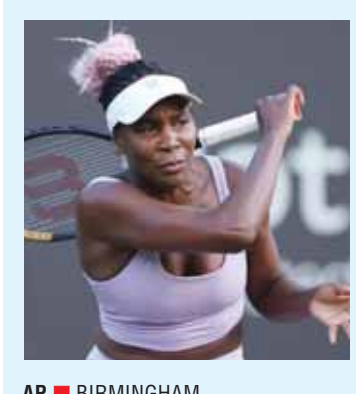
along the famed red-wine vineyards of Saint-Émilion and white-wine vines of Chablis.
"They are the Games of the country," said Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, citing French author Victor Hugo and his theme of universality. "Paris belongs to the whole country."
Including beyond its borders.
A passage in France's overseas territories, called the Relais des Océans (Ocean Relay), will begin on June 9 in Guyana and will take in the Reunion Island, Polynesia, Gaudeloupe and Martinique before coming back to Nice on June 18.
"It's going to be spectacular," said Estanguet, a three-time Olympic canoeing champion.
Continuing over land, the torch will rise up the Alpine mountain pass of Chamonix for Olympic Day on June 23 before spending July 14 - known as Bastille Day, France's national day - and July 15 in Paris.
The torch will then tour various suburbs of Paris until returning via Seine-Saint-Denis - home to the Stade de France - before arriving back in Paris.
"It's an occasion to all come together, whatever our origins," Hidalgo said.

Celta Vigo appoint Benitez as coach

AP ■ MADRID
Rafa Benitez will coach Celta Vigo on a three-year deal, the Spanish side said Friday.
The former Liverpool, Chelsea and Real Madrid coach replaces Carlos Carvalhal, who left Celta earlier in June by mutual consent after helping the team survive relegation from La Liga.
Celta, celebrating their centenary in the upcoming season, said they have reached an agreement with the 63-year-old coach, which will be signed in July.
"The centenary season, an unforgettable and unique event for Celta fans, looks set to have a formidable leader in the dugout," said the Galician team in a statement.
"Celta have reached an agreement in principle with Rafa Benitez for the Madrid-born coach to lead the team in this special year and two more seasons."
Benitez, who won the Champions League with Liverpool and La Liga twice with Valencia, last coached Everton before he was sacked in January 2022.

Venus Williams loses to Ostapenko at Birmingham

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM
Venus Williams couldn't cause an even bigger surprise at the Birmingham Classic.
The 43-year-old American, now ranked No. 697, lost 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 to second-seeded Jelena Ostapenko on Thursday in the second round of the grass-court tournament that is serving as a warmup for Wimbledon.
On Monday, Williams defeated 48th-ranked Camile Giorgi for a first victory over a player in the top 50 in nearly four years. She has just returned after six months out with a hamstring injury sustained in Auckland in the first week of the year.
Williams, who played with strapping around her right knee against Ostapenko, received an off-court medical timeout when



at 2-2 in the second set. She looked uncomfortable when she returned to the grass but continued to play, fighting for every point and even saving a match point at 5-3 before recovering to win four games in a row and take it to a decider.
By the end of a 44-minute third set, Williams' mobility was limited and Ostapenko sealed victory with a forehand down the line.
A seven-time Grand Slam champion and five-time winner of the Wimbledon singles, Williams was this week granted a wild card by the All England Club for this year's championships and she has justified it.
Top-seeded Barbora Krejickova earlier maintained her confident progress by reaching the quarterfinals with a straight-set win over fellow Czech player Tereza Martincova.
With the 6-4, 6-4 victory, Krejickova has yet to drop a set at the tournament.
The No. 12-ranked Krejickova won her first-round match 6-3, 6-3 against Cristina Bucsa.
Eighth-seeded Sorana Cirstea of Romania was beaten 6-3, 6-7 (1), 6-4 by Magdalena Frech of Poland, and Rebecca Marino of Canada defeated 150th-ranked American player Emina Bektas 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (1).



World's strongest chess player Carlsen makes his debut

ANI ■ DUBAI
The second day of the Global Chess League saw the debut of Magnus Carlsen, the strongest chess player in the world. Carlsen played his first game against Ian Nepomniachtchi, a two-time challenger for the world crown.
The first to face each other were the teams of SG Alpine Warriors and Balan Alaskan Knights. The match ended with a score of 9 to 7 for the SG Alpine Warriors. The match saw the two strongest players of the event making their first appearance in the Global Chess League - the current world champion in rapid and blitz and the top-rated player in the world, Magnus Carlsen, and the two-time world champion candidate, Ian Nepomniachtchi. The game was largely calm ending in a draw relatively quickly, which was not the case for the rest of the games.
Balan Alaskan Knights gained a significant advantage as Teimour Radjabov won as black, earning them four crucial points. Fortunately for the SG Alpine Warriors, they made a comeback with two victories, securing six points.
After draws on two other boards the result was 8-6 for SG Alpine Warriors. Everything was hanging on the last game between Indian chess hope Gukesh D who was up against Nodirbek Abdusattorov, the 2021 rapid world champion. Abdusattorov made a strong push from the early stages, but Gukesh managed to hold his ground, ensuring his team's victory with a final score of 9-7.
"I had a small edge but it was largely even through. I wanted to play a more interesting game but this one went the way it did," said Carlsen who also noted that he is excited to be taking part in this event which is more dynamic and different to most others in chess.
In match four the Chingari Gulf Titans played as white against Triveni Continental Kings. Both started with a defeat on the first day and were looking for their first victory.
It started well for the Titans whose players managed to create stronger positions and take initiative in the match.
In the duel of the prodigies, Nihal Sarin scored an impressive victory against Jonas Buhl Bjere, setting the Titans off to a good start. However, following a mistake in a tense game, Daniil Dubov allowed Wei Yi to score as black, making a comeback for the Triveni Continental Kings.
As the four other games ended in a draw - including between heavyweights Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Levon Aronian, this meant that Wei Yi's victory was crucial to secure them an overall edge of 8:7 in the match.

Top seed Medvedev crashes out at Wimbledon warm-up Halle

AFP ■ BERLIN
Number one seed Daniil Medvedev has crashed out of the Halle Open, a traditional Wimbledon warm-up, beaten in straight sets by Roberto Bautista Agut on Friday.
Medvedev lost 7-5, 7-6 (7-3) against the 35-year-old Spaniard. Eighth seed Bautista Agut now boasts a 5-2 career record against the 2021 US Open winner.
Medvedev, the former world number one, was runner-up on the Halle grass in 2022, losing to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in straight sets in the final.
With a poor record on grass, Medvedev has never reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon,

missing last year's tournament due to a ban on Russian athletes due to the war in Ukraine.
Olympic gold medalist Alexander Zverev also progressed into the semi-finals after defeating Chilean Nicolas Jarry.
The 26-year-old German, who made it to the semi-finals of this year's French Open, defeated Jarry in straight sets 7-5, 6-3.
"It's fantastic that I've been able to keep playing like I did in Paris, but there's still a few things to improve on" Zverev said.
Zverev will play in the semis for the third time. The German



previously made it to the final of the Halle tournament in 2016 and 2017, losing to 10-time winner Roger Federer on both occasions.
Zverev will meet Kazakh Alexander Bublik in the last four after Bublik advanced when Italian fourth seed Jannik Sinner withdrew hurt in the second set of their quarter final tie.
Bublik won the first set 7-5 and was up 2-0 in the second when Sinner pulled out with a right leg injury.

India eye semi-final berth, set to face Nepal

FIANS ■ BENGALURU
After a resounding success over Pakistan in their SAFF Championship opener, the Indian senior men's team face Nepal in their second Group A match at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here, with an aim to secure the semi-final berth on Saturday.
A victory for India, coupled with a win or a draw for Kuwait against Pakistan, will see the Blue Tigers qualify for the semi-final with one group-stage match to spare.
Sunil Chhetri's hat-trick and a late strike from Udanta Singh powered India to a 4-0 victory on a rain-lashed Wednesday, which the Blue Tigers have already moved on from, according to head coach Igor Stimac.
"I'm very happy with how we responded against Pakistan. I'm also happy that we've already forgotten about that match and are working on the next one," said Stimac.
"With all due respect to every team participating here, we are only thinking about ourselves," he added.
The Croatian was sent off in the first-half added time for interrupting a quick throw-in from Pakistan, an act he doesn't regret and only did for the good of the team.
"Whatever decision I made wasn't in the heat of the moment but with a cool head and knowing that there would be a sanction after it. I'm there to protect my boys and my team. It's better I get the cards than them," he said.
Under Stimac, India have faced Nepal four times (three wins and a draw), with the last meeting coming in the 2021 SAFF Championship Final in



Male. India claimed their record-extending eighth title after a convincing 3-0 win thanks to goals from Sunil Chhetri, Suresh Singh Wangiam and Sahal Abdul Samad.

Despite India knowing Nepal very well and boasting a great record against them, Stimac believes they are a much-changed side now under new head coach Vincenzo Albertino Annessi, who led Gokulam Kerala to back-to-back I-League titles between in 2021 and 2022.
"Nepal changed their coach a few months ago. He is trying to bring and implement a new philosophy to their game. But as I said, we're not thinking about them. Our only concern is us and where we can improve. We need to maintain the good momentum as far as possible," Stimac stated.
Nepal went down 1-3 to Kuwait in their first game, with Anjan Bista, who played for Mumbai Kenkre in the I-League last season, scoring the consolation goal for Annessi's side.
"Kuwait was a great oppo-

nent. We have many inexperienced players in this competition, and haven't had much time to prepare. However, we did create many chances, especially in the second half," said Annessi.
For 174-ranked Nepal, a defeat will see them eliminated should Pakistan fail to beat Kuwait. But Annessi is only focused on the mountain to climb against the hosts in the evening.
"We will face an India side which hasn't conceded in their last seven games. They have amazing players who play in an amazing league like the ISL. I respect them a lot, and it will be tough for us, but we'll go out with character. We will be up against 20 thousand people tomorrow. We need to give more than 100 per cent. It's a great opportunity, an amazing challenge," said the Italian.

3 NEW FACES FOR WI TESTS

India recently announced ODI and Test squad for the West Indies tour. Young star Jaiswal and Gaikwad get Test call-ups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national selection panel on Friday effectively brought curtains down on veteran Cheteshwar Pujara's international career by dropping him from Indian Test squad for the two-Test series against the West Indies, starting July 12.

Inclusion of powerhouse domestic performers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ruturaj Gaikwad in the 16-member squad is a clear indication that the four-member panel, headed by Shiv Sunder Das, is now looking at the next two-year World Test Championship cycle (2023-2025).

That Pujara will be dropped and skipper Rohit Sharma is likely to lead the Test side in the Caribbean was reported by the PTI recently.

The other significant development was Ajinkya Rahane's re-appointment as the vice-captain of the Test side just after making an international comeback in the previous game.

While Mohammed Shami has been given complete rest from both Tests and ODIs after nearly three months of hectic competitive cricket, the selectors have indeed started the phasing out process by dropping the profligate Umesh Yadav and bringing in the consistent Kolkata seamer Mukesh Kumar in the main squad.

Navdeep Saini, whose career had been on a free-fall since the historic tour of Australia, also gets a chance for resurrection as his hit-the-deck (140 clicks) bowling might be effective on the slow Caribbean



tracks. All three new entrants -- Jaiswal, Gaikwad and Mukesh -- were the stand-by players for the WTC final. They have been very consistent in domestic cricket over past few seasons.

The ODI squad didn't have any major surprise with 17 members literally picking themselves.

The injured Jasprit Bumrah, Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul, whenever fit, also select themselves and

together these 20 players will most likely make the core group going into the big World Cup.

Pujara unlikely to make a comeback anytime soon

When Pujara was dropped for the home series against Sri Lanka along with Rahane, the former chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma had said that doors were not closed for the gritty No.3 and he could go get back to first-class

cricket and earn his stripes.

Pujara went back to County Cricket and played for Sussex. He scored tons of runs and was recalled for the one-off Test against England in 2022 and also got a chance to complete 100 Tests milestone in the series against Australia this year.

"Once he failed in Australia series at home, there was very little chance for him but selectors didn't want to change things ahead of WTC final," a BCCI source in

know of things told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Twin failures at Oval sealed his fate. SS Das was in London for WTC final. He must have had a word with head coach Rahul Dravid and intimated his panel's thought-process post final," the source added.

If Pujara's knocks of 90 and 102 against Bangladesh are taken away, he has scored at a poor average of 26 in the last three years and perhaps got a very long rope for non-performance.

"It is a two-year cycle and you can't just make wholesale changes. Pujara hasn't been scoring for three years. Difference between a Virat Kohli and a Pujara has been the rhythm. Yes, Kohli also has had a dry spell but he never looked out of form.

"Pujara never gave you confidence after the Australia tour that he is in rhythm. Intent was

also an issue. The two knocks against Bangladesh were hardly of any consequence," the source said.

Jaiswal, Gaikwad can both open as well as bat at No. 3

After he scored 213 and 144 in the Irani Cup for Rest of India against MP, the stylish Mumbai left-hander Jaiswal was expected to earn his maiden Test call up.

With a first-class average of 80.21, Jaiswal has shown that he is a special talent and needed to be fast-tracked.

In pre-IPL days, the selectors would always be wary about temperament of domestic performers at the highest level but one good thing about IPL is a chance to test one's skills against the best in the world.

Both Jaiswal and Gaikwad, who plays Maharashtra, can open

and bat at number three. If they forge a good combination at top in future, there is every chance that Shubman Gill can bat at the coveted No. 4 position as and when Virat Kohli decides to move on.

"I am not saying Das' panel would think like this but a Ruturaj with his ability to play fast bowling, despite his 40 plus average in Ranji Trophy, stands a better chance to be successful. A selector will not just look at runs.

"Hence a Sarfaraz Khan getting completely exposed against quick bowlers in IPL or Abhimanyu Easwaran not scoring for Bengal in seven consecutive Ranji knock-out games (three quarter-finals, two semi-finals and two finals) also is taken into account. It is not just about how many runs you score but also how you score them that matters," a former selector said.

India Test squad: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Virat Kohli, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ajinkya Rahane (VC), KS Bharat (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat and Navdeep Saini.

India's ODI squad: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Hardik Pandya (VC), Shardul Thakur, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Mohd. Siraj, Umran Malik, Mukesh Kumar.



Captain Rohit completes 16 years in international cricket



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is something about 16 that has a lingering sweet aftertaste. Ask Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, who completed 16 summers as an international cricketer after starting as a highly-rated 20-year-old from Mumbai's famous stable of batters.

On June 23, 2007, Rohit made his debut under current head coach Rahul Dravid's captaincy in an ODI game in Ireland, a match India won quite easily as one got a glimpse of the youngster clad in full-sleeved jumpers amidst biting cold in Belfast.

Following 441 international games, 17,115 runs and 43 international hundreds, the 36-year-old 'Hit-Man' now stands on the most important cusp of his illustrious career: To end the 10-year jinx for an ICC trophy.

An antithesis to Mumbai's much talked about 'Khadoos' school of batsmanship, Rohit's graceful strokeplay is what makes him stand-out among his peers.

But as he leads the team to West Indies, one can recollect how Rohit had described his feelings when Dravid, the then captain informed him about his debut.

"It was way back in 2007 when I was selected, but the first time I had the opportunity to interact with him (Dravid) was in Bangalore at a camp," Rohit had told mediapersons during an interaction just after Dravid took over as coach.

"It was a very brief chat and I was actually kind of very nervous and I never used to talk so much even with my age group of people, so leave alone these guys at that point.

"So I was just quietly doing my things and getting a move on with my game. But yeah, in Ireland the first time when he came and told me that you will be playing this game I was on the moon, obviously, it felt like a dream to be part of the dressing room," he had recollected.

Dravid remembered it during that press meet as if it happened a day before.

"I guess time flies, doesn't it? I actually remember Rohit even before the Ireland series when we were playing a challenger in Madras (Chennai). We all knew that Rohit was going to be special," he said.

"We could just see that he was a very very special talent that I wouldn't, so many years later, be working with him that I never thought about or envisaged....

"But honestly, the way he has grown as a leader and as a person over these last 14 years now. What he's achieved both as an Indian player and as a leader for the Mumbai Indians has been phenomenal.

"Having to carry the legacy of obviously Mumbai cricket and Indian cricket is not an easy one and he's done it with a lot of grace and class," said Dravid.

However, as he completes 16 years in international cricket, the best compliment from a distance would certainly be from Virat Kohli.

"When he burst onto the scene, everyone spoke about this young player Rohit Sharma and I used to be curious," Kohli had said during YouTube show 'Breakfast With Champions'.

"We are also talented young player so why this fuss about this guy alone? Then we saw T20 World Cup and once I saw him bat, I quietly slumped into my couch because when you saw, you knew what people were talking about.

Perhaps, it was nice to take a trip down the memory lane and recollect a sweet compliment on Rohit's Sweet 16.

SIANS ■ BULAWAYO

Leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga clinched his second consecutive five-wicket haul in ODIs while Lahiru Kumara picked three wickets and openers scored vital runs to lead Sri Lanka to a thumping ten-wicket win over Oman in their Group B match of Mens Cricket World Cup qualifiers at the Queens Sports Club, here on Friday.

After the duo of Hasaranga (5/13) and Kumara (3/22) combined to bowl out Oman for just 98, opener Dimuth Karunaratne made 51 not out as Sri Lanka chased down the total in 15 overs. The result means the 1996 World Cup winners climbed to the top spot in Group B and put themselves on the verge of qualifying for the Super Six stage of the tournament.

Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka's decision to bowl

Hasaranga, Kumara lead SL to thumping 10-wicket win over Oman



first paid off very well as pace from Kumara and Kasun Rajitha was too fiery to handle for the Oman top-order. Kashyap Prajapati was the first wicket to fall, as Kumara

trapped him in front of the stumps. Aqib Ilyas followed suit, with Rajitha getting in on the act.

Kumara was in no mood to stop as he sent Zeeshan

Maqsood and Mohammad Nadeem packing in quick succession, as Oman found themselves reeling at 20/4. Ayaan Khan and Jatinder Singh then embarked on a rebuilding job for Oman, putting together a 52-run stand.

But it all changed when Hasaranga came on to bowl in the 21st over -- three wickets and a maiden over coming out of it. Hasaranga first trapped Jatinder lbw for 21 on the first delivery, followed by casting Shoaib Khan and getting Jay Odedra out on the final delivery of the over.

Oman's slide continued as miscommunication between Ayaan and Naseem Khushi led to the latter being run out for

1 after brilliant work in the deep from Rajitha. Later on, Ayaan's gritty knock of 41 came to an end with Hasaranga scalping his fourth wicket courtesy of a brilliant catch in the slips by Dhananjaya de Silva.

Hasaranga clinched his second consecutive five-wicket haul of the tournament, trapping Bilal Khan for zero, as Oman were bowled out for 98.

In the chase, Karunaratne and Pathum Nissanka barely broke a sweat, remaining unbeaten on 61 and 37 respectively as Sri Lanka not only sealed a win in their first-ever meeting over Oman, but also bolstered their net run rate.

Worcestershire sign Navdeep for four matches of County Championship

SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Worcestershire announced the signing of India fast bowler Navdeep Saini as their second overseas player for the upcoming four matches of the ongoing County Championship season.

Saini has represented India in two Tests, eight ODIs, and 11 T20Is, and had a brief stint with Kent in last year's County Championship, where he claimed 11 wickets in two matches, including match figures of 7-111 against Warwickshire at Edgbaston, lace with 5-72 in the first innings.

"I enjoyed my brief time

with Kent and I am excited about a more extended period with Worcestershire. Hopefully, I can contribute to their promotion push while also continuing to develop my own skills."

"I am aware that Indian players such as Kapil Dev, Zaheer Khan, and Ravichandran Ashwin have previously played for Worcestershire and achieved success. I also aim to make a significant impact and hit the ground running on Sunday," he said in a statement.

Saini, 30 is set to make his Worcestershire debut in

Sunday's clash against Derbyshire at New Road. He will also be available for the home fixture against Yorkshire, starting on July 10, and the away matches against Leicestershire at Oakham School on July 19, and Gloucestershire at Cheltenham College on July 26.

His availability for the Worcestershire matches on July 10 and 19 may be affected considering Saini receiving a call-up for India's two-match Test tour of West Indies, happening from July 12-24 in Dominica and Trinidad.



I got asked for Eng Test coach role before McCullum: Ponting

SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting has revealed that he was approached for the role of England Test team head coach prior to Brendon McCullum's appointment.

Following England's resounding 4-0 defeat in the Ashes series held in Australia in early 2022, significant changes were implemented within the team management. Head coach Chris Silverwood, batting mentor Graham Thorpe, and managing director Ashley Giles all faced dismissal from their respective jobs.

Additionally, Joe Root decided to relinquish his role as captain.

Ponting revealed Rob Key, who assumed the role of director of men's cricket for the England Cricket Board, approached Ponting to discuss the coaching opportunity.

"I actually got asked before Brendon took the job, there you go. You guys might be the first to find that out - but I did take some calls from Robert Key as soon as he took over that job," Ponting told Guerilla Cricket.

"But I'm just not ready for a full-time international coaching job, where I'm at in my life. Having travelled as much as I have, with young kids now I just don't want to be away as much as I was," he said.

"And even talking to Brendon, his family is only just arriving today. When you've got kids that are in school, moving them around, that's not what I want to do."

When new Test skipper Ben Stokes and coach McCullum took over the reins, England adopted an aggressive and fearless brand of cricket dubbed 'Bazball'.

Under the Bazball approach of rattling up boundaries and using aggressive fields and early declarations, England have witnessed a remarkable transformation in Test cricket, having won 11 of their 13 Tests and not lost a single series yet.

The Ashes defeat at Edgbaston was just the third loss England have suffered in 14 Tests since McCullum was appointed in May last year. Before Bazball, England had secured just one win in 17 Tests under former mentor Chris Silverwood.

'I am DONE': James Anderson's Slams Edgbaston Pitch

PTI ■ LONDON

Expressing his displeasure over the flat pitch in the Ashes opener, veteran England seamer James Anderson says he's "done" if similar tracks are produced for the remainder of the series.

Ahead of the series, England skipper Ben Stokes said England wanted fast flat pitches to help execute their attacking style of play.

However, Anderson said the benign Edgbaston track was "like kryptonite for me".

"If all the pitches are like that I'm done in the Ashes series. That pitch was like kryptonite for me. There was not much swing, no reverse swing, no seam movement, no bounce and no pace."

"I've tried over the years to hone my skills so I can bowl in any conditions but everything I tried made no difference. I felt like I was fighting an uphill bat-



tle," Anderson wrote in his column for 'The Telegraph'.

The 40-year old Anderson, the world's most successful pacer, managed to take just one wicket in the first Test as England lost the match by two-wickets. "It's a long series and hope-

fully I can contribute at some point, but if all the pitches are like that I'm done in the Ashes series."

Anderson and Stuart Broad have been pivotal for England, snaring wickets event on flat pitches.

Anderson conceded he didn't meet his own expectation while also revealing why he wasn't handed the second new ball late on the final day.

"I know I wasn't on top of my game this week. It was not my best performance. I know I have more to offer and contribute to the team. I want to make up for it at Lord's and all I can do is turn up on Sunday and prepare to play.

"I didn't take the new ball in the first innings or late on the final day. I had a chat with Ben Stokes about how I felt. We agreed it was the type of pitch the taller bowlers were getting more out of. I was completely on board with that."

Anderson also defended teammate Ollie Robinson, who was involved in a fiery exchange with Australia opener Usman Khawaja.

The pacer has copped a lot of criticism for his explosive-laden sendoff to Khawaja.

"Ollie did nothing wrong when he had his moment with Khawaja. In fact, I stood at mid-off for most of the game and didn't hear anything said by either team that was unacceptable," Anderson wrote.

"I don't want Ollie to change. I like him getting fired up. He bowls better when he is in that mood. From personal experience, I know I bowl better when I am a bit more aggressive and intense.

"It has revved up a few former Australia cricketers who have had a bit to say in the media. That's OK. I'm sure I will be doing that as an ex-player."

"You have to keep your name in the papers and keep getting a job. It is to be expected. More and more people will come out of the woodwork with that kind of stuff as the series goes on."

Rehan Ahmed added to Engl squad for Lord's Test

SIANS ■ LONDON

Leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed has been added to the England squad as a cover for Moeen Ali for the second Men's Ashes Test against Australia to be held at Lords from June 28, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Friday.

Ali returned to Test cricket after retiring from the format in 2021, due to lead spinner Jack Leach suffering a stress fracture to his back. But Ali also suffered an injury to his spinning finger while playing in the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston.

With a big blister on his spinning finger after bowling many overs on the trot in first innings, Ali couldn't bowl significant overs in the second innings, which resulted in England losing in a dramatic fashion by two wickets to Australia.