

‘Vidhan Parishad plea under Centre’s study’

NEW DELHI ■ BHUBANESWAR

A proposal for constitution of Legislative Council in Odisha is under examination of the Government of India, said Union Minister for Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju in the Parliament on Friday.

While replying to a query of senior BJD MP Pinaki Misra, the Law Minister said Odisha, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Assam State Assemblies have adopted a resolution for creation of Legislative Council in the respective States.

“The proposals are under examination in consultation with the concerned State Governments,” he said.

However, Rijiju said no rigid time frame can be given in the matter.

Anyhow, it is a matter of relief for the BJD as the Centre has finally said it is concerned about the proposal for the establishment of the Vidhan Parishad under Article 169 of the Constitution.

In February last year, the same Union Minister had informed the Rajya Sabha that no resolution of the Odisha Legislative Assembly has been

received by the Government of India.

Notably, the Odisha Legislative Assembly had passed a resolution to set up the Legislative Council in the State on September, 6, 2018. The resolution was passed in the absence of opposition Congress and BJP. Out of 147 members, 104 members including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had voted in support of the resolution.

As per the plan, the Vidhan Parishad in Odisha will have 49 members (one-third the size of the Assembly). While 16 members are to be elected by

the MLAs; the Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) would elect a similar number of members.

Four each of the members will be elected from among electoral rolls to be prepared to comprise teachers and graduates respectively. Similarly, nine members will be nominated by the Governors.

So far, six States, such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh have constituted the Vidhan Parishad.

5T Secy Pandian visits Nabarangpur for 2 days

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On the instruction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, his 5T Secretary VK Pandian was on a two-day visit to Nabarangpur district on March 17 and 18 to make field assessment and take stocks of different developmental initiatives of the Government.

On March 17, Pandian made interactions with a number of groups across the society and with the people's representatives at the Circuit House. As many as 131 individuals/groups and people from different sections met him and the grievance were taken up on a case-to-case basis.

Not only from Nabarangpur but also 400 people in different groups from Koraput district met him and extended their



gratitude to the Chief Minister. Some groups from Rayagada district also met the 5-T Secretary and extended their gratitude to the Chief Minister for the help in solving their problems.

In the evening, Pandian visited the Maa

Bhandargarh temple at the heart of Nabarangpur town and offered prayers to the deity. Then, he proceeded to the Anwesha Hostel at Tirliambaguda and had his dinner with the boys in their hostel and interacted with them. He also met girl

students and discussed with them about their studies.

Sports and Youth Service Secretary R Vineel Krishna, ST & SC Development Secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo and Nabarangpur Collector Dr Kamal Lochan Mishra were present.

2 Govt staffs held for job fraud in Puri

PNS ■ PURI

Police on Saturday arrested two Government employees on the charge of defrauding aspirants on the pretext of providing them jobs at the Shree Jagannath Medical College Hospital in Puri.

The accused were identified as Kartika Sethi of Palli village under the Brahmagiri police station (PS) and Batakrushna Bhoi of Nalihana under Puri Sadar PS.

While Sethi is an employee of the Department of Posts, Bhoi is a Peon at the CDMO office.

As per reports, the duo who

has criminal an allegedly duped three persons in Budhang village under Brahmagiri PS of around Rs 4 lakh from by promising them data entry operator jobs at the hospital.

Both Sethi and Bhoi have seven to eight more complaints of cheating pending against them at the Brahmagiri PS. A complaint was received against Sethi and Bhoi for cheating people on the pretext of offering jobs. There are other complaints against them too. All the complaints are being probed, police said. The duo was forwarded to court following arrest.

Mayurbhanj figures in TIME 'World's Greatest Places'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Mayurbhanj district of Odisha has figured in the prestigious TIME Magazine's 'World's Greatest Places of 2023' list.

Describing the natural beauty of the district, the magazine has mentioned about the Similipal National Park, the Mayurbhanj Chhau and the Belgadia Palace.

"Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj, an under-the-radar region in India's eastern State of Odisha, reopened in November with strict restrictions to the number of



daily visitors-only 60 vehicle entry permits are available each day-in order to safeguard its sprawling delicate ecosystem, home to over 40 mammals including Asian elephants and Bengal tigers. Visitors can now explore its unique flora and fauna on guided safaris or self-guided cycling tours," the magazine mentioned.

"There's plenty more to do while you're in town. This April, Mayurbhanj Chhau, a captivating dance festival on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list will take place on a much larger scale

following a pandemic hiatus. Bespoke Chhau performances that combine ancient martial arts and folk dance are scheduled at The Belgadia Palace, an elegant boutique hotel and royal residence. Guests staying at the 11-bedroom old-world property can also participate in experiential retreats and visit the area's Indigenous handicraft communities (many of which are composed of all women) that focus on intricate handlooms, Sabai grass weaving, and the dying art of Dokra (metal casting)," it added.

Ex-BJD MLA Hrushikesh to join BJP

PNS ■ KEONJHAR



Lok Sabha constituency, although BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik had assured him of sending to the Parliament. Moreover, now-a-days, he is not given due weightage in the party, he said.

However, Patna MLA Jagannath Naik, a close aide of Sanatan Mahakud, said Naik's quitting the BJD would have no impact. However, sources confided that Naik's joining BJP may attract many of his supporters to quit BJD and join BJP in Keonjhar.

Meet on geospatial analysis held at Utkal Varsity



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A two-day workshop on "National Works on Geospatial Data Analysis for Natural Resource Management" was held in the Department of Geography, Utkal University, on Friday.

"It is very important when we are concerned with planning, conservation, management of our natural resources. Geospatial data analysis along with new

technologies can add dimension to the situational analysis, can solve the problems, can solve planning and sustainable management of natural resources, i.e., land, water, forest and minerals which are under threat due to many reasons throughout the world," said university Vice-Chancellor Prof Sabita Acharya.

Chief speaker Prof Gopal Krishna Panda spoke on

different dimensions of geospatial technology focusing on geo-analytics, geo-design, geo-visualisation and geo-collaboration as a paradigm shift of the 21st Century.

Prof Nigamananda Das, Director, College Development, said: "There is a need to prudently manage these delicate resources with the current trend in the advancement in the field of information technology,

natural resources managers have now laid a lot of emphasis on the use of geospatial technology in the management of natural resources providing a platform through which managers can generate information that can be used to make sound decisions for sustainable development."

Dr Krishna Chandra Rath, HoD, welcomed the guests while Dr Kabir Mohan Sethy introduced the guests.

3 youths injured in group clash in Puri

PNS ■ PURI

Three persons sustained critical injuries after allegedly being attacked by a rival group at the Grand Road Market Square in Puri town on Saturday morning.

The injured identified as Sameer Das, Hrusikesh Panda and Khageswar Sahu were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

Reports said the trio was having tea at the market at the spot with motorcycles an attack them with swords.

The three were grievously injured in the assault. Two of them were later shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack as their condition deteriorated.

Police have detained two

persons for questioning in connection with the attack.

Preliminary probe revealed that the incident was fallout of past enmity and group clash which had emerged over betting at the Khadipada Melana event on Friday night.

"The groups who have attacked each other had past enmity. They have been identified. We are at a preliminary stage of the investigation. That is why we cannot share all the details of the case with the media. However, three persons have been injured," said a senior police official.

"The accused have been identified and the motive is also established. We have formed three teams. Our primary target is to arrest the accused," he added.

Goof-up in mtric exam question paper

Board terms it 'printing mistake'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A major goof-up in the question paper of Saturday's matric examination conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha left many students baffled.

The matter came to the fore after the examinees pointed out the mistake in the Social Science question paper. As per the students, several questions from Set A paper were in Set B.

They further said that Question Number 19 was missing from the Objective Question Paper, for which they

were able to answer 49 questions on the OMR sheet.

The students have urged the board not to deduct their marks.

On the other hand, the BSE said the students shouldn't worry as it was a printing error.

"The board is aware of the matter. It is a printing mistake. The board will take necessary measures in this regard and the students should not worry," said BSE President Ramashish Hazra. "Authorities of examination centres have been asked to provide a list of students who faced the issue. The programme for the evaluation of OMR sheets will be changed accordingly. There is no need of conducting the examination again," Hazra said.

UP start-up manufactures donkey milk soap

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

History has it that many women have turned to donkey's milk to preserve their beauty and vitality.

Realising the potential of donkey milk, a UP-based start-up 'Organiko' has been manufacturing and marketing skincare products made of donkey milk. Pooja Kaul, a resident of UP, is the founder of Organiko Beautifying Life.

Soaps made from donkey's milk stole the show at a two-day conclave titled 'Ideation to Commercialisation: Opportunities for Start-ups' which began at the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University here on Saturday.

Kaul claimed donkey's milk comprises several anti-ageing properties, skin nourishment

components and contains healing potential.

After collecting donkey's milk from Ladakh, the start-up has been manufacturing different kinds of soap from it. Donkey milk, priced at Rs 1,300 per litre, contains high amounts of anti-ageing, nutraceutical, antibiotic and nutritional substances, she said.

"Within three years, we have produced anti-ageing, anti-acne, anti-pigmentation and hydrating soaps without using any chemicals," Kaul said.

The market price of the soap has been fixed at Rs 500 per cake.

Besides, Devaram Purohit of Gujarat, who has started a start-up by using manure prepared from cow urine in



agriculture, also narrated his experience in the conclave. He explained how organic agriculture could be done without chemicals by using cow urine powder as fertiliser.

Two youths from Kalahandi,

Biren Sahu and Biswabandhu Padhi, who have launched a start-up named 'Manikstu', provided information on how farmers could be encouraged to take up goat farming and prepare ghee from goat milk.

Dr Shankar Goenka, motivational speaker and Managing Director of Wow Factors India Pvt, spoke about the drones manufactured by his company and said the use of drones in agriculture would result

in less water consumption, prevent farmer deaths from snakebites and will protect their health while using pesticides and fertilisers. He said that more than 50,000 farmers die from snakebites in India every year.

‘Drink from Tap’ project Brahmapur water woes substantially addressed

Trial run left in
5 zones to be
completed by
Mar 31

**KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■
BRAHMAPUR**

The decades’ old drinking water scarcity problem in Brahmapur and its adjoining areas was substantially addressed with the inauguration of a 24x7 water supply scheme in nine zones by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in December last.

Meanwhile, the work for the remaining 16 zones is currently in full swing and expected to be completed soon. Out of these 16, the supply of tap water in eleven zones are already under trial run, while the rest five zones are targeted for trial run by March 31, said General Manager of WATCo, Brahmapur, Er Biswabandhu Panigrahi.

It may be recalled here that, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched the 24-

hour ‘Drink from Tap’ project in 19 cities of the State including Brahmapur and Gopalpur under the 5T initiative in December last.

The Gandhinagar Senior Citizens’ Forum has urged the WATCo authorities to connect the existing main pipeline of Gandhinagar 3rd lane extension (west) from the main source to ensure better pressure and flow of water. The denizens are currently getting water two times a day which was a dream earlier, said a resident of the area.

Deepali strengthens BJD in J’suguda



PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Over 100 youths from Dalki panchayat in Jharsuguda district have joined the BJD in a ceremony in the presence of late Minister Naba Kisore Das’ daughter Deepali Das on Friday.

Deepali spoke at length

about the policies and ideals of the BJD, highlighting the Government’s popular works and urging the new members to reach out to the grassroots level. She emphasised the importance of standing by the people and working towards building an ideal society.

Expressing her commitment to the party, Deepali pledged to work in the right direction of the BJD. With the addition of the new members, the party aims to further strengthen its base in the region and reach out to more people to create a positive impact, she said.

Post Master bungalows huge cash deposited by investors

BADAL TAH ■ RAYAGADA

Irregularities to the tune of around Rs 50 lakh have been made by Mukesh Choudhury, Branch Post Master of Kumbhar Dhamuni in Bissam Cuttack block of Rayagada district. Several poor people including SC & ST families have been issued forged National Savings Certificates (NSCs), false pass books containing RD, savings a/c, etc. Huge amounts of money have been withdrawn with false signatures of account holders.

To cite a particular case, Mukesh issued an NSC amounting to Rs 20,000 to one Tulasi Pidikaka, d/o Rama Chandra Pidikaka, with several anomalies. The date of issue is 31-6-2013. There is overwriting in the month column. Mukesh mentioned June having 31 calendar days.

Upon inquiry at Rayagada Head Post Office, it is learnt that there is no such NSC of Rs 20,000 bearing no-7182143 issued by the Post Office on 31.06.2013. The maturity date of the NSC is 30.09.2023 and maturity value is Rs 40,690. Mukesh did not know how to calculate the duration as he cheated in this particular case. Tulasi’s father Rama Chandra has complained about this before authorities like Superintendent of Post Offices and district Collector.

Rasmi Ranjan Dora, an activist scribe has also written to Post Master General and Chief Post Master General at Bhubaneswar, the Collector requesting them to inquire into all financial transactions made by Mukesh since his appointment in the postal department. Dora has warned to use other monitoring instruments like Central Vigilance Commission, CBI and Lokpal to unearth the scam.



Hrushikesh Labala, s/o-late Damodara Labala, also from Kumbhar Dhamuni, has filed an FIR against Mukesh that his father late Damodara Labala was an ex-Branch Post Master

of Kumbhar Dhamuni Branch Post Office prior to Mukesh. After the death of his father, Mukesh withdrew all the money amounting to around Rs 20,600 from his father’s savings a/c by putting his false signature. Mukesh also withdrew all the amount from his

mother’s a/c bearing name Hemabati Labala by putting her false signature. When they complained about this to Mukesh time and again and told to report to his higher authorities, he gave back the amount to his mother without any interest.

Similarly, Mukesh also misappropriated huge amounts by opening false saving accounts and National Saving Certificates in the names of many investors. When exposed, he started returning parts of the investments, but he is yet to return major chunks of the money to the investors.

As the immediate postal department staffs at the Bissam Cuttack Sub-Post Office and Rayagada Head Post Office were hand in glove with Mukesh, some villagers, who are the investors, approached Hrushikesh for help. He, along

with them, met the district correspondents of several vernacular dailies and electronic media and shared his plight and villagers’ woes. As Mukesh’s forgery was thoroughly exposed, he along with Kamala Choudhury, Panchanan Choudhury and Nitesh Choudhury, all belonging to Kumbhar Dhamuni, were instigating villagers to attack Labala and his family members, the FIR stated. Mukesh and his associates are in revengeful mood saying they will finish Labala off along with his family members. Labala has prayed to police to inquire into the matter, take the hooligans to task and make his life and his family members’ lives secure.

The Superintendent of Post Offices, Rayagada and the IIC, Bissam Cuttack PS are conducting inquiries.

Kalinga Herbal Fair held at B’pur

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The State Medicinal Plants Board and the Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department are organising the 13th Kalinga Herbal Fair here, which is inaugurated on March 16 at the KC High School and will continue till March 20.

Guests of the inaugural function were Brahmapur Mayor Sanghamitra Dalai, MLA



Bikram Kumar Panda, State Cashew Development Corporation Chairman Subash

Moharana and State Medicinal Plants Board Managing Director Sudip Nayak.

Ayurvedic practitioners like Kavirajs and Vaidyas from Ganjam district and from throughout Odisha are treating patients and prescribing herbal medicines, which are available in stalls of the fair. There are about fifty herbal medicine stalls. This yearly fair had started in 2009. For the first time this year, a mega health camp is being organised by Ayush doctors.

Deposit employees’ EPF soon, Talcher school asked

PNS ■ TALCHER

The Principal, Pabitrnagar Higher Secondary School, under Talcher Sub-Division, has been asked to deposit EPF of employees who were denied the entitlements for years despite repeated pleas. An aggrieved staff had moved the Central EPF Commission, New Delhi in February in this regard.

According to sources, three staff members were engaged by the Governing Body at the Pabitrnagar Higher Secondary School such as Dhananjay

Singh (joined in 2006), Binati Pradhan and Dambarudhar Nath (joined their service in 2014 and 2015 respectively). As per EPF norms, all the staff members are eligible to get EPF entitlements since their joining, but unfortunately, while only Dhananjay Singh is getting EPF, the other two have been deprived of the facility.

The information was collected by Talcher based RTI activist Deba Prasad Sahoo through the RTI Act.

Sahoo, in May 2022, had filed a written complaint with the Regional EPF Commis-

sioner, Bhubaneswar, and the Sub Collector, Talcher (president of the Governing Body of the college). The Commissioner had issued orders to the concerned principal to release PF benefits to the deprived ones. Meanwhile, eight months have passed but no action was taken by the principal.

Being aggrieved, Sahoo knocked the doors of Central EPF Commission, New Delhi in February 2023. The matter was taken up and EPF Commissioner, Cuttack was ordered for further action. The EPF,

Cuttack directed the principal to submit a detailed report. In response, the principal refused to release EPF benefits while claiming irregularities in appointment of both the staff. But the EPF Commissioner refused to accept the ground and ordered the principal to deposit the EPF money by March 15 or face legal action.

Sahoo further informed that he would approach the Orissa High Court if the EPF Commissioner fails to take action against the principal for non disbursement of EPF entitlements to the eligible employees.

‘Women will change society when no gender gap’

PNS ■ ATHAGARH

While observing the International Women’s Day, the Athagarh Biju Mahila Janata Dal organised a seminar on Friday evening here. The themes discussed were women empowerment, gender equality, contribution of women in Indian freedom struggle, and today’s socio political scenario of the country.

Attending the seminar as chief speaker, member of National Federation of Indian Women Dr Amruta Pathak spoke on the plight of Indian women as they are being used as goods in a capitalist society. She remembered several em-



powered women who involved themselves in the Indian freedom struggle and asked the gathering to follow their noble ideals. She called upon everybody to end gender discrimination and give the women equal opportunity in

a true sense so that the women could be the change agents.

Among others, Vice Chairman of Cuttack Zilla Parishad Suvarada Das, pleader of Orissa High Court Sujata Das, Lecturer in Po-

litical Science of UN College Adaspur Dr Chirashree Indrashree and All India Students Federation president Sanghamitra Jena participated in the seminar. Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain coordinated the programme.

INBRIEF

KIIT HOLDS JOB FAIR IN PATIA VILLAGE

Bhubaneswar: KIIT and KISS founder Dr Achyuta Samanta on Saturday handed over appointment letters to 125 unemployed youths of Patia village, taking the number of employees from the village who are engaged in the KIIT family to 325. The letters were handed over at a job fair organised with the active cooperation of the Patia Gram Mangala Samiti. During his last visit to the village, Dr Samanta had assured the villagers to consider their demand for engaging the unemployed youths at KIIT.



TRAINING FOR TRANSGENDERS HELD IN P’KHEMUNDI

Paralakhemundi: A training programme on handicrafts was held for transgenders in Paralakhemundi. On the concluding day, Gajapati district Collector Lingraj Panda and SP Swathy S Kumar attended as guests and encouraged the trainees. Training was imparted on making of terracotta items, mats and other handicraft products. The district Social Security Department and Handloom and Textile Department jointly organised the programme. After training, certificates and stipend of Rs 2,000 were given to each of the trainees.



ANUJA BISWAL’S BOOK OF POETRY UNVEILED

Brahmapur: A collection of poems titled “Naikar Anam Prem” by social worker and poet Anuja Nand Bishwal was launched by Additional District Magistrate Lina Kumari Xess at the Collector’s office, Chhatrapur, on Friday. It contains 48 poems. Based on intimate experiences, the style of the poetry is dynamic. The life’s moments of love, deception, union and separation are embodied in the poems.



TPSODL CONDUCTS WORKSHOP ON AUTISM

Brahmapur: The TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) conducted a two-day workshop on “Autism: Early identification and care” under the Pay Attention initiative. Over 215 participants, including Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs and Women’s Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) attended the four sessions held in the block offices of Rangeilunda and Chhatrapur.

INDIAN JOURNALISTS’ UNION PLENARY HELD IN RAIPUR

Bhubaneswar: A two-day 10th Plenary Meeting of Indian Journalists’ Union was held on March 17 and 18 at Punjab Keshari Hall, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Seven senior journalists of Odisha participated in the event in which Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel was chief guest. Odisha Journalists’ Union president Sasibhushan Praharaj, general secretary K Shrinibash Rao, vice-president Deepak Nayak and National Council member Sarat Behera participated in the meeting.



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OIPR-10003/13/0172/2223

Modi, Hasina launch first cross-border oil pipeline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to their bilateral ties, India and Bangladesh on Saturday commenced operations of a pipeline carrying oil from Siliguri in West Bengal to the Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the first cross-border pipeline virtually.

The friendship pipeline has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 377 crore, of which the Bangladesh portion of the pipeline built at a cost of approximately Rs 285 crore, has been borne by the government of India under grant assistance. With a capacity to transport one million metric



tonne per annum (MMTPA) of high-speed diesel, the pipeline will supply high speed diesel initially to seven districts in northern Bangladesh.

Addressing the event, Prime Minister Modi said the inauguration of friendship

pipeline has started a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relations.

"In last few years, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress. Every Indian is

proud of that and we are delighted that we've been able to contribute to this development journey of Bangladesh," he said.

Highlighting that the inauguration was taking place a day after the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founding leader of Bangladesh and father of Sheikh Hasina, Modi said the joint project is a perfect example of his 'Sonar Bangla' vision.

"The operation of India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline will put in place a sustainable, reliable, cost-effective and environment friendly mode of transporting HSD from India to Bangladesh and will further enhance cooperation in energy security between the two countries," the ministry of external affair said in a statement.

'Pyaar se samjha denge': Jaishankar on new US envoy's criticism of human rights in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Newly appointed US Ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti's critical views on human rights issues in India and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) notwithstanding, External Affairs S Jaishankar said here on Saturday "Pyaar se samjha denge."

Garcetti, a close aide of President Joe Biden was confirmed at the next US envoy to India earlier this week. The US did not have an ambassador to New Delhi nearly two years.

Given the incoming envoy's critical views on human rights issues in India and the CAA, Jaishankar was asked in the India Today conclave what happens when Garcetti arrives here. This is what Jaishankar said. "Let



him come here. Pyaar se samjha denge," replied the minister with a smile.

The envoy is reportedly an outspoken critic of human rights in India.

He had said the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was discriminatory towards Muslims and that the law would be a core piece

of the Lautenberg amendment and Specter amendment which are targeted at fast-tracking the US citizenship process for specific religious minorities. Such policies are not just limited to the US, but are in practice in European nations as well.

The Senate voted 52-42 to confirm former Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti's nomination on Wednesday. His nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Joe Biden.

During Garcetti's confirmation hearings in 2021, he said he would 'actively raise' human rights issues in New Delhi, in response to a question about the CAA, which Parliament passed in 2019.

The law grants immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh a shot at applying for Indian citizenship.

Who will resign for lapse, Cong asks Govt over PMO conman official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday expressed concern over the case of a conman posing as a PMO official and getting requisite perks, saying if the Government is serious about the country's security then it must make it clear who will resign for the lapse.

Kiran Bhai Patel from Gujarat has been arrested by police from a five-star hotel in Srinagar for posing as an 'additional secretary' in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and enjoying security cover besides other hospitality. He had three cases registered against him in his home State, police said on Friday.

Congress media and publicity department head Pawan



Khera said it was a very serious matter pertaining to the country's security and the government probably was not focussed on such matters as it was "busy protecting the Prime Minister's best friend".

"If anyone asks questions to the Modi government, he is anti-national. Which national interest are you serving? If you are at least a little serious about the security of the nation, then tell me that at the political level who will resign in this matter?" Khera said at AICC Press conference.

"Our three essential questions are — can a PMO officer get Z+ security, should Z+ security be given and is Z+

security availed so easily. It is very important to know from which level the instructions to give security to a thug came?" he said.

In a sensitive area like Jammu and Kashmir, a person has been cheating the security forces for five months and is roaming in those areas with Z+ security by making a PMO card, where common citizens cannot go, he said and raised questions over the government's intelligence mechanism.

Khera said the government must answer whose resignation will be taken for this lapse. "The ruling party has such a toolkit that the one who asks questions of them is an anti-national while one person takes Z+ security by printing fake cards of the PMO," Khera alleged.

US Prez to host state dinner for Modi in next few weeks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Underlining growing strategic and overall ties between the two countries, US President Joe Biden may host a state dinner for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next few weeks.

Incidentally, the two leaders will meet at the Quad summit in Australia in May. Biden will visit New Delhi in September for the G-20 summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is also likely to attend the high-profile event.

As regards the proposed dinner meet this summer,



reports indicated the formal state visit is a sign of the deepening US-India relationship as the administration advances policies and initiatives for a free and open Indo-Pacific to counter what it sees as a growing threat posed by China.

The White House aims for the state dinner to take place in June but the timing could slip, reports said.

India is hosting the Group

of 20 leaders' summit in New Delhi in September, where Russia's invasion of Ukraine will be among the chief topics of discussion.

The dinner with Modi will be Biden's third formal state visit and dinner, following one he hosted for French President Emmanuel Macron in December and one for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol scheduled for April 26.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large of (i) Mr. Ashok Kumar S/o Mr. Bhagwat Singh and (ii) Mrs. Shalini W/o Mr. Ashok Kumar who is purchasing the DESCRIPTION:- FLAT NO. B-105, REAR RHS, AREA MEASURING 400. SQ. FT. FIRST FLOOR, OUT OF KHASRANO. 104MM. SITUATED AT VILLAGE KHORA COLONY, IN SIGNATURE APARTMENT, GHAZIABAD, UP from (i) Mrs Suman Yadav W/o Mr. Sukhveer Singh and (ii) Mr. Pradeep Yadav S/o Mr. Sukhveer Singh who had owner through Khatauni Record, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Rota Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. However, Original Sale Deed Dated 28.03.2006 (Doc. No. 1969), has been lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 17.03.2023 with LR No. 251923/2023 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, Charge, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector - 2, Noida, UP-201301; Contact # 0120 - 4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the public at large that: Mr. Sunil Kumar Suman S/o Mr. Tej Naranya is purchasing the Freehold Residential Plot area measuring 100 sq. yds., i.e. 83.81 sq. mtrs., Out of Khassa No. 156, Situated at Village Ilaahabans, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri District, Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) from Mr. Sarvesh Tyagi S/o Mr. Gajraj Tyagi, who had purchased the subject property through Sale Deed dated 09.11.2022, Vide Doc. No. 7292, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Rota Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. However, Original Sale Deed Dated 28.03.2006 (Doc. No. 1969), has been lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 17.03.2023 with LR No. 251923/2023 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, Charge, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector - 2, Noida, UP-201301; Contact # 0120 - 4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of our client i.e. Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited that Mr. Rahul intends to purchase & mortgage the Plot No. 7, admeasuring 100 Sq. Yds., Khasra No. 244, situated at Govindpur, Village Dasna, District Ghaziabad (U.P.) with our client, against the financial assistance. Whereas, out of the entire chain link documents Original Sale Deed dt. 21-01-2008 of the Said Property, registered as Doc. No. 341 in favour of Mrs. Sunita Devi was already lost/misplaced and in this regard NCR/FIR No. 20230000153722 has been lodged with UP Police.

Public is hereby warned not to deal with the above-mentioned documents & the property. If anyone do the same, then he will be responsible for all consequences. If any person(s) having objection with regard to mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 07 days from the date of issuance of this notice at below address.

DEEPLYOT SINGH, ADVOCATE
A-13, LGF, South Extn-II,
New Delhi-110049 # 011-40587824.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.

- VEHICLES FOR SALE**
- 1) TATA LPT909CH, CHASIS REG. NO. DL1MA1740-YOM -2018
 - 2) TATA 909 REG. NO. DL1MA1785-YOM- 2018
 - 3) TATA 910 REG. NO. DL1MA1863-YOM -2018
 - 4) EICHER 10.95 REG. NO. DL1MA4453-YOM- 2019
 - 5) EICHER PRO 1049C REG. NO. HR55AJ2395-YOM-2019
 - 6) CB LPT1212, TATAMOTORS REG. NO. HR55AJ4803-YOM-2020
 - 7) CB VE_11_10 FULLY BUILT REG. NO. HR55A0030-YOM- 2016
 - 8) TATA ACE REG. NO. DL1LAJ1389-YOM-2022
 - 9) TATA - CB TATA LPT 709 FULLY BUILT REG. NO. DL1LAH3574 YOM -2022
 - 10) TATAACE REG. NO. UP14JT8916-YOM -2020
 - 11) TATA MOTORS LPT 1109 REG. NO. DL1MA8561-YOM- 2021
 - 12) ASHOK LEYLAND- CB AL1615 REG. NO. HR38AD0509-YOM -2022
 - 13) ASHOK LEYLAND- CB AL1615 REG. NO. HR38AC2309-YOM -2022
 - 14) ASHOK LEYLAND- CB AL1615 REG. NO. HR38AC6399 -YOM -2021
- UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS OUT FOR SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITH IN 7 DAYS AT**
- BRANCH ADDRESS:**
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK
3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO 7, SECTOR 125, NOIDA-201313 OR
CONTACT: ABHINAV LAL
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD.
CONTACT NO. 7798988481
EMAIL - abhinav.lal@kotak.com

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

कार्यालय महाराष्ट्र (लकनौकी)

उत्तराखण्ड कृषि उत्पादन विपणन बोर्ड
मन्त्री भवन, कलेक्ट्रेट परिसर कटपुर (लकनौसिंह नगर)
Ph: 05944/250056, Fax: 05944/250056

पत्रांक : निवृत्ति / ई-निविदा सूचना / 2023-153 दिनांक : 16 / 03 / 2023

पुनः ई-निविदा सूचना

उत्तराखण्ड कृषि उत्पादन विपणन बोर्ड में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से कार्यलय पत्रांक 148 दिनांक 27.02.2023 के द्वारा प्रकाशित ई-निविदा जयपद टिन्डरी, ग्राम नौया में एचो प्रोसेसिंग कलक्टर के अक्षय सिन्घि कार्य की निविदा को दिनांक 13.03.2023 को आमंत्रित की गयी थी कि कोई निविदा प्राप्त न होने के कारण दिनांक 03.04.2023 को पुनः आमंत्रित की जाती है। इच्छुक निविदादाता को दिनांक 01.04.2023 की साय 05:00 बजे तक एफ़डीसीआर, स्टाम्प एवं डाक मूलरूप में जमा कराया जाना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जाएगा। निविदा की अन्य विवरण (डाक एवं प्रचौर राशि) एवं सारी दिनांक 20.03.2023 से www.uktenders.gov.in एवं www.ukmandi.co.in में साय 05:00 बजे से देखी एवं डाकनवीस की जा सकती

महाराष्ट्र (लकनौकी)

ICICI Bank Registered Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390007, Gujarat
Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex Bandra (E) Mumbai- 400051

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 **YOGENDRA KUMAR BANSAL/ BASANT KUMAR GUPTA** (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBNO00001678489** located at **FLAT NO-F6/3, PLOT NO-201, 120 FT,PARK SIDE, VILLAS VAYU VIHAR, SHASTRIPURAM ROAD, AGRA- 282002**. 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 **February 27, 2023**, informing that **HRC HORIZON** 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: March 18, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited
Place: Delhi/ NCR

SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI BANK LTD. VS. RAKESH KHOKHAR, CS (COMM) No. 2666/21	Vehicle No. - HR26CC3668, Make and Model- HYUNDAI MOTORS INDIA LTD I20, Manu Year- 2013
ICICI BANK LIMITED VS. ESRAR, CS (Comm) No.4460-2021	Vehicle No.- DL10CT1001, Make and Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD REXTON, Manu Year- 2014
ICICI BANK LTD VS SHAGUFTA, CS No. 383/18	Vehicle No.- DL1CT2392, Make and Model- MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD XYLO, Manu Year- 2013

Auction Date: March 27, 2023 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Auction Type: Online Auction
Auction Portal Name & URL Link: Car Dekho
https://auctions.cardekho.com
Contact Person- Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)/ Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)

Terms of Sale

The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself /themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at auction site with original KYC documents to participate in the auction. .

Successfully bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the approval date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited.

The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, SHAL TOWERS, Plot No 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.



Independence that a government was paying attention to the needs of millet-producing

farmers."

The two-day global conference will have sessions on

CBSE warns schools against starting academic session before April 1



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an unprecedented move, the CBSE Saturday warned schools against starting the academic session before April 1, saying it poses the risk of causing anxiety and burnout among students.

The warning by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) comes after several schools commenced their academic session, especially for Classes 10 and 12.

"It has been noticed that some of the affiliated schools have started their academic session quite early in the year. Attempting to complete an entire year's worth of course work in a reduced timeframe poses risks for students who may get overwhelmed and struggle to keep up with the pace of learning, leading to anxiety and burnout," CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi said in an official order.

The board has noted that preponing the academic session does not give students enough time for extracurricular activities, such as learning life skills, value education, health and physical education, work education and community service.

NIA chargesheets 19 PFI members

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

In its fifth chargesheet this month against Popular Front of India (PFI), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed charges against 19 accused persons, including 12 National Executive Council (NEC) members, founding members and senior leaders of the banned terror outfit, including Professor P Koya.

PFI, as an organisation, has also been charge-sheeted in the case relating to criminal conspiracy aimed at destabilising and dismembering the country as also creating an Islamic caliphate by 2047 along with Shariah/Islamic Law.

As reported earlier by The Pioneer, the international terrorist outfit Islamic State, through its propaganda magazine Voice of Khurasan, has opposed the ban on PFI and exhorted the Indian Muslims to target the Government and Hindu community, and terrorise them. The ISIS also revealed that many PFI supporters joined the banner of Tawheed in different parts of the world and many of them may have attained Shahdadh (so-called martyrdom for Islam and terrorism in civilized parlance).

The PFI is suspected to be recruiting Indian youths for ISIS in order to carry forward



the inimical agenda of the global terror group to create caliphates.

The NIA has alleged that PFI encouraged vulnerable youths to join terrorist organisations including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh and Al-Qaida, and also conspired to establish Islamic rule in India by committing a terrorist act.

With the filing of the chargesheet in the Delhi case, the total number of accused chargesheeted in PFI cases by NIA stands at 105.

The agency further said, "NIA's investigations in the case have also exposed a trail

of millet

"Millets can be easily produced even in very adverse climatic conditions. Its production also requires relatively less water, due to which it becomes a favourite crop for places with a water crisis," the Prime Minister said.

He said in India, millets are primarily grown in 12-13 states. However, in these states, the domestic consumption per person was not more than 2-3 kgs per month.

"Today, it has increased to 14 kg per month", he sought to say.

2023 is being observed as the International Year of Millets.

Russian attacks continue after ICC’s warrant against Putin

AP ■ KYIV

Widespread Russian attacks continued in Ukraine following the International Criminal Court’s decision to issue an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights.

Meanwhile, Putin has travelled to Crimea to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula’s annexation from Ukraine.

Putin visited an art school and a children’s centre on Saturday.

Ukraine was attacked by 16 Russian drones on Friday night, the Ukrainian Air Force said in the early hours of Saturday.

Writing on Telegram, the air force command said that 11 out of 16 drones were shot down “in the central, western and eastern regions.” Among areas targeted were the capital, Kyiv, and the western Lviv province.

The head of the Kyiv city administration, Serhii Popko, said Ukrainian air defences shot down all drones heading for the Ukrainian capital, while Lviv regional Gov Maksym Kozyskyi said on Saturday that three of six drones were shot down, with the other three hitting a district bordering Poland. According to the Ukrainian Air Force, the

attacks were carried out from the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov and Russia’s Bryansk province, which borders Ukraine.

The Ukrainian military additionally said in its regular update on Saturday morning that Russian forces over the previous 24 hours launched 34 airstrikes, one missile strike and 57 rounds of anti-aircraft fire.

The Facebook update said that falling debris hit the southern Kherson province, damaging seven houses and a kindergarten.

According to the Ukrainian statement, Russia is

No casualties were reported, but houses were damaged and a catering establishment destroyed, Anatoliy Kurtev of the Zaporizhzhia City Council said. It is the first time the global court has issued a warrant against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The move was immediately dismissed by Moscow — and welcomed by Ukraine as a major breakthrough.

Its practical implications, however, could be limited as the chances of Putin facing trial at the ICC are highly unlikely because Moscow does not recognise the court’s jurisdiction or extradite its nationals.

UK military officials said Saturday that Russia is likely to widen conscription. In its latest intelligence update, the UK defense ministry said that deputies in the Russian Duma, the lower house of Russia’s parliament, introduced a bill on Monday to change the conscription age for men to 21-30, from the current 18-27.

The ministry said that, at the moment, many men aged 18-21 claim exemption from military service because they are in higher education. The change would mean that they would eventually still have to serve. It said the law will likely be passed and come into force in January 2024.

continuing to concentrate its efforts on offensive operations in Ukraine’s industrial east, focusing attacks on Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Marinka and Shakhtarsk in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk province. Pavlo Kyrylenko, regional Gov of the Donetsk province, said one person was killed and three wounded when 11 towns and villages in the province were shelled on Friday.

Further west, Russian rockets hit a residential area overnight Friday in the city of Zaporizhzhia, the regional capital of the partially occupied province of the same name.



People inspect a damaged restaurant after Russian shelling hit in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine on Saturday

Vatican closes embassy in Nicaragua

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

The Vatican said on Saturday it had closed its embassy in Nicaragua after the country’s government proposed suspending diplomatic relations, the latest episode in a yearslong crackdown on the Catholic Church by the administration of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

The Vatican’s representative to Managua, Monsignor Marcel Diouf, also left the country on Friday, bound for Costa Rica, a Vatican official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Vatican action came a week after the Nicaraguan government proposed suspending relations with the Holy See, and a year after Nicaragua forced the papal ambassador at the time to leave. It’s not clear what more the proposed suspension would entail in diplomatic terms.

Relations between the church and Ortega’s government have been deteriorating since 2018, when Nicaraguan authorities violently repressed anti-government protests.

Some Catholic leaders gave protesters shelter in their churches, and the church later tried to act as a mediator between the government and the political opposition.

Trump anticipates arrest

AP ■ NEW YORK

Donald Trump said in a social media post that he expects to be arrested on Tuesday as a New York prosecutor is eyeing charges in a case examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president.

Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network early on Saturday that “illegal leaks” from the Manhattan district attorney’s office indicate that “The far & away leading republican candidate & former president of the United States of America, will be arrested on Tuesday of next week.”

Messages left on Saturday with the district attorney’s office were not immediately returned. Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to calls for comment.

Trump did not provide any details on social media about how he knew about the expected arrest. In his postings, he repeated his lies that the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden was stolen and he urged his followers to “Protest, take our nation back!” That language evoked the message from the then-president that preceded the riot at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Law enforcement officials in New York have been making security preparations for the possibility that Trump could be indicted.

There has been no public announcement of any time frame for the grand jury’s secret work in the case, including any potential vote on whether to indict the ex-president.

Trump’s posting echoes one made last summer when he broke the news on Truth Social that the FBI was searching his home as part of an investigation into the possible mishandling of classified documents.

The grand jury in Manhattan has been hearing from witnesses, including former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen, who says he orchestrated payments in 2016 to two women to silence them about sexual encounters they said they had with Trump a decade earlier.

Trump denies the encounters occurred, says he did nothing wrong and has cast the investigation as a “witch hunt” by a Democratic prosecutor bent on sabotaging the Republican’s 2024 presidential campaign.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg’s office has apparently been examining whether any state laws were broken in connection with the payments or the way Trump’s company compensated Cohen for his work to keep the women’s allegations quiet.

Daniels and at least two former Trump aides — one-time political adviser Kellyanne Conway and former spokesperson Hope Hicks — are among witnesses who have met with prosecutors in recent weeks.

Cohen has said that at Trump’s direction, he arranged payments totaling USD 280,000 to porn actor Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal. According to Cohen, the payouts were to buy their silence about Trump, who was then in the thick of his first presidential campaign.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials in New York are making security preparations for the possibility that former President Donald Trump could be indicted in the coming weeks and appear in a Manhattan courtroom in an investigation examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with him, four law enforcement officials said Friday.



FIIDS: Time running out for laid off H-1B workers

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Time is running out for laid off H-1B professionals as under the existing laws they need to leave the country within 60 days of losing their employment status, giving sleepless nights to the thousands of Indian tech workers and their family members.

“This has a humanitarian impact on them as their families, including their US-born children are uprooted abruptly, and those who were laid off in the earlier months are now running out of time,” the Foundation For India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS), which took up their cases with lawmakers and federal administration said in a statement on Friday.

While the US Citizenship and Immigration Services is considering their request to extend the existing time window to 180 days, the process is likely to take up some time, leaving no other option for these professionals other than to leave the country.

“FIIDS appeals to the USCIS, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to consider a request to expedite the extension of grace period. FIIDS also appeals to the elected officials, tech executives, and community leaders to emphasise the need and urgency to increase the grace period,” the foundation said in a media statement.

Since last year, more than 2,50,000 such professionals have been laid off in the United States. This number continues to grow with companies like Meta announcing another set of tens of thousands of layoffs, FIIDS said.

Ex-Air Force officer sentenced for Capitol attack

Washington (AP): A retired Air Force officer who stormed the US Capitol dressed in combat gear and carried zip-tie handcuffs into the Senate gallery was sentenced on Friday to two years in prison.

Larry Brock, 55, of Grapevine, Texas, joined other rioters on the Senate floor nine minutes after then-Vice President Mike Pence, senators and their staff evacuated the chamber to escape the mob attacking the building on January 6, 2021.

US District Judge John Bates also sentenced Brock to two years of supervised release after his prison term and ordered him to perform 100 hours of community service. Brock, who declined to speak in court before the judge imposed his sentence, remains free until he must report to prison at a date to be determined.

Prosecutors had recommended a sentence of five years in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Bates convicted Brock in November after a trial without a jury. Brock waived his right to a jury trial. The judge said Brock expressed “very troubling” and violent rhetoric before the January 6 riot. The judge read aloud several of Brock’s social media postings calling it “really pretty astounding” that a former high-ranking military officer expressed those words. “That’s chilling stuff, and it does reflect a purpose to stop the certification of the election,” Bates said.

Brock believed baseless conspiracy theories that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Republican incumbent Donald Trump, prosecutors said.

GLOBE TROTTER

1 KILLED BY ISRAELI ARMY IN WEST BANK

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military said troops shot a Palestinian who approached soldiers on Friday and pulled a knife near the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. Palestinian authorities said the man died of his wounds a short while later. The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the man as Yazan Khaseeb, 23. The military said the man refused to identify himself and drew a knife, prompting the soldiers to open fire. It published a photo of the alleged knife on the ground.

THREE DEAD IN STABBINGS IN CANADA

MONTREAL: Three people were found stabbed to death Friday inside an apartment in the eastern Canadian city of Montreal, and police have a suspect in custody. Police found the three bodies with wounds from a sharp object after responding to an emergency call Friday morning, Montreal police Const. Julien Lévesque said. He said it was too early to release details about the link between the victims and the suspect. The suspect was arrested outside the apartment building and will be questioned by investigators, police said. Authorities barricaded the street, in a neighbourhood consisting of low-rise apartment buildings.

TURKIYE’S DIPLOMAT IN CAIRO TO MEND TIES

CAIRO: Turkiye’s chief diplomat was in Cairo on Saturday for talks with Egyptian officials as the regional powers seek to mend their frayed ties after years of tensions. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkiye’s foreign minister, landed in the Egyptian capital early Saturday. He was the highest ranking Turkish official to visit the Arab World’s most populous nation in over a decade.

NEW MEXICO PASSES BILL TO SAFEGUARD ABORTION PROVIDERS

SANTA FE: New Mexico legislators raced against the clock on Friday to advance hard-fought proposals aimed at safeguarding abortion access, delivering tax relief and reducing gun violence in the final hours of a 60-day legislative session. Republicans in the legislative minority raised a series of objections during a House floor debate to a bill that aims to protect abortion providers and patients from out-of-state interference, prosecution or extradition attempts.

Violence in France over retirement age push

AP ■ PARIS

Angry protesters took to the streets in Paris and other cities for a second day on Friday, trying to pressure lawmakers to bring down French President Emmanuel Macron’s government and doom the unpopular retirement age increase he’s trying to impose without a vote in the National Assembly.

A day after Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne invoked a special constitutional power to skirt a vote in the chaotic lower chamber, lawmakers on the right and left filed no-confidence motions to be voted on Monday.

At the elegant Place de Concorde, a festive protest by several thousand, with chants, dancing and a huge bonfire, degenerated into a scene echoing the night before. Riot police charged and threw tear gas to empty the huge square across from the National Assembly after troublemakers climbed scaffolding on a renovation site, arming themselves with wood.

They lobbed fireworks and paving stones at police in a standoff.

On Thursday night, security forces charged and used water cannons to evacuate the area, and small groups then set street fires in chic neighbourhoods nearby. French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin told radio station RTL that 310 people were arrested overnight, most of them in Paris.

Mostly small, scattered protests were held in cities around France, from a march in Bordeaux to a rally in Toulouse. Port officers in Calais temporarily stopped ferries from crossing the English Channel to Dover. Some university campuses in Paris were blocked and protesters occupied a high-traffic ring road around the French capital.

Paris garbage collectors extended their strike for a 12th day, with piles of foul-smelling rubbish growing daily in the French capital. Striking sanitation workers continued to block Europe’s largest incineration site and two other sites that treat Paris garbage.



Demonstrator ran through the tear gas during a protest in Paris on Friday

Indians organise Young Minds Conference in London

London (PTI): Youth 20 (Y20), the official consultation forum for youth from across the G20 member countries to be able to dialogue with each other during India’s presidency, found resonance here with a special Y20 India Young Minds Conference.

Attended by Y20 India representative Falit Sijeria, the two-day conference was organised at University College London on Friday by the student group Young India Dialogue in association with Y20 India.

“Many kinds of programmes are being organised in India regarding Y20 and this is the first program to be held outside India,” Sijeria said.

“It is our endeavour to get ideas from as many youths as possible so that there can be a good discussion about solutions on the international platform of Y20. It is a matter of pride for me that in the presidency of India, I have been able to participate in a consultation programme organised abroad,” he added.

India assumed the Presidency of the G20 for one year from December 1, 2022, to 30 November 2023.

Y20 UK representatives, James Frater and Ritvik Singh joined in the day’s deliberations and were supported by the Indian National Students Association (INSA) UK.

Braverman in Rwanda to assess illegal migration

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain’s Indian-origin Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, arrived in Rwanda on Saturday on a tour of facilities being built as part of a bilateral migration pact that will see hundreds of illegal migrants deported from the UK to the central African nation.

The UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership, which was signed by Braverman’s predecessor Priti Patel in April last year, is designed to house migrants in Rwanda while their asylum claims are assessed.

The controversial plan remains caught up in legal wrangles, but Braverman said her visit is an effort to reinforce the government’s commitment to the partnership.

“Our partnership is a ground-breaking approach that will act as a powerful deterrent against dangerous and illegal journeys, such as small boat crossings,” said Braverman in a statement on the eve of her visit to Rwanda.

“While in Rwanda we will discuss all the aspects of the partnership and I will be visiting some of the initiatives that we have supported,” she said.

According to the UK Home Office, the minister is scheduled to meet refugees who have rebuilt their lives in Kigali, people leading on accommodation projects and a range of entrepreneurs who have helped build employment opportunities for people in Rwanda.

She will also meet with Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Vincent Biruta during the two-day official visit this weekend.

British Muslim guilty of terror

PTI ■ LONDON

A British Muslim financial analyst influenced by extremist Islamist ideology has been found guilty of multiple terrorism related offences by a UK court after his laptop led police to dangerous bomb-making plans.

Asad Bhatti, from Redhill in Surrey, south-east England, was arrested and charged in January 2021, following which a search was carried out at an address in the area which revealed a makeshift bomb-making facility.

Surrey Police said the 49-year-old, of South Asian origin, was found guilty of two counts of possessing an article for the purpose of terrorism, contrary to Section 57 of the UK’s Terrorism Act 2000.

He was also found guilty of three counts of making or possessing an explosive substance under suspicious circumstances contrary to Section 4 of the UK’s Explosive Substance Act at the Old Bailey court in London on Friday.

Bhatti remains in custody and will be sentenced for the crimes at the same court on April 25.

“The case against Bhatti was strong. I am glad the jury found him guilty today,” said Detective Chief Superintendent Olly Wright, Head of Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) in Surrey.

“There was clear evidence of his extreme Islamist ideology and the danger he posed. He clearly hated those whom he considers do not follow his version of Islam, and he made a range of derogatory comments towards those he considers to be ‘unbelievers,’” he said.

Japan, German leaders agree to strengthen ties

AP ■ TOKYO

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday held the first round of government consultations in Tokyo and agreed to strengthen economic and defense ties to better cope with China’s growing influence and global security concerns.

Kishida told a joint news conference after the talks that the sides agreed to strengthen supply chains in minerals, semiconductors, batteries and other strategic areas, in order to “counter economic coercion, state-led attempts to illegally acquire technology and non-market practices,” apparently referring to China.

“Japan and Germany, both industrial nations that share fundamental values, need to take global leadership to strengthen resilience of our societies,” Kishida said.

Scholz brought six of the 17 Cabinet members for talks with Japanese counterparts, including economy, finance, foreign, interior, transport and defense ministers.

They discussed deepening economic and national security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as China’s assertiveness in pressing its maritime territorial claims and its closer ties with Russia.

Germany has similar “government consultations” framework with several countries.

In Tokyo, the two leaders again condemned Russia’s war on Ukraine and agreed to continue tough sanctions against Moscow and strong support for Ukraine, Kishida said.

Russia’s nuclear threat has made atomic weapons disarmament even more difficult and divided the international community, Kishida said, adding that it’s crucial to get China, Russia and other nuclear states to resume discussing nuclear disarmament.

Scholtz said the government consultations will “further advance our strategic cooperation, and they’re a very important part of giving a new drive to this close cooperation we want to achieve together,” German news agency dpa reported.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, second left, and Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, centre, pose for a family pictures at prime minister’s official residence in Tokyo on Saturday

Be transparent in sharing Covid data for origin study, WHO tells China

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA

The WHO has criticised China for withholding data related to samples taken at a market in Wuhan in 2020 that could have provided vital information about the Covid-19 pandemic’s origins, calling on Beijing to be transparent and to share results of investigations it conducts.

The Huanan market in central China’s Wuhan city was the epicentre of the pandemic. From its origin there, the SARS-CoV-2 virus rapidly spread to other locations in Wuhan in late 2019 and then to the rest of the world.

“Every piece of data relating to studying the origins of COVID-19 needs to be shared with the international community immediately. These data could have – and should have – been shared three years ago,” World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in Geneva on Friday.

“We continue to call on China to be transparent in sharing data and to conduct the necessary investigations and share the results. Understanding how the pandemic began remains both a moral and scientific imperative,” he said.

Ghebreyesus said that last Sunday, the global health agency was made aware of data published on the GISAID database in late January, and taken down again recently.

“The data, from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, relates to samples taken at the Huanan market in Wuhan, in 2020,” he said.

Ghebreyesus said while the data was online, scientists from a number of countries downloaded the data and analysed it.

“As soon as we became aware of this data, we contacted the Chinese CDC and urged them to share it with WHO and the international scientific community so it can be analysed,” he said, adding that WHO also convened the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens, or SAGO, which met on Tuesday.

“We asked researchers from the Chinese CDC and the international group of scientists to present their analyses of the data to SAGO. These data do not provide a definitive answer to the question of how the pandemic began, but every piece of data is important in moving us closer to that answer,” he said.

In a report Thursday, the New York Times said that an international team of virus experts said they had “found genetic data from a market in Wuhan, China, linking the coronavirus with raccoon dogs for sale there.”

The NYT report said that the genetic data was drawn from swabs taken from in and around the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market starting in January 2020, “shortly after the Chinese authorities had shut down the market because of suspicions that it was linked to the outbreak of a new virus.”

While the animals had been cleared out from the market, researchers took swabs from the walls, floors, metal cages and carts used for transporting animal cages.

Forex kitty down by \$2.39 bn to \$560 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's forex reserves fell by \$2.39 billion to a three-month low of \$560.003 billion for the week to March 10, the Reserve Bank said in its latest weekly data release. In the week to March 3, the reserves rose by \$1.46 billion and stood at \$562.40 billion.

On an annualised basis, the RBI said, the reserves are down by \$47.31 billion during the week under review while on a fiscal year basis, the same plunged by \$62.23 billion.

With this erosion, the forex kitty is at the lowest since early-December, according to the weekly statistical supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

The loss in the reserves is due to the revaluation of the foreign currency assets, which are the largest component of the forex kitty, to the tune of



\$2.2 billion to \$494.86 billion for the week to March 10. On a year-on-year basis, the value of foreign currency assets fell by \$45.86 billion and from a fiscal year perspective, they lost \$59.49 billion.

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

exchange reserves. The reserve losses are primarily due to the RBI selling dollars to stem the rupee volatility in the spot and forwards market to prevent runaway moves in the exchange rate.

Last week, the rupee stood ground and lost just 10 basis points against the dollar and the currency traded in the 81.61-82.29 range. The rupee ended at 82.55 on Friday. The

country's gold reserves and SDR holdings too saw a reduction in the week under review with both reserves falling \$110 million and \$53 million, respectively. The gold reserves and SDR holdings stand at \$41.92 billion and \$18.12 billion, respectively.

The country's reserve position in the IMF also fell by \$11 million, taking it to \$5.1 billion.

The reserves have been falling from the peak as the rupee has been under pressure and the monetary authority has been taking measures to defend the rupee from extreme volatility. In 2022, the cost of defending a falling rupee was over USD 115 billion of the reserves.

The worst drop was in the week to February 10 when reserves plunged by a steep \$8.32 billion to USD 566.95 billion. In October 2021, the forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion.

‘Packaging industry growing at 15-17%’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The packaging industry is growing at 15-17 per cent and the sector has the potential to create employment opportunities in the country, industry experts said.

The experts also called for the promotion of domestic players and setting up the packaging industry in every district on the lines of the ‘one district one product’ initiative to create jobs at the local level.

“Presently, the demand for packaging of all things has increased a lot and there is a lot of scope for employment in this sector,” Prof Tanveer Alam, Director of the Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) Delhi, said at the Asian Packaging Congress here on Saturday.

The event was organised by the Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP), an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a release said. The packaging business in the world is worth USD 79 billion



The packaging industry is growing at 15-17 per cent and the sector has the potential to create employment opportunities in the country, industry experts said in New Delhi PTI photo

and has a growth rate of 15-17 per cent, Alam said. Industry experts opined that to boost the industry, packaging units should be set up in every district on the lines of one district one product scheme so that employment can be generated, a statement said. Different types of packaging like glass, metal, paper and others are being adopted for each type of

product, the expert said. Recently, an MoU has also been signed with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and this product has already been launched in 15 districts of UP, IIP said. Experts said that the packaging industry can also help bring agricultural products to market which will increase farmers’ income and cut farm production losses.

Gig economy in limbo after food deliveries slow down

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

With a spurt in online food and grocery delivery, especially in the pandemic years, India saw a meteoric rise in the gig economy, giving millions of people job opportunities.

However, delivering hot and piping food at customers’ doorsteps has become a nightmare for many of them as the food delivery business turns out to be a losing game while more and more delivery partners report unfair work conditions, pay disparity, and harassment.

India is likely to see its gig workforce add 9-11 million jobs by 2025, which has been one of the most pivotal economic shifts in a long time.

In terms of job roles, door delivery is the most prevalent gig role employers are hiring for currently — 22 per cent for food and 26 per cent for other deliveries, according to a recent study by leading job portal Indeed. According to reports, a typical delivery boy’s salary is



Rs 15,000 per month. Delivery Boy salaries at Zomato and Swiggy can range from Rs 4,804-Rs 30,555 per month depending on which area they are working in.

Gig workers are freelancers or contractors who work independently, typically on a short-term basis for multiple clients. Their work may be project-based, hourly, or part-time.

However, when it comes to fair work for gig workers among the digital platform economy in India, Zomato, Swiggy, and quick-grocery delivery providers Dunzo and Zepto are among the worst per-

formers across parameters related to the working conditions of gig workers, according to the latest ‘Fairwork India Ratings 2022 Report’.

According to professor Balaji Parthasarathy, one of the principal investigators of the team, these findings are alarming for all stakeholders - government, consumers and platform owners -- and they should come together to help gig workers get the best working conditions.

“We would like the government and other stakeholders like consumers and digital labour platform owners to take

note of these findings and ensure a better work environment for millions of gig workers in 2023,” Parthasarathy said.

The Fairwork India team was spearheaded by the Centre for IT and Public Policy (CITAPP), International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B), in association with Oxford University in the UK.

Even with workers and worker groups repeatedly emphasising the importance of a stable income for platform workers, platforms have been reluctant to publicly commit to and operationalise, a minimum wage policy.

“Secondly, while workers have engaged in various forms of collective action to voice their concerns in the platform economy, platforms have been uncompromisingly unwilling to recognise or negotiate with any collective body representing workers,” the findings showed. According to the report, the promise of flexibility of the digital platform econ-

omy raises as many questions about livelihoods as it offers opportunities.

“We hope the report provides the basis for an interpretation of flexibility that allows for not merely the adaptability that platforms seek, but also the income and social security that workers lack,” said Parthasarathy and Janaki Srinivasan, the Principal Investigators of the team.

The biggest barriers for gig workers are lack of access to job information (62 per cent), not knowing English (32 per cent), and not knowing the local language (10 per cent) for workers who have shifted outside of their home town for work.

Challenges in language also result in other difficulties with 14 per cent of the gig workforce respondents reporting a lack of awareness of their jobs’ skills and abilities, according to Indeed study. Nearly three out of five gig workers (59 per cent) find their jobs uncomfortable (46 per cent), if not hard and risky (13 per cent).

India needs to promote e-payment items globally: Das

PTI ■ KOCHI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday underlined the need for using the G20 presidency to present India’s e-payment story to the global audience and seize the opportunity to internationalise payment products like UPI and RuPay.

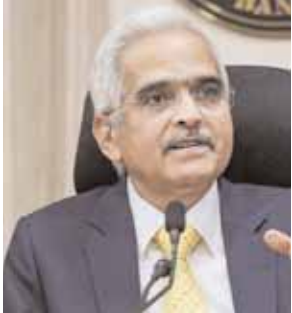
India’s home-grown payment products like UPI and RuPay network are increasing their global footprint and will make cross-border payments easier, Das said while inaugurating the Payment System Operators (PSO) Conference here.

“Under Reserve Bank’s Payments Vision 2025, we stand committed to the core theme of ‘E-Payments for Everyone, Everywhere, Everytime’ (4Es). We must seize every opportunity to internationalise our payment products. This will open up a new world of opportunities for our country. This is the year of the Indian Presidency of the G20. Let us present the India story to the global audience,” he said.

The governor further said with the Indian economy getting increasingly integrated with the global system, cross-border payments have assumed greater significance.

“Our home-grown payment products, UPI and RuPay network, are enhancing their global footprint,” he said and added launch of UPI linkage with Singapore’s PayNow is a major step forward.

In future, Das added such linkages with other countries will make crossborder payments simple, affordable and real-time. QR code-based merchant payments through UPI apps are already enabled in



Bhutan, Singapore and the UAE. All these would also help project India’s soft power at the global level. “I would like to say that a lot has been achieved but a lot more can and should be done in the days ahead,” he said.

Das emphasised that payments and settlements are serious businesses with potential downsides, should anything go wrong. Effort should be to mitigate such downsides and capitalise on the upsides.

“This is something all market participants must recognise and constantly remind themselves. Every failed transaction, every fraud attempted or actually carried out, every complaint that is not satisfactorily addressed should be a cause of concern and must invite a detailed root cause analysis.

“It would do well to remember that like the batsman on the cricket field, you are only as good as the last ball faced.

“We must together make sure that no one in the country is left behind in the digital payments journey,” he said.

The launch of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in 2016 has revolutionised the payments ecosystem with about 803 crore transactions worth Rs 13 lakh crore processed in January 2023 alone.

Cabinet okays exemption to NTPC to invest in NTPC Green Energy

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Friday granted exemption to NTPC Ltd for making investment in NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL), it’s wholly-owned subsidiary.

The CCEA also exempted NGEL’s investment in NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NREL) and its other joint ventures and subsidiaries, subject to a ceiling of 15 per cent of its net worth beyond the monetary ceiling of Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 7,500 crore, towards achieving a target of 60 GW renewable energy (RE) capacity by NTPC Ltd, official sources said.

The exemption given to NTPC will help in improving India’s global image as a green economy. It will also decrease India’s dependency on conventional sources of energy by diversifying India’s energy generation and will also decrease the country’s coal import bills.

Number of air-passengers benefitting from the government’s Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) has come down in 2022-23.

A Parliamentary standing Committee took note of the dwindling numbers and has sought an explanation from the Ministry.

In its latest report, the Committee noted that there has been a fluctuation in the number of RCS passengers who have benefitted from the UDAN Scheme. While the number of RCS passengers rose from 3 lakh (2017-18), to

Startup failure gradually reducing in India; awareness needed: STPI DG

PTI ■ PANAJI

Asserting that the rate of failure of startups in the country is slowly declining, Director General of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) Arvind Kumar said there is a need to create more awareness about what the government is doing to promote startups. Talking to PTI, Kumar said awareness campaign is very much required amongst the youth about startups.

“I go to a number of engineering colleges, they don’t know anything about startups, they don’t know about STPI, they don’t know anything about what the country and government is doing,” he commented.

The STPI DG was in Goa to address the Future Tech Leadership Forum Goa 2023 on Saturday organised by the stakeholders in the state’s IT industry. Kumar said there should be a subject on entrepreneurship for students in 12th standard where the product cycle should be explained and they should be made job



producers and not job seekers. He said STPIs’ directors are going to various colleges and giving lectures to youngsters about startups and also how to get funds for that. “I think awareness is happening but it has to be accelerated,” Kumar added.

He said though they have not done any study on the failure of startups, there are studies which claim that the rate in India is one against ten. “Failure is a part of startup ecosystem not just in India but also in the developed part of the world. Our country has just started the journey of startups, so naturally we will fail more,

compared to those countries which have started ten years back,” he said. Talking about Centres of Entrepreneurship (COE) created by STPI, Kumar said such initiatives are working to reduce the failure rate.

“COEs have chief mentors who are authority on the particular subject. They guide startups in COEs and do hand-holding.

When something (startup idea) is ready, we call Venture Capitalists, Fund Managers, who see the product and see if they can invest in it,” he said. “Failure of startups is also reducing with the passage of time.”

MG Motor India to supply 100 vehicles to WTiCabs India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

MG Motor India on Saturday said it has bagged an order to supply 100 units of its various models to WTiCabs India. The fleet of 100 vehicles, including Hector and ZS EV, will be used for the rent-a-car division of WTiCabs India.

“Our partnership will further make MG vehicles more accessible to SUV and EV enthusiasts in India. We are deeply grateful to WTiCabs for having chosen the MG Hector and ZS EV as their choice of vehicle for their business,” MG Motor India Senior Director Sales Rakesh Sidana said in a statement.

WTiCabs CEO Ashok Vashist said company values partnership and looks forward to continued sales and services support from MG Motor India. “In our constant endeavor to provide sustainable mobility, we will keep adding EV’s into our fleet. Our endeavor is to provide sustainable and robust mobility solutions to our corporate clients,” he added.

Online gaming can make India \$1 tn economy: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The online gaming sector is a rapidly growing industry that has potential of contributing significantly to the country’s goal of becoming a USD 1 trillion digital economy, generating substantial employment, and fostering innovation, a report said.

Regulation of online gaming will not only open up economic opportunities but also address various social issues, a report titled ‘Online Gaming in India: The Taxation Quandary’ by Primus Partners said. Announcements in Union Budget 2023-24 are positive for the sector as it has addressed the persistent ask to incorporate the offset of losses in the calculation of gains from online games for income tax, it said.

A pertinent issue relating to the implementation mechanism proposed in the Union Budget for TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) on online games has been highlighted in the report.



the critical being the delivery boys-girls who serve as the ‘last-mile’ link between the food outlets and the hungry customer.

One such delivery boycott Area Manager attached to an app-based company, G. V. Kishore, 35, of Borivali, shares some insights into the low-profile business that quietly delivers’ with clockwork precision and an efficiency that could merit a top Sigma rating. There are an estimated 500,000 car-

riers (delivery boys/girls) in Mumbai alone who effect an average of around 10 deliveries daily, coming to more than 50,00,000 parcels being rushed from one place to another for nearly 18 hours daily, with the weekend numbers bulging by at least 25 percent. “Besides, there are corporate food deliveries that would account for another 25-30 lakh parcels on weekdays but crashes on weekends.

After Covid-19 pandemic, most companies have discontinued their in-house canteens barring beverages and now allow employees to order food online with discounted corporate coupons,” said Kishore.

Another deliverer from Ghatkopar, Sanjay Chauhan, 31, serving through various Apps, haunts corporate offices with big and small food packets daily, and supplements his income with weekend home deliveries.

iPhone 15 Pro Max may feature thinnest screen bezels to date

San Francisco: Tech giant Apple’s upcoming iPhone 15 Pro Max smartphone will reportedly “break record” of the thinnest screen bezels to date. Tipster Ice Universe tweeted on Friday: “iPhone 15 Pro Max will break the record of 1.81mm bezel black edge held by Xiaomi 13, and we measure that its cover plate black bezel width is only 1.55 mm.iS22 and S23—1.95mmiCEiPhone 14 Pro 2.17mm)”

Last week, the front glass videos of the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max smartphones had leaked online which revealed that they will feature ultra-thin bezels around the display.

Also, the tech giant is expected to limit its display features — Always-On and ProMotion — to upcoming iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max smartphone models. It was also rumoured that the iPhone maker will bring support for Wi-Fi 6E network to only iPhone 15 Pro models.

Number of flyers benefitting from RCS-UDAN falls in 2022-23

IANs ■ NEW DELHI



12 lakh (2018-19), to 31 lakh (2019-20) after the initiation of the Scheme in 2016, it dipped to 15 lakh in 2020-21. “Though, the number of RCS

passengers benefitted grew to 33 lakh in 2021-22, it has again come down to 20 lakh passengers as on 31.01.2023. The Committee would like to know

the reasons for the reduction in number of passengers benefitting from this Scheme during 2022-23.

The Committee also desires to know the details of plans for the year 2023-24, wherein the Ministry aims to increase the number of passengers benefited to 30 lakh,” said the Demand for Grants (2023-24)n report of Civil Aviation Ministry.

It also noted that as per the Output Outcome Monitoring Framework for 2022-23 (till 31.12.2022), the Ministry has not been able to achieve the targets in most cases, with achievements in the range of 40

per cent to 67per cent only. Only in the case of passengers travelled in NER, it has achieved a percentage of 261.5 per cent.

“The Committee notes the low performance of the Ministry on almost all the constituents of the RCS-UDAN Scheme, except one.

The Committee hopes that with the increased allocation, the Ministry would do meticulous planning to ensure full utilisation of funds and achievement of targets,” said the report.

The Civil Aviation Ministry launched Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) -

UDAN on October 21, 2016. RCS-UDAN is a flagship programme of the Ministry.

The primary objective of RCS-UDAN is to facilitate or stimulate regional air connectivity and by making it affordable to masses through measures like concessions by Central Government; State Governments/ Union Territories (UTs); and Airport Operators to reduce the cost of airline operations on regional routes/ other support measures and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to meet the gap, if any, between the cost of airline operations and expected revenues on such routes.

TREESA-GAYATRI LOSE IN SEMIS

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's sensational run came to an end as the Indian pair signed off with a second successive semifinal finish at the All England Championships here on Saturday.

The two young shuttlers found the going tough against Korean world number 20 duo of Baek Na Ha and Lee So Hee, losing 10-21 10-21 in a 46-minute women's doubles contest at the Utilita arena.

"We learnt a lot from this match. The difference was they didn't leave a shuttle and we did panic a little bit," Gayatri said after the match.

Treesa added: "When we played against them, their defence was good, it was better than yesterday. We were just panicking and didn't play well, we just kept attacking."

Gayatri's father Pullala Gopichand, the chief national coach, was the last Indian to win the All England crown, in 2001, the first being the legendary Prakash Padukone in 1980.

Gayatri, 20, and Treesa, 19, had a big opportunity to reach the finals but it ended in anticlimax as they played into the hands of the Koreans.

"I was nervous. There was pressure," said Gayatri.

The world number 17 pair was pitted against Baek and Lee, the latter being an experienced player with two world championships medals with former partner Shin Seung-chan.

In fact, Lee and Shin had faced defeat against the Indian pair in the last edition but the



fresh combination of Lee and Baek have been relentless this week with wins over second and eighth seeds, and looked in supreme touch as they came up with a tactical masterclass.

The Koreans turned into a retrieving machine as they defended seamlessly and extend-

ed the rallies with their high tosses and lifts to not allow the Indians to play their short flat rally game.

As a result, Gayatri and Treesa failed to make a good start like they did earlier this week, falling behind 0-4 early on.

Lee and Baek frustrated the

Indians with longer rallies, waiting patiently for their opponents to make errors. It worked perfectly as the Koreans grabbed a 11-5 lead.

Briefly the Indians made it 9-13 but it was a one-way traffic from 14-10, with the Koreans drawing the first blood with

seven straight points, including the last which went long from Gayatri.

The Koreans didn't kill the shots at the nets and kept playing more high lifts, with the Indians sticking with their smashes from the back court.

Gayatri and Treesa couldn't

change their tactics and went wide and long too many times as Lee and Baek zoomed to a massive 11-2 lead at the mid-game interval of the second game.

Gayatri had her moment of brilliance, when she mixed body shots with a drop to grab a point to move to 5-11 after resumption, but such instances were too few.

The Indians managed just five more points before Treesa hit the net to hand 10 match points to the Koreans, who sealed their place in the final after another long rally.

Despite the loss, it was a good week for the young Indians, who started playing together only in 2021 and had surprised all by reaching the semifinals in the last edition after being promoted to the main draw from the reserve list.

This time, Gayatri and Treesa had come into the tournament with a Commonwealth Games bronze medal and wins over higher-ranked pairs such as world No. 7 Tan Pearly and Thinnah Muralitharan at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship in February.

Gayatri and Treesa accounted for some big scalps such as the seventh seeded Thai pair of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Ravindra Prajongjai and Japan's former world number ones Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in the early rounds this week.

"We played against some good players, the confidence was there. So we are looking to the next tournaments. We have a lot more to learn. We will come back stronger," Treesa signed off.



We believe to seal place in next season's Champions League: Isak

AP ■ NOTTINGHAM

Alexander Isak said Newcastle believe they will seal a place in next season's Champions League after the Swede scored twice, including a stoppage time penalty, to beat Nottingham Forest 2-1 on Friday.

Victory lifts the Magpies to within one point of fourth-placed Tottenham and with a game in hand to come on Spurs. "We believe and we know that we have it in our own hands and have a good chance," said Isak after Newcastle signed off for the international break with back-to-back wins.

"It is important we have gone into this break with a good feeling with two wins from two games."

Defeat was Forest's first at home in the league since September and leaves Steve Cooper's men still two points above the relegation zone.

"It's always the worst way to lose, in the last couple of minutes, having fought in the game," said Cooper. "We made some poor football decisions around the build-up to the goals and that's something we can only blame ourselves for."

Newcastle ended a near two-month wait for a Premier League win last weekend in beating Wolves and came flying out the blocks at the City Ground.

But the closest the visitors came to turning their early dominance into a lead was when Renan Lodi turned Isak's cross onto his own crossbar.

Instead it was Forest who went in front completely against the run of play thanks to a howler from Sven Botman.

The Dutch centre-back has been a major factor in Newcastle's success this season but his attempted pass back to

goalkeeper Nick Pope was intercepted by Emmanuel Dennis, who produced a stunning chipped finish for just his second Forest goal.

The crossbar came to the home side's rescue again when Sean Longstaff's deflected strike from the edge of the box came back off the woodwork.

Newcastle finally got their reward in first half stoppage time when the club's record signing Isak acrobatically flicked in Joe Willock's cross off the post.

The pattern of play continued after the break as the Magpies laid siege to the Forest goal.

Former Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain goalkeeper Keylor Navas had to be at his best to turn over powerful drives from Elliot Anderson and Bruno Guimaraes.

Anderson then thought he had his first senior goal when he headed in Isak's cross at the back post.

However, the goal was controversially disallowed after a VAR check for offside against Longstaff in the build-up despite the ball breaking to the midfielder off a Forest player.

Just when Forest looked set to hold out for a precious point in their battle to beat the drop, Moussa Niakhate needlessly put his hand up to block Isak's tame header.

The Swedish international's debut season in England has been blighted by injury, but he showed his class by keeping his head to slot past Navas and spark wild scenes of celebration among the away support.

"It's a massive win and I thought we deserved it," said Howe.

"To come back is always a great way to win and the character shown in the group is very pleasing."

Atalanta beat Empoli 2-1 to boost CL hopes

AP ■ MILAN

Substitute Rasmus Hojlund Scored late to help Atalanta fight back to beat Empoli 2-1 in Serie A and boost its chances of qualifying for the Champions League. Hojlund scored the winner just seven minutes after coming off the bench. Marten de Roon had cancelled out Tyrone Ebuehi's opener for Empoli.

The victory snapped Atalanta's winless run and lifted it to within three points of fourth-placed AC Milan, which visits Udinese on Saturday.

Empoli remained nine points above the relegation zone.

Atalanta had lost three of its past four matches, drawing the other, and lost ground in a tight race for the Champions League spots.

Ancelotti backs Vinicius to escape Araujo shackles

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti this season, has been shut down by Barca defender Araujo in recent clashes with the Catalans, with coach Xavi Hernandez deploying the centre-back on the right to directly confront him.

Vinicius has scored twice in 12 games against Barcelona, both times before Araujo started at right-back.

No player has scored from open play against leaders Barca at Camp Nou in La Liga this season, giving champions Madrid a formidable task as they try to eat into their nine-point deficit.

"He's had more difficulties than in other games, but Vini is always Vini, his mobility can help him get the best (from himself) in tomorrow's game," Ancelotti told a news conference Saturday.

"I'm thinking of putting him on the right, let's see. He can play on the right,



Vinicius."

Ancelotti later said he was joking about using Vinicius on the right flank, but reiterated that the forward could be given more liberty to drift from the left.

"Obviously that wasn't serious, but mobility could be important, not having a fixed reference point. Speaking generally, against a forward that's another problem for a defence.

"Vini will play on the left, with more mobility."

Xavi also looked forward to the battle between Araujo and Vinicius.

"Araujo is very physically strong, he's quick, fast, and understands the movements of his opponents," Xavi told reporters Saturday.

"He's responsible, and a leader. He's a world class defender, one of the best in the world. Having Ronald in the team, is a guarantee, an advantage.

"Usually when he takes on Vinicius, he comes out as the winner of the battle, but Vinicius can make a big difference.

"It's not just Ronald, it's (everyone) looking out, and collectively, we've been very good against Madrid."

RYBAKINA TO FACE SABALENKA IN INDIAN WELLS FINAL

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Elena Rybakina again proved too much for world number one Iga Swiatek, denying the defending champion a return to the Indian Wells final with an emphatic 6-2, 6-2 semi-final victory on Friday.

Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina, the reigning Wimbledon champion who stunned top-seeded Swiatek in the fourth round of the Australian Open on the way to the final, will now get a chance to turn the tables on Aryna Sabalenka, who beat her in Melbourne to capture a first Grand Slam title.

World number two Sabalenka advanced with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over seventh-seeded Maria Sakkari of Greece.

Rybakina, ranked 10th in the world, was all over Swiatek from the opening game, painting the lines with her punishing ground strokes and serving with pinpoint precision.

Swiatek, winner of the French and US Opens last year in a campaign that included eight titles in all, simply had no answer and surrendered the first set with a double-fault on the first set point.

It was more of the same in the second as Rybakina raced to a 5-0 lead. Swiatek, who revealed after the match she was dealing with "discomfort" in her ribcage, finally managed a hold for 5-1, and pounced to break as Rybakina suddenly struggled with her first serve in the next game.

Rybakina still managed to muster two match points at 40-15, but Swiatek saved one with an overhead and another with a blistering return of a second serve, winning two more points to complete the break for 5-2.



But there would be no comeback. A mis-hit as Swiatek appeared to trip chasing a ball back to the baseline gave Rybakina another match point and she converted it with confidence.

"I didn't expect that I was going to play that good today," admitted Rybakina, who battled through three sets to beat Czech Karolina Muchova in the quarter-finals.

"Hopefully I'm going to play like this on Sunday," she added after denying Swiatek's bid to become the first woman since Martina Navratilova in 1990-91 to win back-to-back titles in the California desert.

Rib injury threatens Iga's Miami Open defense

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Iga Swiatek's Indian Wells title defense ground to a halt in a straight sets semi-final loss to Elena Rybakina on Friday, the world number one later revealing she is battling a rib injury.

"For sure, Elena played great tennis today, and I feel like against her I have to play better," Swiatek said after falling 6-2, 6-2 to the Wimbledon champion — who also shocked her in the Australian Open fourth round.

"Honestly, I feel like it's more me and kind of my mistakes," she said. "I'm also not feeling 100% physically. I have a little discomfort in my rib, and we're going to consult with medical team."

Swiatek said she still planned to defend her title at the Miami Open that starts next week.

"For now I'm preparing to play, but we'll see what (the) next days are going to tell us," she said. "I don't know yet."

She said she hadn't had

Sabalenka 'feels bad' for Ukrainian players

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to stir tension in the tennis world, and Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka on Friday said that it's not only Ukrainian players who are feeling the strain.

"Of course it's a lot of tension between us," Australian Open champion Sabalenka said after beating Maria Sakkari to reach the final of the combined WTA and ATP Masters 1000 in the California desert.

But, she added, "I still have this belief that I did nothing bad to Ukrainians — not me, not Russian athletes."

The WTA and ATP tours have barred players from Russia and its ally Belarus from competing under their national flags, but insist that individual athletes have a right to compete.

much experience of playing through injury, the only example she recalled coming at the 2019 French Open.

"It's a new situation for me, for sure," the 21-year-old said. "For sure now it's a totally different level. So I feel like going on (for) matches you have to be 100% fit.

"I have been playing, so there has been some fatigue all the time," she said. "I would say it's kind of constant, but I'm pretty sure that tomorrow or day after will help in recovery."



Boxing World C'ships: Nitu, Preeti, Manju enter pre-quarters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers continued to shine at home as three of them entered the pre-quarters with contrasting wins at the Women's World Championships here on Saturday.

Commonwealth Games gold medalist Nitu Ganghas (48kg) began her campaign with a RSC (referee stopped contest) win over Doyeon Kang of Korea, while Preeti (54kg) eked out a 4-3 split decision victory against Romania's Lacramioara Perijoc.

Manju Bamboriya (66kg), on the other hand, defeated Cara Wharerau of New Zealand by a 5-0 unanimous verdict.

Nitu, who lost in the quarter-final during the last edition, opened her campaign in the best possible way, winning the bout in the first round itself.

In the opening minute, she used her hook and left cross but

wasn't able to connect her jabs.

The boxers then went into a frenzy as they punched each other with both hands. Soon, Kang got the first standing count. With Nitu continuing her onslaught, the Korean got her second standing count 20 seconds later with referee Luca Vadilonga of Italy ruling in the Indian's favour, much to the joy of the partisan crowd at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall.

Having won her opening bout by an RSC verdict, Preeti had to work hard for her second win in the tournament.

"I had prepared a lot for this bout, she had won a silver last time. I want to prove to myself that I'm less than no one," said Preeti.

"I was trying to understand her game in the beginning. In the last round I changed my strategy. She was attacking and getting unbalanced."

Both boxers looked to keep a distance in the first few seconds. Preeti was caught unawares by a Perijoc straight jab but the Haryana pugilist recovered soon.

The 2022 Asian Championships bronze medalist then landed two punches on her Romanian opponent and led 3-2 at the end of the first round.

In the second round, both boxers tried to sidestep each other as Perijoc resorted to body blows.

Preeti danced around the ring, using her nimble feet, as she tried to avoid the Romanian. She landed some accurate punches but lost the round 2-3.

In the final three minutes, Preeti resorted to counter attacking which she did effectively. The round was a draw with the bout going into a review. The evaluator and observer ruled in favour of the Indian.

INDIA AIM TO SEAL SERIES

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The spotlight will once again be on KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja when India take on Australia in the second ODI here on Sunday, with regular captain Rohit Sharma returning to lead the side after missing the opening game in Mumbai.

India defeated Australia by five wickets in a low-scoring game at the Wankhede Stadium, with Rahul, who struggled to find form during the Border-Gavaskar series leading to him being dropped for the third and fourth Tests, scoring a patient unbeaten 75 as the hosts cantered home.

Jadeja, playing ODI cricket after nearly eight months due to a knee injury and subsequent surgery, scored an unbeaten 45 in the chase of 188 on Friday. He also bowled a tight spell and returned figures of 2/46 to be declared 'Player of the Match'.

With the ODI World Cup being hosted by India later this year, an in-form Rahul and a fully-fit Jadeja will be an asset, and the three-match series will help the selectors assess the duo's progress. India would look to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series and also try to make amends with the bat, after they were in a spot of bother at 4/39, and later 5/83, before Rahul and Jadeja came together at the crease to guide the hosts to victory with 61 balls to spare.

Rohit Sharma's return to captaincy duties will certainly give solidity to the top order, which crumbled to the pace and variations of Australian quick Mitchell Starc.

The lanky left-arm pacer's



three-wicket burst at the start put India under tremendous pressure, with Virat Kohli (4), Suryakumar Yadav (0) and Shubman Gill (20) departing in quick succession after Marcus Stoinis had made an early dent by dismissing Ishan Kishan for three runs. Indian batters have occasionally looked tentative against quality left-arm pacers, and facing Starc in the remaining two games should give them

good practice in home conditions, with efforts focused towards making preparations for the World Cup in October-November.

With Sharma set to open, Kishan will likely make way for the regular captain. While not much should be read into Kohli and Gill's below-par scores in the first ODI, Suryakumar Yadav not being able to find his mojo in the 50-over format is a reason

for concern.

A marauder with the bat in T20s, Suryakumar is evidently still finding his feet in ODIs. He has gone without a fifty in all five ODIs this year. Surya has now played 15 ODIs (13 innings) without a score exceeding 50.

However, with no timeline set for Shreyas Iyer's return, India will keep auditioning Suryakumar for the role at No. 4. India's bowling did a tremen-

dous job in Mumbai with pacers Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj flourishing on a pace-friendly Wankhede pitch. But wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav could not make a strong impression.

However, the team management is not expected to tinker with the bowling line-up, with Pandya playing the role of a third seamer to perfection in Mumbai.

The weather forecast for

Important we recover properly to perform better: Shami

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ace pacer Mohammed Shami has stressed on the importance of recovery after bowling India to a five-wicket win against Australia in the first ODI at the Wankhede stadium here.

The right-arm quick returned with figures of 6-2-17-3 on Friday as India restricted Australia to 188 in 35.4 overs and then returned to overhaul the target in 39.5 overs.

"The plan was to keep it simple. We had discussed in team meeting as well to make a good start, to keep the ball in good areas and stick to our line and length," he said in conversation with fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj in a video posted on BCCL.Tv.

"The heat was also an issue. When we bowled the first spell it was hot but later it got a bit better to bowl when the wind started blowing." The 32-year-old had missed the training for the first ODI to recover from the fourth and final Test against Australia in Ahmedabad.

"After 40 overs of the Ahmedabad Test, I needed 1-2 days to recover. I completed that recovery and came here for the match," he said.

"The management accepted that I needed recovery. We have played so many matches that we know our skills and ability. So it is impor-



tant that we recover properly to perform better." Siraj also claimed three wickets for 29 runs to play a huge role in India's win.

"When I get the new ball, I try to bowl inswing. Like when there is a left-hander, I try to bowl inswing. I wanted to take as many wickets in the powerplay. I got one wicket," he said.

"But when I went to fine leg when you were bowling, I was thinking 'what is happening'. I was wondering if the umpire has given you the new ball or what?"

"Then when I came to bowl, the ball was moving off the wicket nicely. So, I also looked to bowl consistently in one area. I also got tips from you and we enjoyed the bowling in Wankhade."



India can bolster their batting if Rahul keeps wickets in WTC final vs Aus: Shastri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India coach Ravi Shastri has backed KL Rahul to seal his place as a wicketkeeper-batter for the World Test Championship final at the Oval in June, saying his presence will strengthen the team's batting lineup. Rahul has a good record in England but he was dropped from the playing XI after the first two Tests against Australia at home due to poor form.

The 30-year-old from Karnataka, however, made an impressive return, slamming a match-winning 75 not out in the first ODI against Australia in Mumbai on Friday night.

Shastri feels Rahul can play as a wicket-keeper in the WTC final, especially after KS Bharat couldn't produce the goods in the absence of an indisposed Rishabh Pant.

"He (KL) has really done

well to keep the selectors interested ahead of the WTC final," Shastri told Star Sports.

"Two things, one for the ODI series when Rohit Sharma returns and the other for the WTC final... India can bolster their batting if Rahul can keep wickets. "Rahul can bat in the middle-order — No. 5 or 6. In England, you have to generally keep wickets from far behind. You don't have to keep up to the spinners a lot. He (KL) has two more ODIs to go before the IPL. He can cement his place in that Indian team."

Rahul has amassed 614 runs at 34.11 with two centuries — one at The Oval —, and one fifty in nine Tests in English conditions. India qualified for the WTC final to be held in June at The Oval against Australia. It will be India's second appearance in the final. They had lost to New Zealand in the 2021 final.

CSK eyeing stake in MLC's Texas team

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) could be eyeing a stake in the Texas team, one of Major League Cricket's (MLC) six sides.

The four-time IPL winners on Saturday revealed that they will soon make a "major announcement" with regard to their association with the new T20 tournament in the US.

San Francisco Unicorns, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle Orcas, Texas and Washington DC are the six teams competing in the tournament, scheduled to be begin on July 13 this year.

MLC had announced on Friday that another IPL franchise Delhi Capitals, co-owned by GMR Group, will partner with Seattle Orcas to "help build and operate a world-class cricket team".

The Seattle Orcas' lead investor group includes Satya Nadella, chairman and CEO of Microsoft and Soma Somasegar, managing director of Madrona Ventures, among others.

In their cryptic message on social media on Saturday, CSK said, "Major announcement soon. Howdy Texas! Show some yellow to our NRI cousin, @TeamTexasMLC!"

The development comes a day before the MLC Domestic Player Draft scheduled to take place in Houston with more than 100 players eligible to represent the "USA cricket community" in the tournament.

UPW end Mumbai Indians' winning run in WPL

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

UP Warriorz snapped formidable Mumbai Indians' winning run in the Women's Premier League with a five-wicket victory, after the Uttar Pradesh side extracted more out of a tricky pitch here on Saturday.

On a surface where the ball turned a lot and was also holding up, England's star left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (3/15) led the way with her excellent bowling as UP Warriorz bundled out Mumbai Indians for 127.

When MI batted, as many as 18 of the 20 overs were bowled by spinners, a WPL record.

In reply, UPW faced some obstacles before competing the task with three balls to spare. Grace Harris (39) and Tahlia McGrath (38) were the main contributors with the bat for UPW, while Deepti Sharma (13 not out) and player of the match Ecclestone (16 not out) also played vital knocks.

UPW lost Devika Vaidya with just one run on the board at the start of the second over. While the successful bowler was Hayley Matthews, most of the credit for the dismissal must go to Harmanpreet Kaur, who pulled off a sensational catch at first slip after the batter got a thick outside edge.

Issy Wong picked up the big wicket of UPW captain Alyssa Healy (8), trapping her in front of the wicket. The on-field umpire was not convinced despite the huge appeal and MI's move to go for a referral proved to be the right call, leav-



ing the Australian star with no option but to walk back into the dugout.

Defending a small but tricky total on this surface, MI found another reason to celebrate when Yastika Bhatia completed a fantastic one-handed diving catch behind the wicket-off the bowling of Nat Sciver-Brunt to send back Kiran Navgire for 12, for which she consumed 16 balls.

UPW were in a spot of bother at 27 for 3 in the beginning of seventh over, when Grace Harris got off the mark with a boundary.

Even as MI picked up three wickets quickly but they were also guilty of dropping three catches, which proved to be crucial in the end.

In the company of Harris, Tahlia McGrath stroked her way to a 25-ball 38 before Amelia Kerr had her caught and bowled. But Harris hit two successive fours on three occasions, after McGrath's dismissal, to reduce the gap.

There was another twist after Kerr dismissed Harris at a crucial juncture, but UPW held their nerves to emerge winners.

Earlier, had it not been for

which would be a concern for captain Steve Smith.

As a makeshift opener in the absence of Warner, Marsh provided a rapid start with a 65-ball 81 but Australia lost the way in the middle overs, crashing from 129/2 to 188 all out against quality pace in Mumbai. Smith and Labuschagne may have encountered 'difficult' pitches in the Test series but the wickets for ODIs in India are usually batter-

friendly, and both the Aussie mainstays will be expected to do more. Smith has not crossed the 50-run mark so far on this India tour. For someone who has a mountain of runs against India, the Australian stand-in skipper will look to end the drought. Australia's fast bowling looked terrific in Mumbai, with Abbott keeping a lid on the Indians with tight lines and Green, Stoinis also chipping in.

RCB TO RETIRE JERSEY NUMBERS WORN BY ABD, GAYLE

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) will retire the jersey numbers worn by AB de Villiers and Chris Gayle when the two cricketing legends are inducted into the Indian Premier League (IPL) side's Hall of Fame on March 26.

"Jersey numbers 17 and 333 will be retired forever as a tribute to @ABdeVilliers17 and @henrygayle, when we induct the legends of RCB into the Hall of Fame," RCB tweeted.

Jersey No. 17 had become synonymous with de Villiers, who played 11 seasons (2011-2021) for RCB and scored 4,491 runs in 156 matches for the franchise.

The charismatic South African cricketer also slammed 37 half-tons and two centuries for RCB, with a highest score of 133 not out in 2015.

De Villiers, who announ-

ced his retirement from all forms of cricket in November 2021, had a strike rate touching 152 for RCB.

With Virat Kohli, de Villiers posted five 100-plus partnerships for RCB and two 200-plus stands, the only pair in the world to post two such partnerships.

West Indian hard hitter Gayle played for RCB for seven seasons (2011-2017) and his jersey No. 333 became the most feared among opposing teams.

During the 2013 IPL season, the Jamaican smashed a mindboggling 708 runs in 16 matches for RCB, including an unbeaten 175. Gayle began his stint with Kolkata Knight Riders in 2009, before moving to RCB, where he served the longest stint with an IPL franchise. He was bought by Punjab Kings in 2018, where he played four seasons.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, “e”-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
B-1362
E-mail: pwdoff_khd@yahoo.com
Tender Call Notice No. 37/2022-23

The Superintending Engineer, Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in **Double cover** system in ONLINE MODE from eligible class of contractors having valid registration certificate for execution of the **Civil** works as detailed below:

1. Nature of Work	:	Road
2. No of Work	:	01 No
3. Tender Cost	:	Rs.10000.00 (Online)
4. Class of Contractor	:	‘B’ class Contractor
5. Available of Bid documents in the web site.	:	From Dt. 22.03.2023 at 10.30 AM to Dt . 6.4.2023 at 5.00 PM
6. Date of opening of Bids	:	Dt 10.4.2023 at 11.30 AM
7. Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in . Any information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can be available in the said website.	:	

SD/-
Executive Engineer,
Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda
OIPR-34095/11/0014/2223

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, “e”-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
B-1359
E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com
RFP Identification No. CE-DPI & R – 09/2022-23

1. The Chief Engineer, D.P.I. & Roads, Odisha (Authority) on behalf of the Works Department, Govt. of Odisha is engaged in the Development of State Roads and Highways in Odisha, and, as part of this endeavour, Govt. of Odisha has decided to undertake the following **“Projects”** under **EPC Contract** (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) basis, and has decided to carry out the bid process for selection of the parties/Joint Ventures to whom the Project may be awarded eventually.

2. Nature of project	:	Road work
3. No. of project	:	1No.
4. Tender Paper cost	:	Rs.10,000.00
5. Class of Contractor	:	Super Class
6. Available of bid document in the website	:	From 10.00 A.M. of 21.03.2023 to 11.00 A.M of 10.04.2023
7. Date of Pre-Application conference	:	31.03.2023 at 12.30 P.M.
8. Date of opening of Bid	:	Dt.10.04.2023 at 11.30 A.M.
9. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	:	

Chief Engineer (DPI & Roads), Odisha
OIPR-34111/11/0100/2223

‘There was not one true thing said in this video’
— Bella Hadid denies anonymous TikTok claims about drug use



FEAR AND RISKS

More and more countries are banning TikTok citing data security risks. Should users be worried that the app will be wiped off their phones, writes HALELUYA HADERO

TikTok is once again fending off claims that its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, would share user data from its popular video-sharing app with the Chinese government, or push propaganda and misinformation on its behalf.

China’s Foreign Ministry on Wednesday accused the United States itself of spreading disinformation about TikTok’s potential security risks following a report in the Wall Street Journal that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US — part of the Treasury Department — was threatening a US ban on the app unless its Chinese owners divest their stake.

So are the data security risks real? And should users be worried that the TikTok app will be wiped off their phones?

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS ABOUT TIKTOK?

Both the FBI and the Federal Communications Commission have warned that ByteDance could share TikTok user data — such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers — with China’s authoritarian government.

A law implemented by China in 2017 requires companies to give the government any personal data relevant to the country’s national security. There’s no evidence that TikTok has turned over such data, but fears abound due to the vast amount of user data it, like other social media companies, collects.

Concerns around TikTok were heightened in December when ByteDance said it fired four employees who accessed data on two journalists from BuzzFeed News and The Financial Times while attempting to track down the source of a leaked report about the company.

HOW IS THE US RESPONDING?

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby declined to comment when asked Thursday to address the Chinese foreign ministry’s comments about

TikTok, citing the review being conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment.

Kirby also could not confirm that the administration sent TikTok a letter warning that the US government may ban the application if its Chinese owners don’t sell its stake but added, “we have legitimate national security concerns with respect to data integrity that we need to observe.”

In 2020, then-President Donald Trump and his administration sought to force ByteDance to sell off its US assets and ban TikTok from app stores. Courts blocked the effort, and President Joe Biden rescinded Trump’s orders but ordered an in-depth study of the issue. A planned sale of TikTok’s US assets was also shelved as the Biden administration negotiated a deal with TikTok that would address some of the national security concerns.

In Congress, US Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Jerry Moran, a Democrat and a Republican, wrote a letter in February to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen urging the Committee on Foreign Investment panel, which she chairs, to “swiftly conclude its investigation and impose strict structural restrictions” between TikTok’s American operations and ByteDance, including potentially separating the companies.

At the same time, lawmakers have introduced measures that would expand the Biden administration’s authority to enact a national ban on TikTok. The White House has already backed a Senate proposal that has bipartisan support.

HOW HAS TIKTOK ALREADY BEEN RESTRICTED?

On Thursday, British authorities said they are banning TikTok on government-issued phones on security grounds, following similar moves by the European Union’s executive branch, which temporarily banned TikTok from employee phones. Denmark and Canada have also announced efforts to block it on government-issued phones.

Last month, the White House said



THERE’S NO EVIDENCE THAT TIKTOK HAS TURNED OVER SUCH DATA, BUT FEARS ABOUND DUE TO THE VAST AMOUNT OF USER DATA IT, LIKE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES, COLLECTS.

it would give US federal agencies 30 days to delete TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices. Congress, the US armed forces and more than half of US states had already banned the app.

WHAT DOES TIKTOK SAY?

TikTok spokesperson Maureen Shanahan said the company was already answering security concerns through “transparent, US-based protection of US user data and systems, with robust third-party monitoring, vetting, and verification.”

In June, TikTok said it would route all data from US users to servers controlled by Oracle, the Silicon Valley company it chose as its US tech partner in 2020 in an effort to avoid a nationwide ban. But it is storing backups of the data in its own servers in the US and Singapore. The company said it expects to delete US user data from its own servers, but it has not provided a timeline as to when that would occur.

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew is set to testify next week before the House Energy and Commerce Committee about the company’s privacy and data-security practices, as well as its relationship with the Chinese government.

Meanwhile, TikTok’s parent company ByteDance has been trying to position itself as more of an international company — and less of a Chinese company that was founded in Beijing in 2012 by its current chief executive Liang Rubo and others.

Theo Bertram, TikTok’s vice president of policy in Europe, said in a Tweet Thursday that ByteDance “is not a Chinese company.” Bertram said its ownership consists of 60% by global investors, 20% employees and 20% founders. Its leaders are based in cities like Singapore, New York, Beijing and other metropolitan areas.

ARE THE SECURITY RISKS LEGITIMATE?

It depends on who you ask. Some tech privacy advocates say

while the potential abuse of privacy by the Chinese government is concerning, other tech companies have data-harvesting business practices that also exploit user information.

“If policy makers want to protect Americans from surveillance, they should advocate for a basic privacy law that bans all companies from collecting so much sensitive data about us in the first place, rather than engaging in what amounts to xenophobic showboating that does exactly nothing to protect anyone,” said Evan Greer, director of the nonprofit advocacy group Fight for the Future.

Karim Farhat, a researcher with the Internet Governance Project at Georgia Tech, said a TikTok sale would be “completely irrelevant to any of the alleged ‘national security’ threats” and go against “every free market principle and norm” of the state department’s internet freedom principles.

Others say there is legitimate reason for concern.

People who use TikTok might think they’re not doing anything that would be of interest to a foreign government, but that’s not always the case, said Anton Dahbura, executive director of the Johns Hopkins University Information Security Institute. Important information about the United States is not strictly limited to nuclear power plants or military facilities; it extends to other sectors, such as food processing, the finance industry and universities, Dahbura said.

IS THERE PRECEDENCE FOR BANNING TECH COMPANIES?

Last year, the US banned the sale of communications equipment made by Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE, citing risks to national security. But banning the sale of items could be more easily done than banning an app, which is accessed through the web.

Such a move might also go to the courts on grounds that it might violate the First Amendment as some civil liberties groups have argued.

Associated Press

China appeals for fair treatment

China appealed Friday to other governments to treat its companies fairly after Britain and New Zealand joined the United States in restricting use of TikTok due to fears the Chinese-owned short video service might be a security risk.

Governments are worried TikTok’s owner, ByteDance, might give browsing history or other data about users to China’s government or promote propaganda and disinformation.

“We call on the countries concerned to recognize the objective facts, effectively respect the market economy” and provide “a non-discriminatory environment” for all companies, said foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin.

TikTok is one focus of conflicts between China and other governments over technology and security that are disrupting processor chip, smartphone and other industries.

Legislators and employees in New Zealand’s Parliament will be prohibited from having TikTok’s app on phones, the government said Friday. Britain announced a ban Thursday on TikTok on all government phones.

India has banned TikTok and dozens of other Chinese apps, including the WeChat message service, on security and privacy grounds.

The United States also has imposed restrictions on access by Chinese companies to processor chip and other technology on security and human rights grounds.

The Chinese government accused Washington of spreading false information about TikTok following a report by The Wall Street Journal that US authorities were considering a ban if ByteDance doesn’t sell the company.

The ruling Communist Party blocks most internet users in China from seeing TikTok and thousands of social media and other websites. ByteDance operates a sister short-video service, Douyin, that can be seen in China.

H3N2: PRECAUTION IS THE KEY

Amid a spurt in cases of the H3N2 virus in the country, one more death has been reported, this time from Gurugram in Haryana. This takes the total number of fatalities to three. Adequate rest, simple home-cooked fresh food, and proper hydration are advised for recuperation at home, doctors tell **THE HEALTH PIONEER**

GOING AYURVEDA WAY



DR RP PARASHER
CMO (Ayurveda), MCD

As per Ayurveda, a state of equilibrium of Vata, Kafa and Pitta in the body denotes health. When any of the three increases or decreases, we may fall ill. Kafa is deposited all over the body during the winter season. The warmth of spring melts the kafa which is the cause of diseases like cough, cold, asthma and other ailments of the respiratory tract. That's why the level of immunity is lowered during change of season and people, especially the children & the elders fall ill easily. People, whose lungs have become weak due to corona infection, are more prone to catch the viral infection. Such types of patients are also facing problems like breathlessness and low levels of oxygen. Since it is a droplet infection, it spreads very fast. If a kid suffering from H3N2 infection attends school, he may spread the infection to a large number of students. Similarly if one member of a family gets infected, the whole family is likely to fall ill.

How to avert the infection: Keeping a vigil on feeding and living habits will definitely avert the infection. Observing covid appropriate behaviour is necessary which includes wearing of masks, regular cleaning of hands, avoid hands shake, etc. Cold drinks, ice creams and refrigerated items must be avoided. Do not consume items of cool temperament like rice, kadhi, curd, cauliflower peanuts, arhar daal, etc.

Never use cold water just after consuming fried foods. In case of viral infection, alum or saline gargles in warm water will help to reduce inflammation of the throat and the respiratory tract. Tulsi, Ginger, clove, pippali, cinnamon bark and kali mirch boiled in water, milk or tea will also give relief. Hot soups of tomato and other seasonal vegetables will increase immunity on one hand and reduce inflammation as well as itching on the other hand. Fruits like Amla, Giloy, Anjir, resins, grapes and oranges will provide immunity and strength to the body.

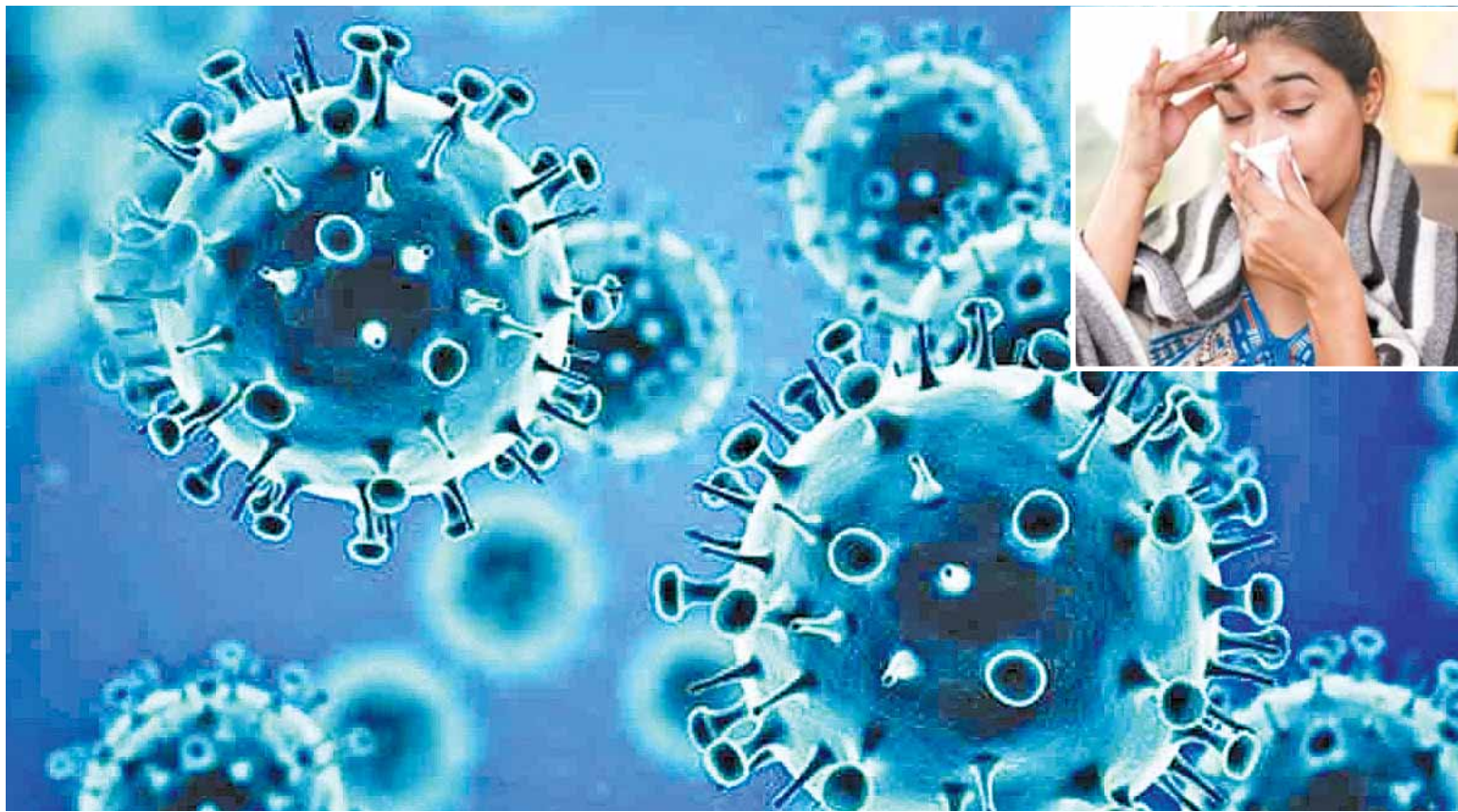
Ayurvedic treatment: Ayurvedic drugs are capable of treating the infection within three to five days. Medicines like Sitopaladi churan, Talishadi churan, Laxnivilas Ras, Kafketu Ras, Sanjeevani Vati, Sudarshan ghan vati, Trilokyachintamani ras, Samsheerpannag ras are quite effective to treat the infection. Chyavanprash, Vasa Avleha, Agastya Haritiki provide relief in cough and cold within a few days.

If chewed, Aladi Vati, Lavangadi vati and Vyoshadi vati provide instant relief in cough. Ayurvedic cough syrups containing Tulsi, vasa, jufa, pippali, mulethi, somlata, kantkari are quite effective and safe even in children and elders.

Some people with co-morbidities are getting hospitalised as they are in the high-risk zone. People need to wear masks and take precaution," Dr Rajiva Gupta, a consultant at the internal medicine department of CK Birla Hospital said.

The World Health Organisation, too, recommends that the most effective way to prevent infection with any virus is to get vaccinated and follow prevention measures: "Maintaining at least a 1-metre distance from others, wearing a well-fitted mask when keeping your distance is not possible, avoiding crowded and poorly ventilated places and settings, opening windows and doors to keep rooms well ventilated and cleaning your hands frequently." It also advises that people should follow the advice "of your local authorities on getting influenza and Covid-19 vaccines".

Dr. Raman Kumar, physician from Noida said that H3N2 influenza is a respiratory virus which transmits in the same fashion as the Covid virus. The precautions are also the same and should be diligently followed.



The health experts said that the first sign of influenza virus is usually a high fever, which begins about four to five days after exposure to the virus and lasts 10 to 15 days. A runny nose, a cough, red and watery eyes, and facial swelling can develop in the initial stage. They added that people at higher risk of developing complications include children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant people, and people with certain long-term health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neuro-developmental problems.

Dr Jugal Kishore Director Professor and Head of Department of Community at Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi said that precaution is a key word. It is crucial to avoid crowded places, travel only if necessary, practice good hand and respiratory hygiene, and seek medical advice if symptoms persist for more than two days.

"There is a surge of H3N2 cases in the region now, but the severity of such cases is less.

What is the H3N2 virus? According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. There are 4 types of seasonal influenza viruses, types A, B, C and D. Influenza A and B viruses circulate and cause seasonal epidemics of disease. Influenza A viruses are further classified into subtypes according to the combinations of the hemagglutinin (HA) and the neuraminidase (NA), the proteins on the surface of the virus.

How Does The Virus Transmit? H3N2 Influenza virus transmitted mainly through infected droplets created when infected pigs

WHAT/HOW/CAUSES/SYMPTOMS/MANAGEMENT OF H3N2

cough or sneeze. If these droplets land in your nose or mouth, or you inhale them, you can be infected. After this when an infected person sneezes or coughs, the respiratory droplets can travel in the air and reach the nose, and mouth of another individual, making him/her catch the virus and fall sick.

Common Symptoms of H3N2 virus: Cough and runny nose/ Body aches/Coughing/Fever/ Vomiting/Nausea/Diarrhea and Chills among few others.

Tips for Patients infected with H3N2: In

symptomatic cases, patients should wash hands with soap and water, wear masks and avoid crowded places, cover mouth and nose while sneezing and coughing, avoid touching eyes and nose, take plenty of fluids and take paracetamol for fever and bodyache.

Who is More at Risk? Following is a list of all the health and age factors that are known to increase a person's risk of getting serious flu complications, according to US body Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

or CDC

■ Although all children younger than 5 years old are considered at higher risk of serious flu complications, the highest risk is for those younger than 2 years old, with the highest hospitalization and death rates among infants younger than 6 months old.

■ Adults 65 years and older/Asthma/ Neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions/ Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)/Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and

cystic fibrosis)/Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)/Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)/Kidney diseases/Liver disorders/Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)/Obese people with a body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher/ People younger than 19 years old on long-term aspirin- or salicylate-containing medications/ People with a weakened immune system/ People who have had a stroke/ Pregnant women and those up to 2 weeks after the end of pregnancy/ People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

HEALTH BRIEFS



GURU NANAK EYE CENTRE CELEBRATES FOUNDATION DAY: Delhi-based Guru Nanak Eye Centre celebrated its 37th Foundation Day on On the occasion, it released a souvenir, "The glorious history and journey of Guru Nanak Eye Centre", compiled by the staff of GNEC team. It was released by Lt Gen Dr Daljit Singh, Dir. Gen. Medical Services (Army), Prof Poonam Narang (Dir. Prof. Radiology, Deen.

Dr.Kirti Singh, Director of the hospital said, the surgical expertise and clinical acumen of the doctors meets the best among their peers, a fact that is reflected in the annual footfall of 3-4 lakh patients requiring eye care.

AIIMS, DELHI MOOTS 5G ROUTE: AIIMS, Delhi is embarking on an installation of a smart fifth-generation cellular network in its premises by June 30, capitalizing on 5G's fast speeds to enhance access to care and improve efficiency.

A five-member panel headed by Prof Vivek Tandon, Department of Neurosurgery has been set up to expedite the process. An office memorandum issued by AIIMS director M Srinivas stated, "To enable maximum utilisation of modern communication technology for patient care, teaching, research, good governance, and for optimal deployment of integrated medical university information system (IMUIS), it is desirable that the entire campus has good strength of 5G mobile network to enable a robust mobile and data connectivity inside the buildings."

He also said that strong 5G connectivity will help the institute stay in touch with its main and outreach campuses like NCI Jhajjar, which will enable senior faculty members to provide their expert advice during off-duty hours.

The other members of committee include Dr Vivek Gupta (computer facility) and superin-

tending engineer Jitendra Saxena. Dr Vikas from telecommunications will be member secretary of the committee and Sunita Cherodath, senior deputy director general, department of telecommunications, will be a special invitee.



BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS BHUMI UNDP'S SDGs AMBASSADOR: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has announced Bollywood actor Bhumi Pednekar as their first national advocate for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recently.

As a national advocate, Bhumi will support UNDP India's efforts to raise awareness and mobilize support for the SDGs, a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Taking on the new role, Bhumi said, "I believe it is our collective responsibility to ensure we leave behind a better world for future generations. The SDGs provide a roadmap for building a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all..."

Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India said that Bhumi's talent and dedication to gender equality and sustainability make her an ideal advocate for the SDGs.

Cancer Prevention Strategies for Women



DR ADITI AGGARWAL
Senior Consultant,
Radiation Oncology, Paras
Hospital, Gurgaon

As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer is the second most common cause of death globally with cases increasing every year in India as in the world.

Looking at cancers occurring in females, globally breast cancer tops the list followed by colorectal and lung cancers whereas in India, breast cancer is the leading and cervical cancer is the second most common cancer followed by ovary, head neck and colorectal cancers.

When it comes to cancer prevention, it is important to understand the risk factors for these diseases. Breast cancer

occurs more commonly in urban population than rural, pointing towards the westernization and changes in lifestyle that is contributory. Also the reproductive habits have changed over decades, amongst women in India. The older a woman is when she has her first full-term pregnancy, the higher her risk of breast cancer, no/fewer children, no breastfeeding. Poor genital hygiene, multiple births, multiple sexual partners are causative for cervical cancers. Consumption of saturated fats, processed foods, red meat, sedentary lifestyle being risk factors for breast and colorectal, as well as ovarian cancers to some extent. Smoking, tobacco chewing, alcohol are leading causes for head, neck and lung cancers. Family history is another important factor in breast, colorectal and ovarian cancers in few cases.

Amongst risk reduction/cancer prevention strategies that need to be followed, the first and foremost is leading a healthy lifestyle which means, no addictions, healthy diet with adequate



fibers, fruits and vegetables, minimal processed food, low red meat, avoiding constipation. Also moderate amount of exercise in our daily routine for around 30 minutes is recommended to maintain a healthy weight and keep many diseases away, not just cancer. Healthy reproductive habits and good genital hygiene, having children timely, limiting the number of births, avoiding high risk sexual behavior is equally important.

Following a routine of getting yourself tested regularly, termed as screening for breast and cervical cancers should be done by all females. Mammo-

graphy for breast cancer should be undertaken at the age of 45 years, thereafter done once in two years, till the age of 74 years as per USPSTF. Also PAP Smear for cervical cancer should be done for all sexually active females once in 3 years till the age of 65 years. These are simple tests which can detect very early lesions, sometimes even before they become cancerous. Screening for colorectal cancers using a test called colonoscopy is recommended for all those touching 45 to 50 years, done once in 5 to 10 years till the age of 75 years. In case of a positive family history, these tests should start 10 years earlier than the

index case.

Another very effective preventive tool available for cervical cancers is HPV vaccine for all girls, starting at the age of 9 years and given as two doses till the age of 15 years, or three doses till the age of 26 years. We need to educate our daughters to be aware of their bodies and start breast self-examination once a month to understand what is normal for their body and to consult a doctor in case they notice or feel any abnormality. Breast self-examination should be done by all females on a regularly basis once a month after their periods starts.

Head neck cancers would most of the times present with a non-healing ulcer, pain or difficulty in swallowing. These complaints should be addressed by an expert at the earliest. With increasing pollution and smoking in females, lung cancer in females is also on increase.

To summarise, cancer in women is largely preventable by following a healthy lifestyle, regular screening tests, timely vaccination and self-examination.

Down Syndrome: Untapped Sky-high Potential



ALOK KUMAR 'BHUVAN'

Down Syndrome (DS) is a condition in which extra genetic material causes delays in the mental and physical development of a child. One of the most common genetic disorders, the condition is characterised by the presence of an extra 21st chromosome. It is not a disease and there is no way to prevent it. In India, around 32,000 cases are observed.

Individuals with Down syndrome demonstrate more similarities than differences compared to other typically developing peers.

Demystifying the myths that such children have a bleak future, each day, many new kids on the block are beating the

odds, showing extraordinary achievements, the ability to possess hopes and dreams for the future, and a solid determination to meet their goals.

Though individuals with Down syndrome experience learning difficulties that give rise to developmental delays, not all areas are impacted with an equivalent effect.

Here, I would like to talk about Nagpur's **Devanshi Joshi**, a recipient of 'Role Model' award which was conferred on her by the then President Ram Nath



Kovind in 2021. She has been breaking many stereotypes and misconceptions around intellectual disability through her path-breaking achievements.

Ditto is the case with 24-year-old **Adya Verma**. An advocate by profession, Adya is with our organization, aiding in the creation of Easy Road Documents as well as taking part in numerous lectures and workshops to communicate her vision.

Similarly, **Rashmi Rekha Sahu** with Down Syndrome is charting her own path under the guidance of her parents, both

school teachers. An Odissi dancer, she leaves everybody in awe with her excellent dance expressions and movements. Recently, she successfully accomplished Sangeet Visharad Pratham Khand (IV year) organized by well-known organization, Pracheen Kala.

These are just among a few examples even for many of us who are pursuing with relentless passion to accomplish their potential as well as passion.

On our part, on World Down Syndrome Day 2023 our organization in collaboration with SNAC & CBSM, organiz-

ing a programme where over 500 participants comprising those diagnosed with disabilities will attempt to exhibit their talents.

Such events are an attempt made at creating awareness related to communication skills, primary sign language and easy-read training for intellectual



and developmental disabilities, guidance on career options after school along with education and skill training opportunities, plus ensuring good oral hygiene and healthcare among others – all coming together to promote inclusive living within our society.

Therefore, let us set sails towards reaching success by enabling each child with Down syndrome to gain access to schooling and college environments which come equipped with platforms that allow for auditory/visual modifications, accommodating physical exercises (occupational/speech therapies). Efforts should be made on giving them the extra time required for classwork – all so that we can better comprehend each individual affected by this condition including his/her abilities & special needs.

After all, it is our responsibility as a society to provide opportunities and nurture diversity at every step going forward.

(The writer is Managing Secretary of Manovikas Charitable Society, Delhi)

(The author is AP's vice president for standards and editor at large. Jerome Delay is chief photographer in Johannesburg, South Africa. AP reporter Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Abby Sewell, AP's Syria, Lebanon and Iraq news director, contributed from Baghdad)

