

OPINION 6
THE MISCHIEVOUS
FOREIGN HAND

WORLD 8
HALEY: PAK HOME TO OVER A
DOZEN TERRORIST GROUPS

MONEY 10
GDP GROWTH MAY EXCEED
7% THIS FISCAL, SAYS CEA

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

Late City Vol.33 Issue 61
*Air Surcharge Extra If Applicable

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY MARCH 3, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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www.dailypioneer.com



LIVERPOOL
BEAT WOLVES
IN PL CLASH
11 SPORT

CAPSULE

**NIA ATTACHES ASSETS
OF IC-814 FAME ULTRA**
NEW DELHI: NIA on Thursday said it has attached property of Pakistan-based J&K terrorist Mushtaq Zargar, the founder and chief commander of terror group Al Umar Mujahideen, who was released along with Masood Azhar in exchange of passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines flight 814 (IC 814) at Kandahar in 1999. **P5**

**FORMER CJI AM
AHMADI PASSES AWAY**
New Delhi: Former Chief Justice of India Aziz Mushabbir Ahmadi passed away on Thursday following age-related ailments, a lawyer close to his family said. He was 90.

**MAN SEXUALLY ABUSES
DOG IN DELHI PARK, HELD**
NEW DELHI: A 40-year-old man was arrested, under section 377 (unnatural offences) of the Indian Penal Code, for allegedly sexually abusing a dog in a park in West Delhi, police said.

BJP's 'look-east policy' yields good returns

**BJP retains
Tripura, to form
alliance Govt
in Nagaland,
and Meghalaya**

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The "look-East policy" of the BJP has paid off again with the saffron party and its allies retaining power in both Tripura and Nagaland. They are also set to be back in the Meghalaya coalition government led by the National People's Party (NPP).

The BJP, part of the ruling coalition in all three North-Eastern States, has come back to power in Tripura with the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) and in Nagaland with the Nationalist

Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP).

In Nagaland, its longest serving Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, is set to come back to the top office for the record 5th term.

The NDPP and the BJP have improved their tally in Nagaland from the last time. The state also has got a woman MLA — 60 years since it attained statehood. Hekani Jakhalu, from BJP's ally NDPP, has won from Dimapur-III seat. The 48-year-old lawyer-activist was among four women of the total 183 candidates who contested the Nagaland assembly elections. Jakhalu defeated Lok Janshakti Party's Azheto Zhimomi.

In Meghalaya, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma-led NPP has emerged as the single largest party and expected to be in the saddle with the backing of the BJP and other parties.



Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha being offered sweets by BJP supporters after the party's good performance in the Assembly elections in Agartala. PTI

Though BJP's decision to go it alone in Meghalaya did not pay good dividends, the party has opened up backchannel talks with the former ally

Sangma's NPP which is short of the halfway mark with 26 of the state's 60 seats. The BJP contested all 60 seats in Meghalaya but won only a couple of them.

The Congress, which once held a strong position in the North-East, failed to make a mark in all the three States. The biggest setback for the party

was in the multi-cornered contest in Meghalaya where it scored in single digit while the party was the single-largest in 2018.

The saffron party's second consecutive win in Tripura is significant, as five years ago it had almost negligible presence in the Left-run State. The party has beaten anti-incumbency and defeated the Left-Congress coalition hands down.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, who is tipped to get a second term, defeated Congress's veteran leader Ashish Kumar Saha by a margin of 1,257 votes from Town Bardowali despite detractors within his own party predicting a "tough time" for him in the prestigious constituency.

In Tripura, the debutant Tipra Motha, led by the royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma, made an impressive debut with over 12 seats. He

said that his party's "growing presence" will ensure that the BJP will not be able to "sideline" the issues relating to tribals. "We will continue to fight with our core demand of constitutional solution to the issues of tribals in Tripura," he said after the results were announced.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was coordinating for the party in the NE states, tweeted, "Sangma called Union HM Amit Shah and sought his support to form a new government."

Making it clear that the BJP would go with Sangma, Sarma also said, "Adaraniya Sri @JPNadda ji, the national president of the @BJP4India has advised the state unit of BJP, Meghalaya to support the National people's Party in forming the next government in Meghalaya. @SangmaConrad." **See edit:** Lotus blooms

PM-LoP-CJI's panel to pick CEC, ECs: SC

'Arrangement till Parliament passes law for selection'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Election Commissioners (ECs) will be done by the President on the recommendation of a committee, comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India, to maintain the "purity" of the electoral process.

The five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph also said the "unrelenting abuse" of the electoral process over a period of time is the "surest way to the grave of democracy."

In a democracy, the "purity of election" must be maintained or else it would lead to "disastrous consequences", the bench said. The direction on the EC appointments will continue to hold good till a law on the issue is made by Parliament, said the verdict.

As of now, the CEC and the ECs are appointed in terms of Article 324 of the Constitution by the President on the recommendation of the Centre.

The apex court said if the



Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha is not there, then the leader of the single largest Opposition party will be in the committee to select the CEC and the ECs.

The bench delivered its verdict on a petition filed by noted lawyer Prashant Bhushan and other pleas seeking a Collegium-like system for the appointment of the CEC and ECs.

"We declare that as far as the appointment to the post of the CEC and the ECs are concerned, the same shall be done by the President of India on the basis of the advice tendered by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister of India, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and in case there is no such leader, the leader of the largest party in the Opposition in the Lok Sabha having the largest numerical strength and the Chief Justice of India," Justice Joseph said, while reading out the operative part of the judgment.

"This norm will continue to hold good till a law is made by Parliament," said the bench, also comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar. Justice Rastogi, who concurred with the lead judgment, authored by Justice Joseph, delivered a separate verdict with his reasoning.

"The unrelenting abuse of the electoral process over a period of time is the surest way to the grave of democracy," the bench said, adding that the means to gain power in a democracy must remain pure and abide by the Constitution and the laws.

Democracy is intrinsically linked to the will of people, it said. "Democracy can succeed only when all the stakeholders uncompromisingly work at it and the most important aspect of democracy is the very cautious electoral process, purity of which alone reflect the will of the people," it said.

Continued on Page 2

**G-20 Foreign
Ministers' meet
fails to come
out with a joint
communique on
Ukraine conflict**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for evolving consensus on pressing global challenges, in an obvious reference to the ongoing Ukraine conflict, and "focus not on what divides us, but on what unites us." However, the G-20 Foreign Ministers' conclave here was not able to come out with a joint communiqué on the conflict.

In his message to the G-20 conclave, Modi also stressed the need to not allow differences on geopolitical tensions to affect overall grouping and added that countries should acknowledge that multilateralism is currently "in crisis".

Addressing a news conference after the G-20 meet, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said there were "polarised views" on the issue.

"There were issues and very frankly they were concerned with the Ukraine conflict. There were divergences.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni prior to their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Thursday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

There were differences, which we could not reconcile," he said in reference to inability to have a joint communiqué on the issue.

The conference, held under India's presidency, adopted a Chair's Summary and Outcome document, Jaishankar said. He said the grouping expressed resolve to deal with pressing global challenges. Jaishankar also said the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting unequivocally condemned

terrorism.

Prime Minister Modi called for evolving consensus on pressing global challenges, in an obvious reference to the ongoing Ukraine conflict, and "focus not on what divides us, but on what unites us."

Giving this message to the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meet, he also stressed the need to not allow differences on geopolitical tensions to affect overall grouping in the grouping.

Continued on Page 2

**Blinken, Lavrov
talk: 1st thaw in
US-Russia row**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As differences persist on finding a solution to restore peace in Ukraine, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov briefly met here on Thursday in the first high-level contact between the two countries in months amid the conflict.

It is understood that the exchange lasted about 10 minutes and that Blinken conveyed to Lavrov that the US would continue to support Ukraine.

Continued on Page 2

Prime accused gets life term in Hathras rape-murder case

3 others freed by special court

PTI ■ HATHRAS

A special court here on Thursday sentenced the main accused in the 2020 Hathras rape-murder case to life imprisonment while acquitting the three other accused.

The rape and murder charges could not be proved against the prime accused, his lawyer Munna Singh Pundir said.

The court held Sandeep (20) guilty under section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Indian Penal Code, a lesser charge than section 302 (murder).

Ravi (35), Luv Kush (23) and Ramu (26) were acquitted

in the case that triggered outrage and put Yogi Adityanath's BJP Government in the dock over law and order in the State.

The court also slapped a fine of ₹50,000 against Sandeep. The chargesheet in the case was filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation in the SC/ST court here against all the four accused for murder and gang rape, and under sections of the SC/ST Act.

Lawyer Seema Kushwaha, who is representing the Dalit woman's family, said they will challenge the verdict in the high court.

Sandeep's lawyer claimed that his client is innocent. "We will appeal in the high court against the conviction," he said.

"The prosecution couldn't prove the charges of rape, gang rape and murder in the court with sufficient evidence or witnesses," he said.

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Twitter introduces new 'violent speech' policy

AP ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Twitter CEO Elon Musk on Thursday said Twitter is a platform where writers and leaders spend their time, even though a "few other social networks" are actually bigger.

His comment came after Twitter announced that it has updated its rules on "violent content and similar language", and has now "officially launched" its "Violent Speech" policy. The rules appear very similar to guidelines against violent threats that the company had on its books before Elon Musk took it over.

Among the updates, Twitter expanded its policy to include a ban on "coded language," which is often referred to as "dog whistles," used to indirectly incite violence. It also added a rule that prohibits "threatening to damage civilian homes and shelters, or infrastructure that is essential to daily, civic, or business activities."

The additions come as San Francisco-based Twitter prepares to comply with new



European Union rules that go into effect this fall.

The new rules, called the Digital Services Act, require tech companies to better police their platforms for material that, for instance, promotes terrorism, child sexual abuse, hate speech and commercial scams.

Twitter's new violent-speech policy states that "healthy conversations can't thrive when violent speech is used to deliver a message.

As a result, we have a zero tolerance policy towards violent speech in order to ensure the safety of our users and prevent the normalisation of violent actions."

Continued on Page 2

SC sets up panel for regulatory mechanism to protect investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to probe within two months allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group and any lapses in regulatory disclosures, and also set up a six-member panel to look into protection of Indian investors after a damning report by a US short-seller wiped out more than USD 140 billion of the conglomerate's market value.

The SC, while directing the setting up of a six-member committee headed by former apex court judge Justice AM Sapre for the assessment of the extant regulatory framework and for making recommendations to strengthen the process, said it is appropriate to set up such a panel of experts in order to "protect Indian investors against volatility of the kind which has been witnessed in the recent past".



nished in the recent past".

The other members of panel are OP Bhat (former chairman of State Bank of India), Justice JP Devadhar (retired judge of the Bombay High Court), KV Kamath (former head of New Development Bank of BRICS and Infosys Limited), Nandan Nilekani (co-founder of IT firm Infosys and former head of Unique Identification Authority of India) and Somasekharan Sundaresan, a lawyer and securities and regulatory expert.

Continued on Page 2

Two Ministers talk about challenges to smoothen bilateral ties, G20 agenda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With tension still persisting at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, India and China on Thursday discussed the possible ways to restore normalcy as soon as possible during talks here between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang. Qin is here to attend the ongoing G-20 Foreign Ministers' conclave.

During their interaction on the sidelines of the G-20 meeting, the two Ministers also discussed current challenges to the bilateral relationship and the G20 agenda.

"Met Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang on the sidelines of #G20FMM this afternoon. Our discussions were focused on addressing current challenges to the bilateral relationship, especially peace and tranquility in the border areas. We also spoke about the G20 agenda," the Minister tweeted.

Qin is reportedly a close aide of Chinese President Xi Jinping and is on his first visit



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar welcomes Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang as the latter arrives to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, at RBCC in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

to India since replacing Wang Yi as the Foreign Minister. Incidentally, Wang Yi was the first Chinese Minister to visit New Delhi last year after tension flared up between the two countries at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020.

The India-China meeting on Thursday at the Foreign Ministers' level signals significance in the wake of the continuing military standoff between the two sides in Ladakh.

Continued on Page 2

18 CRPF-RAF companies sent to Punjab to boost security

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and said the Centre and the State will work together on the law and order issue, even as 1,900 personnel of the CRPF and its specialised anti-riot unit were dispatched to the State for strengthening the security grid.

The two leaders discussed the law and order issue. Mann told Shah about the circumstances leading to the Ajnala incident, sources said.

On February 23, self-styled Sikh preacher and Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into a police station in Ajnala on the outskirts of the Amritsar city, extracting an assurance from the police that his aide and kidnapping case accused Lovepreet Singh would be released.



released.

The chief minister said in a tweet in Punjabi that the 'Centre and Punjab will work together on the issue of law and order'.

Official sources added that the Union home ministry last week also directed the deployment of 18 companies to Punjab for 'aid of the state government during law and order duties.'

Out of the 18 contingents, eight are drawn from the anti-riot Rapid Action Force (RAF) while the rest are regular ones. The overall strength of these companies is around 19,000

personnel.

These companies have been initially tasked to be deployed in Punjab between March 6-16 and their stay could be extended after consultation between the state and the Centre, the sources said.

They said the companies will assist the state police in security duties during the three-day Sikh festival of 'Hola Mohalla' that will be celebrated between March 8-10.

The chief minister said he had discussed with the home minister the issue of drones and drugs along the border. He said the issue of shifting

the barbed wire along the border was also discussed. Mann said he has asked Shah to release Punjab's stalled rural development fund soon.

The central government officials said the Union Home Ministry is 'closely monitoring' the situation in Punjab in the wake of renewed activities of some Khalistani supporters.

The Punjab Police said on February 24 that the demonstrators had used the holy Guru Granth Sahib as a shield and attacked police personnel in a cowardly manner, leaving six of them injured. Lovepreet Singh walked out of jail on February 24.

Dubai-returned Amritpal Singh was last year anointed head of 'Waris Punjab De', which was founded by actor and activist Deep Sidhu who died in a road accident in February last year.

The event was held at Moga's Rode, the native village of slain militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

NIA court issues NBW against 13 J&K terrorists operating from Pakistan

PTI ■ JAMMU

A special NIA court here issued non-bailable warrants against 13 terrorists, hailing from Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, who are presently operating from across the border, police said on Thursday.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Kishtwar, Khalil Poswal said the warrants have been issued in a terror-related case registered last year under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act at police station Kishtwar.

The chief investigation officer of Kishtwar Police approached the special NIA court for issuance of non-bailable warrants against the accused for their active involvement in terror activities and creating unrest in the Chenab valley and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"After the eruption of ter-

rorism in 1990, many terrorists were killed but one group comprising 36 members affiliated with Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), all residents of Kishtwar, were settled in different parts of Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir and engaged in disruptive activities," the officer said.

He said two cases were registered against them and in one of the cases, non-bailable open-ended warrants have been issued by the special NIA court Jammu, while similar action is being taken against others as well in the coming days.

"We are forwarding a red corner notice to Interpol and a process has also been initiated to identify their properties to get them sealed. Based on electronic and other evi- dence, we will pursue these two cases in the court of law and with the help of Interpol will arrest the terrorists and bring them back to face the law," Poswal said.

ED arrests liquor bizman Dhall in Delhi excise case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) made a fresh arrest in connection with its money-laundering investigation into the Delhi excise policy scam by taking liquor businessman Amandeep Dhall in custody.

Dhall, the executive director of liquor firm Brindco Sales Private Ltd., was arrested on Wednesday night under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following his questioning, officials said. Brindco is a major importer and distributor of a variety of liquor brands and related beverages. Dhall was produced before a designated court here that granted five-day custody of the accused to the ED. According to a CBI FIR, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) functionary Vijay Nair, Manoj Rai, Dhall and Sameer Mahandru were actively involved in framing and implementing the now scrapped Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22.

Bird flu: Avoid wet markets, farms, WHO tells tourists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With wet market being perceived as the source of Covid-19 virus that swept the world for the last two years, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned tourists visiting countries with bird flu cases to avoid farms, wet markets and any areas where animals are slaughtered to ward off risk of any spillover of the virus.

The WHO advised regular hand washing and good food safety and food hygiene practices. However, it warned against the application of any travel or trade restrictions to countries with a bird flu outbreak.

The agency also suggested people in close contact with poultry to get vaccinated against seasonal human flu, to reduce the risk that H5N1 could recombine with a human avian virus.

This comes after an 11-year-old girl in Cambodia died after contracting the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus.

Combination drug therapies effective against scrub typhus, reveals study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a largest-ever randomised controlled trial on the treatment of severe scrub typhus in India, a team of researchers has found that instead of the current single-drug therapies, a 'combination antibiotic treatment' (using a combination of drugs) is more effective for treating the mite-borne infectious disease. As combination therapy quickly controlled bacterial growth within the first week of infection, severe disease may have been prevented and the resolution of symptoms might have quickened, said the study published in The New England Journal of Medicine.



Physician and Researcher, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and the INTREST trial investigators conducted the clinical trial to identify the best treatment option for patients with severe scrub typhus. It demonstrated that intravenous doxycycline and azithromycin treatment is more effective than using either drug on its own. Patients who were treated with combination antibiotics had fewer complications from the infection on day seven.

In line with other studies, this study also found that there was no difference in the outcome between using doxycycline or azithromycin alone. The overall mortality rate in this study was 12 per cent.

Cong presses demand for JPC in Adani issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday insisted on its demand for a JPC in the Adani row after the Supreme Court ordered setting up of a six-member committee headed by former apex court judge Justice A M Sapre to investigate the Adani Group shares crash triggered by the Hindenburg Research's fraud allegations and other regulatory aspects related to stock markets. The court asked the panel to submit its report in a sealed cover within two months.

The grand old party said no panel other than a joint parliamentary committee can bring out the truth in the Adani row and the industrialist's relationship with the prime minister and asserted that it will raise the demand in Parliament when it meets again on March 13.

Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said he had stated on February 16 that any panel by the Supreme Court would only look into violations of SEBI rules and regulations and will not be able to bring out the truth in the Adani issue.

PW-LoP-CJI's panel to pick CEC, ECs...

From Page 1

The top court said undoubtedly, the EC is duty-bound to act fairly and legally and must abide by the provisions of the Constitution.

"The fate of the political parties and its candidates and therefore of democracy itself to a great measure is allowed to

rest in the hands of the EC. While there may be officers who assist the commission, vitally important decisions have to be taken by those who are at the helm of affairs," it said.

"It is the CEC and the ECs at whose table the buck must stop," the bench said. The apex court said there cannot be any

doubt that the poll panel needs to perform the enviable task of remaining aloof from all forms of subjugation by interference from the executive. It said that an EC, which does not ensure a free and fair role in the process, guarantees the breakdown of rule of law, which is the bedrock of democracy.

SC sets up expert panel...

From Page 1

The court-appointed Justice Sapre panel, which will be provided assistance by the Centre and other statutory agencies, including the SEBI chairperson, will have to submit its report in a sealed cover within two months, said the bench which comprised Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala. The panel will also suggest measures to strengthen investor awareness, the court said, adding the committee will probe whether there was any regulatory failure in dealing with the alleged contravention of laws pertaining to the securities market in relation to the Adani Group or other companies.

Reacting to the court directions, Adani group chairman Gautam Adani tweeted, "The Adani Group welcomes the order of the Supreme Court. It will bring finality in a time bound manner. Truth will prevail." The bench took note of

ongoing probe by the SEBI and said the market regulator has not expressly referred to an investigation into the alleged violation of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules 1957 which provide for the maintenance of minimum public shareholding in a public limited company.

"Similarly, there may be various other allegations that SEBI must include in its investigation," it said, directing the SEBI to also investigate whether there was any violation of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules. The SEBI will also probe "whether there has been a failure to disclose transactions with related parties and other relevant information which concerns related parties to SEBI, in accordance with law," it ordered, adding the probe will also look into whether there was any manipulation of stock prices in contravention of existing laws.

The top court made it clear that the market regulator can also go beyond its directions with regard to the contours of the ongoing investigation.

Prime accused gets life term in...

From Page 1

The 19-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by four men from her village on September 14, 2020. A fortnight later, she died at a Delhi hospital. She was cremated in the middle of the night in her village near Hathras. Her family members claimed that the cremation, which took place well past midnight, was without their consent and they were not allowed to bring home the body one last time. Several politicians, including Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, slammed the Adityanath government over the death and the "hurried" cremation.

There were standoffs with UP Police when the two leaders, along with other party members, headed for the victims' village. The visit took place only on the second attempt. In another episode linked to the Hathras incident, Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan and his companions were arrested when he was on his way to the district, the move triggering another row. The UP Police claimed that he was linked to radical organisation People's Front of India and was trying to incite violence. After two years in jail, he was recently released on bail.

Multilateralism in crisis...

From Page 1

His appeal comes in the backdrop of the sharp differences between Russia and the West over finding a solution to end the conflict. In a meeting with visiting Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Modi said India was fully prepared to contribute to the peace process to find a solution to the Ukraine conflict.

"From the very beginning of the Ukraine conflict, India has made it clear that this dispute can only be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. India is fully prepared to contribute to any peace process," Modi said after bilateral talks with Meloni.

In his video message to the G-20 conclave, the Prime Minister invoked Mahatma Gandhi and Buddha to urge the delegates to draw inspira-

tion from India's civilisational ethos and "focus not on what divides us, but on what unites us."

The foreign ministers from the world's largest industrialised and developing nations held crucial deliberations on key global challenges that took place in the backdrop of the increasingly bitter rift between the US-led West and the Russia-China combine over the Ukraine conflict.

In their remarks, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, British Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly and European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell criticised Russia for its invasion of Ukraine while China's Qin Gang referred to the 12-point Chinese peace plan to resolve the conflict.

Blinken, Lavrov talk: 1st...

From Page 1

Blinken and Lavrov had a very brief interaction on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, a Russian official said.

"Secretary of State Antony Blinken asked for contact with Foreign Minister Lavrov, during the second session of the G20 meet," Russian spokesperson Maria Zakharova said.

She said they had the "contact but there were no talks or a full-fledged meeting". This comes over a week after Russia suspended participation in the New START nuclear treaty with the US.

"We must continue to call on Russia to end its war of aggression and withdraw from Ukraine for the sake of international peace and economic stability," Blinken said in his remarks at the G20 meet.

Twitter introduces...

From Page 1

But Twitter already had a version of this rule on the books in October 2021, a year before Musk bought the company for \$44 billion, according to a snapshot of its site rules on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

The old rule stated that Twitter has a "zero tolerance policy against violent threats. Those deemed to be sharing violent threats will face immediate and permanent suspension of their account."

Twitter also edited and reshuffled policies, though some changes appeared purely cosmetic.

For instance, the prohibition of violent threats and wishing harm on a person or a group of people was previously in a section called "Abusive behavior" and now it is in a new section called "Violent Speech Policy."

Jaishankar, Qin discuss...

From Page 1

The relations between the two countries are the most tense in the past 60 years since the brutal clash at the Galwan Valley on June 15, 2020. Both the sides have held 17 rounds of military level talks besides several rounds at the diplomatic level to restore peace in the border areas. India has all along maintained that status quo ante as existing before May 2020 has to be restored for normalising relations with China.

It is the first meeting between Jaishankar and Qin after the latter became the Chinese Foreign Minister in December. The talks came nearly eight months after Jaishankar held a meeting with the then Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Bali on the sidelines of a G-20 meeting.

During the one-hour meeting on July 7, Jaishankar had conveyed to Wang the need for early resolution of all the outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh.

The External Affairs Minister had told Wang that the relationship between the two countries should be based on "three mutuals" — mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.

On February 22, India and China held in-person diplomatic talks in Beijing and discussed proposals for disengagement in the remaining friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh in an "open and constructive manner". The meeting took place under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC).

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION
Dated: 20.02.2023
Summons to defendants under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
Original Application No. 1140 of 2022
ICICI Bank Ltd.
V/s.
Ejaz Sibtain & Others

To,	Defendant No.1
1. Ejaz Sibtain-S/o. Mr. Noore Syed Sibtain R/o. Flat No. 201, B1, Jaypee Klassic, Noida, Mahārishi Nagar, Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) - 201304	
2. Nishat Sibtain W/o. Mr. Ejaz Sibtain R/o. Flat No. 201, B1, Jaypee Klassic, Noida, Mahārishi Nagar, Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.)-201304	Defendant No.2

In the above noted Original Application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorised agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorised agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on **21/08/2023 at 10.30 A.M.** failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal,
Lucknow

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, that Mr. Umesh Singh is claiming owner of property bearing No. 54-A, area measuring 37' x 54' x 54', out of Khata No. 14/2, Situated in the area of Village Matliya, colony known as Sewak Park, in Block-8/2, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi. "Said property" by virtue of GPA, Agreement to sell and will dated 30.09.2003, executed by Mr. Khatri Lal. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property and someone want to purchase the same by taking Home loan from Fullerton India Home Finance Ltd. (if anybody has any objection/s upon the said property, and its ownership / Title of Mr. Umesh Singh, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, that Mr. Indar Pal Sharma is claiming owner of Property bearing No. F-78, Old Plot No. 2, area measuring 50 Sq. Yds., out of Khata No. 669, Situated in the area of Village Basai, Tarapur, Delhi, known as F-78 Block, Sushant Park, New Delhi. "Said property" by virtue of will dated 23.04.2020, executed by late Mr. Mr. Sonu Dutt Sharma, who was owner of the said property by virtue of sale deed dated 11.07.2006, executed by Mr. Om Prakash Arya. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property and someone want to purchase the same by taking Home loan from Fullerton India Home Finance Ltd. (if anybody has any objection/s upon the said property, and its ownership / Title of Mr. Indar Pal Sharma, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

(1) 23/SPE/PE (PH-II)/ET/ 2022-23	Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies for Carrying Out Dog Sterilization and Immunization of Stray Dogs in Noida	Rs. 9000000.00
The above tenders can be uploaded from dated 03.03.2023 to 15.03.2023 upto 5.00 PM . Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 16.03.2023 at 11.00 AM .		
Office: Sector - 94	Dy. GM/Sr. Project Engineer (Public Health) Noida	
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA		

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Mamchand S/o Sh. Sukhdev R/o H.No. 216, Village Sadapur, Sector-45, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) who is the original allottee of property No. Plot No. 96D, Block-SD, Sector-45, Noida (U.P.) & his share to the above said property & who is Expired on dated 29.01.2023. That executed a WILL in my favour which is registered in Sub Registrar-III, Noida on dated 30.01.2021. So it is informed to all concern that the above said property is going to be transferred in favour of Mrs. Shashibala Garg W/o Sh. Devendra R/o H.No. 103, Garhi Shahdara, Sector-141, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

(Mrs. Shashibala Garg)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Mr. Raj Kumar Bhatia S/o Late Dharam Pal Bhatia R/o House No. J-25, Uttam Nagar West Delhi-110058 hereby declare that the schedule number of 1st and 2nd floor with roof rights Built Upon Plot No. 25 area measuring 25 sq yds part of Khata No. 20/20 situated at Village Hehal, Colony Known as J-BLOCK, Area Samaj Road, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110055; Herein after referred to as the "said property" through GIFT deed vide Document No. 2445, Volume No. 8613, pages 183 to 190, Book No. 1, dated 31/07/2023 executed by Mrs. Janki Devi W/o Late Dharam Pal Bhatia whereas she was owner of said property through Will dated 28/05/2005 said property is free from all encumbrances, liens, charges, mortgages etc. and I have clear and marketable title and possession of the property and Mr. Raj Kumar Bhatia s/o Late Dharam Pal Bhatia declare that the said Will is Final Will in respect to said property whereas other Legal Heirs of Mr. Dharam Pal Bhatia have no objection kindly contact on 986971075 (Advocate Lalit Kumar Kaushik).

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is given to public at large that my client, Mrs. Protektus Capital Pvt. Ltd., having its registered office at 7-E, 5th Floor, DRI Building, Swami Ramkrishn Nagar, Ram Jhansi Road, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi-110058, (hereinafter referred to as "Borrower") has sanctioned credit facility to Valspurg India Private Limited and Mr. Vijender Kumar, Mr. Satyaprakash Sharma, Mr. Hanom Sharma, Mr. Yogesh Sharma & Mr. Vikram Sharma (Borrowers/Co-Borrowers/Mortgagor) on condition "that the Borrower/Mortgagor shall mortgage the property more particularly described in the schedule hereunder written (Schedule of Property) to the lender and has confirmed and declared that the Scheduled property is solely jointly owned and possessed by the Borrower/Mortgagor by virtue of sale deeds/gift deeds/transfer deed registered with the sub-registrar and assured that the Scheduled property free from all encumbrances and have clean and marketable title and exclusive right to mortgage and deal with the Scheduled Property. Therefore any persons) having any right, title, interest or claim in respect of said property or any part thereof by way of a gift, lease, inheritance, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, beneficial interest, possession, easement, tenancy, sub-tenancy, license, hypothecation, maintenance, inheritance, power of attorney, order, decrees, award attachment or otherwise howsoever else hereby "agreed to make the true deed in writing together with supporting documents at undersigned address within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which my client will proceed to disburse the loan, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, shall be considered decided to have been waived and/or abandoned. SCHEDULE (Property Description) Properties situated at Brahmanan, Sector - 22F, Near Yamuna Expressway, YEIDA City, Jawar, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) being plots as mentioned below:- Plot no 227A, 1124.26 sq name vijender kumar deed ref. document no 10966 dated 27.9.2022. Plot no 227B, 1349 sq name Satyaprakash Sharma deed ref. document no 10954 dated 26.9.2022. Plot no 227C, 1124.26 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227D, 1349 sq name Vikram Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227E & 227F, 1349 sq name Vikram Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227G, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227H, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227I, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227J, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227K, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227L, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227M, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227N, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227O, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227P, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227Q, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227R, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227S, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227T, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227U, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227V, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227W, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227X, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227Y, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227Z, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AA, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AB, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AC, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AD, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AE, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AF, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AG, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AH, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AI, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AJ, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AK, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AL, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AM, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AN, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AO, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AP, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AQ, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AR, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AS, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AT, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AU, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AV, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AW, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AX, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AY, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227AZ, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BA, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BB, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BC, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BD, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BE, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BF, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BG, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BH, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BI, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BJ, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BK, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BL, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13774 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BM, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13775 dated 15.12.2022. Plot no 227BN, 1349 sq name Hanom Sharma deed ref. document no 13

JNU rescinds harsh new rules for students after VC steps in

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid criticism, the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Thursday withdrew a notice that stipulated students can face a fine of Rs 50,000 for violence, abuse and protesting on campus. Interestingly, JNU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Santishree Pandit claimed that she was not aware that such a document was prepared and released. "I was not aware of such a circular. I am in Hubli for an international conference. The Chief Proctor did not consult me before releasing the document. I got to know about it through newspapers. That is why, I have withdrawn it," Pandit said. In a notification, Chief Proctor Rajnish Kumar Mishra said, "In view of administrative reasons, the notification dated 28.2.2023 in respect of rules of discipline and proper conduct of students of JNU is hereby withdrawn.

This has been issued on the directions of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor."

This comes after the 10-page document drew a sharp reaction from students and teachers, who termed it draconian.

The document titled 'Rules of Discipline and proper conduct of students of JNU' had laid out punishments for different kinds of acts like protests and forgery, and procedures for proctorial enquiry and recording a statement.

The punishment ranged from a fine of Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000 or rustication and cancellation of admission. According to the now-withdrawn rules, a student might face a fine of Rs 50,000 for physical violence, abuse and manhandling towards another student, staff, or faculty members.

According to the now-deleted document, the rules came into effect on February 3.

It came after the university witnessed a slew of protests over the screening of a BBC documentary. The rules document stated that it has been approved by the Executive Council, the highest decision-making body of the university.

Punishments were listed for 17 "crimes", including blockage, indulging in gambling, unauthorised occupation of hostel rooms, use of abusive and derogatory language and committing forgery. The rules also mention that a copy of the complaints will be sent to the parents.

It proposed punishments for all acts of violence and coercion such as gheraos, sit-ins or any variation which disrupts normal academic and administrative functioning and/or any act which incites or leads to violence.

A fine of up to Rs 20,000 would have been levied.

According to the old rules, for gheraos, demonstrations

and sexual harassment, the proposed punishments were cancellation of admission, rustication and expulsion.

An Executive Council member, who did not wish to be named, has said the matter was not discussed at length in the EC meeting and "we were told that the rules have been created for court matters". Another Executive Council member Brahma Prakash Singh said: "The university might have planned to streamline the process and prepare a full document but it should have been discussed in the EC meeting properly.

Some of the rules are absurd." The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad's JNU secretary Vikas Patel on Wednesday termed the new rules "authoritarian (tughlaqi)" while asserting that the old code of conduct was sufficiently effective. He demanded a rollback of this "draconian" code of conduct.

Panel for blocking illegal mobile usage in Delhi jails gets LG nod

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena has approved the formation of a high-level committee to suggest ways of addressing illegal and unauthorised telephone communication in the national Capital's prisons.

The 10-member panel, headed by Director General (Prisons) Sanjay Baniwal, has been instructed to submit its recommendations within a month. The other members are experts and scientists from IIT-Madras, IISc-Bangalore, Defence Research and Development Organisation, C-DOT and officers from the Intelligence Bureau and the Special Protection Group.

"The committee will explore suitable jamming solutions emerging in the market (in addition to the existing infrastructure) and their testing in prisons to check their effectiveness in blocking incoming/outgoing calls, SMS



and data services on prison premises," a Raj Niwas official said. In Tihar, the country's largest prison which houses close to 18,000 undertrials, there is not a single mobile phone jammer that is capable of blocking 4G signals. Between 2008 and 2012, 31 mobile phone jammers were installed in Tihar and Rohini jails. These jammers were effective in blocking 2G and 3G services. However, after the introduction of 4G services, these became ineffective, he said. As a result, the annual maintenance contracts for these 31 jammers were not renewed after November 2016. Subsequently, a committee constituted under the then-Director General (Prisons) proposed and decided on an alter-

native solution in the form of Towers for Harmonious Call Blocking System (T-HCBS), for blocking 2G/3G/4G signals. This system was chosen for its ability to block 5G signals as well, the official said. This system entailed installing one or more "special towers" on the jail premises.

The T-HCBS, which follow a hybrid approach to jamming, were installed in various Delhi prisons. However, despite being effective to a large extent, the system could not prevent telephone communication in totality, the official explained. These towers were also blocking calls and data services of the general public in residential areas around the prisons, he added.

"It was also learnt that if the dominant T-HCBS or the second layer tower fails to generate signals, the third layer tower can also provide signals to execute calls and, therefore, 100 per cent call blocking could not be achieved," he

said. This apart, factors such as non-coverage of dark areas, shadow areas, multi-path propagation, fading and atmospheric conditions, among others also affected the T-HCBS's functioning.

To address these concerns, based on the actual situation on the ground, officials felt a need to explore other existing and emerging solutions to curb the use of mobiles and SIM cards in the prisons and to ensure that no communication is possible on the premises, he added.

A cell phone is a prohibited item inside prison, but it is smuggled by prisoners when they go out for court hearings. The prisoners even hide the phone in their body cavities and take it inside.

There are many instances of prisoners swallowing cell phones to smuggle it inside. Apart from this the phones are also thrown by accomplices of the prisoners from main road, outside prison complex, inside prison.

AAP Govt has made Delhi capital of scams, says BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva and Leader of Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said in a joint press conference that in the last eight years, the Arvind Kejriwal Government has made Delhi the capital of corruption and scams.

"Excise scam, education scam, transport scam, health scam. The list of scams is long," the BJP leaders alleged. Delhi BJP also decided to hold public awareness campaigns against AAP leaders' corruption charges and the excise policy case.

Sachdeva said that Kejriwal claims that he has given the country's best health and education Minister, but the truth is that he has given the mastermind of two scams to the country, who are in jail today and despite repeated attempts not getting bail.

He said that Kejriwal is saying that he would go to the public but then he should also explain why he withdrew the liquor policy, why he gave tenders to blacklisted companies and why Satyendar Jain's resignation was not taken for so many months. Sachdeva said



that it is doubtless that the AAP is a destructive storm due to which the administration of Delhi is at a standstill and anarchy is prevailing.

Bidhuri said that today Kejriwal is talking about development but the fact is that the Government only looted Delhi by doing scam of thousands of crores.

"The Kejriwal Government, which talks big about health, has done a scam in building seven temporary hospitals, which is under investigation," he alleged. He alleged that Kejriwal was feeling the need of 15,000 buses before forming the Government, but after coming to power he did not buy a single bus. Kejriwal,

who talked about opening 1000 mohalla clinics, could only open 350 mohalla clinics in which now medicines and basic facilities are not available.

Bidhuri said that today the roads of Delhi are deplorable. There is no account of what happened to the Rs 2500 crore given by the Central Government for cleaning the Yamuna. "Kejriwal, who talks about education, should tell why 50 schools were closed. Delhi ranks 8th in terms of education," he said.

He said the Central Government has built a tunnel at Pragati Maidan, in which 27 per cent fund was to be given by the Delhi Government, but it did not give a single rupee.

Will inform people of BJP dictatorship: AAP

Party to hold 'mohalla and nukkad sabhas' to reach out to Delhiites

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

The AAP will launch door-to-door campaigns and hold 2,500 'mohalla sabhas' and 'nukkad sabhas' to reach out to Delhiites and inform them about the 'dictatorship' of the BJP. On Thursday, a meeting was chaired by Delhi State convenor Gopal Rai and it was decided to organise 'mohalla sabhas' and 'nukkad sabhas' to reach out to Delhiites and inform them about the misuse of probe agencies by the Central Government.

After the meeting, Rai said that on Friday a volunteer meeting will be held in all 70 Assembly constituencies in Delhi to expose the BJP. After that, on Saturday, the party will hold mohalla sabhas at the State level. Further, on Sunday and

Monday, meetings will be held in every polling station of Delhi. Eventually on March 10, 'nukkad sabhas' will be held in every neighbourhood of Delhi.

Rai said, "PM Modi has adopted an authoritarian approach and arrested the country's best education Minister Manish Sisodia and also misused the central agencies to keep Satyendar Jain in jail."

On Wednesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal held a meeting with all his MLAs and Councillors and asked them to reach out to Delhiites and tell them the truth of the case. "Every plot and conspiracy of the BJP will be given a strong answer. Our party workers will reach out to the people and reveal to them how the central agencies were misused by the Modi Government to arrest our leaders. Our 'nukkad sabhas' in every neighbourhood will reveal the conspiracy organised by Modi to stop AAP," he said.

Gahlot takes charge of his new departments

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot took over the charge of his newly allocated departments on Thursday and held meetings with the related Secretaries and Commissioners.

Secretary (Power), Principal Secretary (Finance and Planning), and Commissioner (Excise) apprised the Minister of the status of ongoing projects and schemes in a series of meetings, the Government said in a release. The Minister also discussed the preparation of the budget with the officials and asked them to ensure the timely completion of pending works. In the statement, Gahlot said that all the Secretaries and Commissioners have been directed to expedite the pending works and ensure the timely completion of the projects. He further said, "Under the able leadership of

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, we are working on a war footing to present a citizen-centric and progressive budget. I would like to assure the Delhiites that the upcoming budget will prove to be a milestone in achieving the goals of making Delhi a world class city for its citizens."

The Minister further said, "We will take forward the good works done in various fields by this Government in the last 8 years. Presenting a people-friendly budget is our priority and we are working towards it."

Gahlot had recently been allocated the Finance, Planning, Public Works, Power, Home, Urban Development, Irrigation and Flood Control, Water departments in addition to the responsibility of all other departments not specifically allocated to any minister after Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia resigned from the government after his arrest by the CBI in the excise case-and subsequent denial of bail.

Kejriwal hails SC's verdict on CEC's appointment



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Thursday hailed the Supreme Court ruling on the appointment of election commissioners as "historic", saying it will help strengthen democracy with an impartial functioning of the poll panel.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hailed the Supreme Court decisions on the appointment of election commissioners and matters involving the business empire of industrialist Gautam Adani as landmark orders. "Truly landmark orders by Hon'ble SC on both EC and Adani issues. We welcome both the orders," Kejriwal said in a tweet.

For a long time, questions were being raised on the functioning of the Election Commission (EC), the AAP's national spokesperson Sanjay Singh told a press conference here, reacting to the apex court's decision.

The Supreme Court has ruled that the appointments of the chief election commissioner and election commissioners will be made by the president on the advice of a committee comprising the prime minister, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha and the chief justice of India.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph, in a unanimous verdict, held that this norm will continue to hold good till a law on the issue is enacted by Parliament.

The apex court said if the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha is not there, the leader of the single-largest opposition party will be in the committee to appoint the chief election commissioner and election commissioners.

Singh said the Supreme Court's decision is "significant, historic and worth welcoming". "This will help maintain fairness in the functioning of the EC," he said.

The Rajya sabha MP of the AAP leader alleged that before announcing poll dates, the EC "waits" for the prime minister and home minister to "conclude their rallies, public meetings and making announcements".

The apex court's decision on the appointment of election commissioners will help strengthen India's democracy and the Constitution, he added.

Scribe alleges fraud by Bumble crush; Noida cops launch probe

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

A journalist has alleged cyber fraud with her by a "Europe-based person" with whom she got connected through an online dating app, prompting the Noida Police to launch an investigation into the case.

The journalist (39) working with a TV news channel claimed she lost Rs 66,000 which she had to pay to the "customs office" in Mumbai to help the suspect whose "euro one lakh cash" got seized upon landing in India, they said.

The suspect identified himself as Manvik Bukka, a plastic surgeon who was born in Pune but is now based in the Netherlands.

"We first came in contact on January 16, 2023 on the Bumble dating app. We started chatting and he also introduced me over the phone to his mother.

"He left on January 31, 2023 from Amsterdam and landed in Mumbai on February 1. I got a call from someone from the customs office and she said that Manvik brought around 1 lakh euro cash in India which was seized," the journalist stated in the FIR.

"Manvik asked me to transfer Rs 45,000 as customs fees and Rs 50,000 as conversion fees to transfer money into an Indian account that is his SBI account.

"I gave Rs 66,000 but fell short and could not give more," she added.

The complainant said she was later informed that the authorities had to send Manvik back to Amsterdam on February 2 and after landing he was in touch with her till February 6 but thereafter she

did not get any message or call from him.

A Noida police official said the FIR has been lodged under Indian Penal Code section 420 (cheating) and under provisions of the Information Technology Act at the Sector 20 police station.

"An investigation has been launched into the case, which is now being probed by the Information Technology Cell of the Noida police," the police official said. Meanwhile, the police urged citizens to be cautious during online fund transfers and report any cyber offense immediately at the national helpline number 1930 or at 112. Noida and Greater Noida residents can also use the local police's dedicated helpline number 0121-4846100 to report any cyber offense.

Delhi Police arrests man for giving 'triple talaq' to wife

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a case against a man for allegedly pronouncing instant 'triple talaq', an offence under a law enacted in 2019 to protect Muslim women from this menace, on his wife.

Efforts are being made to arrest the accused, a property dealer, who has been absconding since the incident came to the fore, police said. On July 7, 2022, the 52-year-old accused allegedly abused and shouted "Talaak- Talaak- Talaak" before throwing his wife out of the house, police said.

The matter came to light after the woman, aged 50, approached officials at Bhajanpura police station in northeast Delhi with a complaint of domestic violence against her husband.

According to the police, the woman who has six children from the wedlock stated in her complaint that her husband left her and married a transgender which was amica-

bly terminated under social pressure from their community. However, her husband later married another woman and is residing somewhere in Kardampuri. "He was later pressuring her to vacate the house and also threatened her of dire consequences.

On July 7, 2022, her husband abused her and shouted "Talaak- Talaak- Talaak before throwing her out of the house," said a senior police officer quoting the complainant.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) Joy Tirkey said the victim's complaint was sent to Crime Against Women Cell for counselling. Accordingly, on the basis of her complaint, a case under section 4 of The Muslim Women Protection Of Rights On Marriage Act has been registered at the Bhajanpura police station and further investigation in the case is in progress.

On August 1, 2019, Parliament approved a bill that proposed making "instant 'triple talaq' a criminal offence.



People visit the international non-profit organisation Gideons' stall at the World Book Fair in Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Thursday, a day after a group of Right-wing activists attacked it for distributing free Holy Bibles, even though other religious texts were also being given away.

DGCA officer kills self, wife follows suit later

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 37-year-old senior Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) officer and his wife allegedly died by suicide at their home in South Delhi's Defence Colony on Wednesday. The deceased were identified as Ajay Pal Singh and Monika, 32, residents of Hudco Place in South Delhi. Singh worked as an operations manager at the DGCA, said the police.

The police received a PCR call regarding a possible suicide at a flat in Block-3A, Transit Camp Hudco Place, at 2.49 am. The call was made by Ajaypal's friend Ashish Tiwari, a resident of Mahavir Enclave in Palam. When the police reached the spot, they found Monika lying

unconscious with froth oozing from her mouth. She was taken to Safdarjung Hospital, where she was declared dead, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Chandan Chowdhary said. Her neighbours revealed that Ajaypal allegedly committed suicide earlier in the night. He was an operation officer at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation cell near Jor Bagh metro station, Chowdhary said.

Monika had allegedly found Ajaypal in an unconscious state and taken him to a hospital, where he was declared dead. Later, she came home, consumed a poisonous substance and killed herself, the police said. The couple got married on November 26. No suicide note was recovered

from the house and no foul play is suspected, the police said. Their neighbours told the police that they used to have frequent arguments. Ajaypal's elder brother Yogendrapal said he last spoke to him on Wednesday.

"They used to fight often over petty issues. My brother used to tell me about their fights. I spoke to him around 1 pm on Wednesday when he was in office. He told me that everything was going smoothly.

"I asked him to come home on Holi so that we could talk to them. When I was speaking to him, everything seemed fine and I did not have any idea that he would take such a step," Yogendrapal said. BS Ghritlehare, his brother-in-

law, said he received a call from Yogendrapal, telling him to reach Delhi. "I am posted with Chhattisgarh Police and received a call from Yogendrapal about the incident. He lives in Mumbai and asked me to reach Delhi as soon as possible. "The couple used to have petty fights and I spoke to them several times. Everyone is shocked by them ending their lives," Ghritlehare said.

Monika's brother said, "We were at home in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) when we got to know about the incident. We reached Delhi in the morning.

"She was my younger sister. Everything was going fine before this. Had we got any intimation about any issue, we would have immediately come."

NE wins due to emergence of new ideology, says Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the BJP scored clear election victories in Tripura and Nagaland, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday described them as emergence of "new ideology" in the North-East and blamed backwardness of the region to the "vote bank politics" of the Congress.

Modi was accorded a warm welcome by the party workers when he reached at BJP headquarters after his party scored poll wins Tripura and Nagaland and set to be in coalition power in Meghalaya.

"Today whenever I could watch TV, I saw results of Northeast all over... This is not a result of less distance between hearts but a reflection of a new ideology. Now Northeast is not far from Delhi or from hearts", said Modi addressing the enthusiastic supporters.

BJP president JP Nadda and Union home minister Amit Shah welcomed the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flashes victory sign at BJP workers as party president JP Nadda and Union Minister Amit Shah look on during celebrations after the party's good performance in Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya Assembly polls, at the BJP HQ in New Delhi, on Thursday

PTI Photo

Prime Minister at the event. In his speech, Modi blamed previous governments for the backwardness of the NE. "Providing tap water, electricity, gas connections & houses in the Northeast was not even on their list of work...previous

govts escaped from difficulties & left people here to suffer, our such efforts have made the country for the first time fight against poverty", he said amidst cheering workers. Even after seven decades, there was no electricity in Northeast, Modi

said. The Prime Minister said "Nagaland where majority is Christian has posed faith in BJP." Stressing that all communities were voting for the BJP, he said "we have seen in Gujarat polls how tribals voted for BJP. Minority was made to fear BJP, but we also busted that myth". Lashing-out at the Congress the Prime Minister said "Your (Congress) hatred towards small states will decimate the party."

BJP was termed Bania party, middle class party, but we have broken that perspective". Congress always focused on vote bank politics, he said. "Rivals saying Mar ja Modi, (Die Modi), but people are saying 'Mat ja Modi' (Modi don't go away)"

"Lotus blooming even after some people wishing to dig Modi's grave", he said. Modi said daughters of Tripura have supported BJP wholeheartedly. A woman has reached Assembly in Nagaland for the first time, he said.

Cong hopes of regaining lost NE turf dashed

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress hope to regain it lost turf in the North East by allying with Left party for the Assembly elections in Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland were dashed again with yet another round of dismal performance at the back-drop of resurrection move through Bharat Jodo Yatra and a non-Gandhi president in Mallikarjun Kharge.

However the only silver lining for the struggling grand old party came over three assembly bypolls win in Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Congress said the assembly election results in the northeastern states of Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya were "disappointing" for it, but touted its victory in three assembly bypolls in as many states as "encouraging".

While the party managed to open its account in Meghalaya and Tripura, it failed to win any seat in Nagaland. In the last polls in 2018, the Congress had failed to win any seat in Tripura and Nagaland. In Meghalaya, it did



emerge as the single largest party with 21 seats, but could not hold on to its MLAs and failed to form government then. The major loss of face was however in Tripura, where the Congress alliance with Left could not catapult itself beating the anti-incumbency against BJP that closely managed to retain.

Which means of the 180 assembly seats that went to polls in the three states last month, also the first electoral battle of 2023, Congress could win only 8. Icing on the cake for Congress came from the win of Sagardighi assembly bypoll in West Bengal, Kasba Peth in Maharashtra and Erode East in Tamil Nadu. In assembly elections of 2022, the

Congress could win just one – Himachal Pradesh- of the seven state polls. It lost Uttar Pradesh (only 2 seats), Goa (19), Manipur, Punjab (18), Uttarakhand (11) and Gujarat (17).

Other States where Congress is in power are Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. In Rajasthan, the tussle between chief minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot have been at loggerheads and washing dirty linens in public. However the brighter side in planning for the party comes from Karnataka.

The elections results have come as a disappointment to Kharge, who at recently concluded 85th plenary session of the party in Raipur, invoked for

beginning of a "new Congress." Now, what it considers to be a new Congress and fully revamped, the grand old party is expecting high from five states - Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and better its tally in Telangana, - from where the Rahul Gandhi led Bharat Jodo Yatra traversed during his 3500 km Kanniyakumri to Kashmir Yatra.

Congress is hopeful from another north east state Mizoram making it sixth State to go polls this year ahead of the major Lok Sabha 2024 for which several like minded parties from Opposition camp are hobnobbing to take on the Modi's political might who himself it set to score a hatrick given the present political equations.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said the party would soon assess assembly poll results and take corrective measures to strengthen organisation. "Our performance will be strong five years later," Ramesh insisted pointing to fact that party fielded youth candidates in northeastern states this time with an eye on future.

Opp welcomes SC's ruling on CEC appointment

Congress demands same formula should be applied to ED appointment also

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling on the appointments of the Chief Election Commissioner and election commissioners, saying the landmark judgment would pave the way for free and fair elections in the country. Welcoming the verdict Congress demanded that the

same formula be applied to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as well.

While the Congress said insulating EC from Government influence & dependence will secure the integrity of the electoral process, Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee termed the verdict is a victory of democracy. "Supreme Court's landmark order is a democratic victory! We welcome the decision of the Constitution Bench on the appointment of Election Commissioners and Chief Election Commissioner. Will of the people prevails over the ill-fated attempts of the oppressive forces!" she said on Twitter.

Party MP Derek O'Brien said the ruling will transform the "Extremely Compromised EC" to an "Extremely Competent EC".

While AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh also said that the judgment will strengthen democracy, Shiv Sena leader and member of the upper house Priyanka Chaturvedi hailed the Supreme Court and called the judgment a "landmark" order. "Truly landmark order from Supreme Court on top appointments of EC. A panel comprising PM, Leader of Opp/opposition leader of largest political party in Lok Sabha & the CJI for the top appointments in Election Commission. Earlier it was

the PM recommending names to the President," she said in a tweet.

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi termed the SC decision on appointments of election watchdog officers as historic and said steps are required to be taken to stop the misuse of agencies and institutions by the BJP-led government.

Currently, appointments on posts, such as those of the CBI chief, CVC, NHRC chairman and Lokpal, are effected by a three-member committee consisting of the prime minister, the CJI and the leader of opposition.

"We strongly welcome the historic decision of the Supreme Court, wherein it

held that the chief election commissioner must be appointed by way of a committee comprising the prime minister, the CJI and the leader of opposition (or the leader of the single-largest party)," Singhvi told at AIACC Press conference.

CPI (M) also welcomed the Supreme Court verdict and said it is a step in the right direction to ensure the independence of the poll body. In a statement, the Left party said, "This is a step forward in the direction of strengthening the independent authority and functioning of the Election Commission which alone is mandated to conduct a free and fair election under Article 324 of the Constitution."

‘India, Italy worried over impact of Ukraine war’

New Delhi: As the Ukraine conflict continues for more than a year now, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India was fully prepared to contribute to the peace process to find a solution to the Ukraine conflict.

"From the very beginning of the Ukraine conflict, India has made it clear that this dispute can only be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. India is fully prepared to contribute to any peace process," Modi said after bilateral talks with visiting Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

Addressing the media here alongside Modi, Meloni said



Italy hoped that India, during its G-20 presidency, plays a central role in facilitating and negotiating the process for cessation of hostilities in Ukraine.

Modi said he and the Italian Prime Minister voiced concerns over the adverse impact the Ukraine conflict has had on developing countries. He said all countries have been

impacted by the food, fertiliser and fuel crisis triggered by the Ukraine conflict. "Especially, developing countries have been affected adversely.

We voiced our concerns on this issue and stressed on joint efforts to address these issues," Modi said. His remarks on the Ukraine crisis come at a time when foreign ministers of G-20 countries are meeting here. As regards bilateral ties between India and Italy, Modi said both the countries have decided to elevate their bilateral ties to a strategic partnership, opening a new chapter on defence cooperation. **PNS**

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

Regd. Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390007
Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai- 400051
Regional Office : ICICI Bank Limited, NBCC Place, Bishma Pitamah Marg, Pragati Vihar, New Delhi- 110 003

**[Rule- 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited ("ICICI Bank") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, ("Rules") issued a demand notice dated May 21, 2022 calling upon the borrower M/s Nipman Fastener Industries Private Limited ("Borrower and Security Provider") to repay the entire outstanding amount as particularly mentioned in the notice being ₹ 22,22,66,648.83 (Rupees Twenty Two Crore Twenty Two Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Six Hundred Forty Eight and Paise Eighty Three Only) as on April 29, 2022 together with further interest, default/penal interest and other charges thereon till the date of realization ("Outstanding Dues"), within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower and Security Provider having failed to repay the Outstanding Dues, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and Security Provider as mentioned hereinabove and the public in general that the Court Receiver Mr. Rohan Garg, Advocate has taken the physical possession of the property described herein below, pursuant to the orders dated January 31, 2023 passed by the Hon'ble Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, South East District, Saket Court Complex, Delhi in MISC CRL No. 144/2023 in terms of the power vested under Section 14 of the said SARFAESI Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and has handed over the same to the undersigned, being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited on this 27th day of February 2023.

The Borrower and Security Provider in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the Secured Asset and any dealings with the Secured Asset will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank for an outstanding amount of ₹ 23,46,10,285.55 as on February 15, 2023 together with further interest, default/penal interest and other charges thereon till the date of realization.

The Borrower and Security Provider's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the Secured Asset.

Description of the Secured Asset

Commercial office space bearing no. DJ1004 on 10th Floor having a plinth area of 63.761 Sq. Mtrs. and super area of 98.128 Sq. Mtrs. (1056 Sq Ft) along with the parking space no. BP1044 in the basement being part of multistory building known as DLF Towers, Jasola (Tower B) situated at plot bearing no. 11, Non - Hierarchical Commercial Centre, Jasola, New Delhi.

Bounded by:
North: 1003 East: Open
South: 1005 West: Corridor

Date : March 03, 2023
Place: New Delhi

**Sd/-
(Authorized Officer)
ICICI Bank Limited**

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Regd. Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390007
Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai- 400051
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The Borrower and Security Provider having failed to repay the Outstanding Dues, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and Security Provider as mentioned hereinabove and the public in general that the Court Receiver Mr. Alok Pandey, Advocate has taken the physical possession of the property described herein below, pursuant to the orders dated January 31, 2023 passed by the Hon'ble Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, South East District, Saket Courts Complex, Delhi in MISC CRL No. 144/2023 in terms of the power vested under Section 14 of the said SARFAESI Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and has handed over the same to the undersigned, being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited on this 27th day of February 2023.

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Description of the Secured Asset

Commercial office space bearing no. DJ1004 on 10th Floor having a plinth area of 63.761 Sq. Mtrs. and super area of 98.128 Sq. Mtrs. (1056 Sq Ft) along with the parking space no. BP1045 in the basement being part of multistory building known as DLF Towers, Jasola (Tower B) situated at plot bearing no. 11, Non - Hierarchical Commercial Centre, Jasola, New Delhi.

Bounded by:
North: 1004 East: Open
South: 1006 West: Corridor

Date : March 03, 2023
Place: New Delhi

**Sd/-
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited**

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नवनिर्मित फ्लैट खरीदने का स्वर्णिम अवसर
(जहाँ है, जैसी है, स्थिति में ऑफर द्वारा एकमुश्त आधार पर विक्रय)
(रेरा पंजीयन क्र. P-GWL-17-080)

ई-ऑफर दिनांक
15.03.2023
तक आमंत्रित।

क्र.	उपलब्ध फ्लैट क्रमांक	फ्लैट के साथ संलग्न पार्किंग स्थल क्रमांक	फ्लैट का अनुमानित प्लिनथ क्षेत्रफल (वर्ग.मी.) (प्रति भवन)	फ्लैट का कॉरपेट क्षेत्रफल (वर्ग मी.)	फ्लैट का अपसेट मूल्य (रुपये) (प्रति इकाई)	धरोहर राशि (रुपये) (प्रति फ्लैट)	आवेदन शुल्क (रुपये) (प्रति इकाई) देय + जी.एस.टी.
1	HIG (3BHK) 603	24 (खुला स्थल)	110.00	95.97 (78.29+16.60)	5866000/-	117320/-	1180/-
2	MIG B (2BHK) 601	23 (खुला स्थल)	88.00	75.67 (62.83+12.84)	4694000/-	938800/-	1180/-
3	MIG A (2BHK) 404	15	84.50	74.46 (61.62+12.84)	4557000/-	911400/-	1180/-
4	MIG A (2BHK) 504	22 (खुला स्थल)	84.50	74.46 (61.62+12.84)	4507000/-	901400/-	1180/-
5	MIG A (2BHK) 604	25 (खुला स्थल)	84.50	74.46 (61.62+12.84)	4507000/-	901400/-	1180/-

नोट :- (1) ऑफर डालने के पूर्व निर्मित फ्लैट एवं उसके साथ दिये गये पार्किंग स्थल का अद्यतन निरीक्षण कर ही ऑफर डालें। (2) एक फ्लैट के लिए पार्किंग हेतु एक स्थल बिना अतिरिक्त शुल्क के उपलब्ध। (3) कॉर्पस फण्ड, कर, शुल्क एवं लीजरेट इत्यादि पृथक् से देय होंगे। (4) ऑफर स्वीकृति उपरत धरोहर राशि में नियमानुसार कटौत कर वापस हो सकेंगी। (5) ऑफर डालने के पूर्व संपत्ति का अवलोकन कर लें। स्वयं के कारणों से ऑफर निरस्त कर राशि वापिस मांगने पर धरोहर राशि का 50 प्रतिशत कटौत कर शेष राशि वापस की जावेगी। (6) ऑनलाइन आवेदन/धरोहर राशि जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि 15.03.2023. (7) ऑनलाइन ऑफर बिड डालने की अंतिम तिथि 16.03.2023 समय 5.00 बजे तक। (8) ऑफर दिनांक 17.03.2023 को दोपहर 3.00 बजे ऑनलाइन खोला जावेगा। (9) संपत्ति के ऋण हेतु बैंक वित्तीय संस्थानों से विशेष सुविधा उपलब्ध। (10) मण्डल/शासन के नियम एवं शर्तें लागू।

सम्पर्क :- के.के. शर्मा (संपदा प्रबंधक) मो. 93011-09442, एस.के. गर्ग (उपयंत्री) मो. 94069-12144, रतन कक्कानी (उपयंत्री) मो. 62326-41721, आर.के. कक्कानी (उपयंत्री) मो. 99770-21556, राजेश्वर तिवारी (संपदा अधिकारी, संभाग-1 ग्वालियर) दूभाष : 0751-3585632, MP ONLINE

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FORM NO.5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Near Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION
Date: 20.02.2023
[Summons to defendants under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
Original Application No. 1139 of 2022
ICICI Bank Ltd.
V/s.
Dinesh Chandra & Others
To,
1. Dinesh Chandra
S/o. Sri Prayag Dutt Dhoundiyal
R/o. Flat-260C, Nyay Khand-II, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad- 201014
Defendant No. 1.
2. Bal Krishan Dhoundiyal
S/o. Sri Prayag Dutt Dhoundiyal
R/o. Flat-260C, Nyay Khand-II, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad- 201014
Defendant No. 2.
3. M/s. Jatasya Promoters Pvt. Ltd.
Corporate Office: C-60, Sector- 63, Noida (U.P.)- 201301
Through its Managing Director
Defendant No. 3
In the above noted Original application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorised agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorised agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 21/08/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow

India strikes back at IC-814 hijacking accused after 2 decades

NIA attaches J&K house of terrorist living in Pakistan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

In a major offensive against terrorists operating from Pakistani soil, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday attached the property of Pakistan-based Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) terrorist Mushtaq Zargar, the founder and chief commander of terror group Al Umar Mujahideen,

who was released along with Masood Azhar, the notorious Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief, in exchange of passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines flight 814 (IC 814) at Kandahar in 1999.

Zargar alias Latram was also involved in the kidnapping of former Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's daughter, Rubaiya Sayeed in 1989.

"Zargar's two Marlas house (Khasra No. 182) at Ganai Mohalla, Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta, Srinagar, has been attached under the provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention

Act," the NIA said in a statement.

The procedure was carried out on Thursday by a team of NIA along with the representatives of district administration and local police, the agency said.

Zargar is a 'Designated Individual Terrorist' under the UA (P) Act and has been operating from Pakistan ever since his release and has been funding terror activities in the Valley, it said.

Zargar was earlier associated with Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and was responsible for several terror attacks in J&K. He has also been involved in other heinous

crimes, including murders, and has a close association with other terror outfits such as the Al-Qaeda and JeM.

Zargar was designated a terrorist by the Union Government under the Fourth Schedule of the UA (P) Act

He grew up in Nowhatta area of Srinagar and joined the JKLF. In 1989 he was one of the members who kidnapped Rubaiya Sayeed and negotiated her release in exchange of five terrorists.

He was arrested on May 15, 1992 and was released from jail on December 31, 1999, as part of the Indian Airlines Flight 814

hostage exchange deal.

Before targeting security forces and civilians in the Kashmir Valley Zargar had gone to Pakistan to obtain illegal arms training.

Last year while designating Zargar as a terrorist the Home Ministry notification had clearly stated that Zargar is a threat to peace, not only to India but across the world, with his contacts and proximity to radical terrorist groups like the Al-Qaeda and JeM and the Central Government believes that Zargar alias Latram is involved in terrorism and he is to be notified as a terrorist under the UA (P) Act.



Cong-Left alliance stuns TMC in Sagardighi bypolls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Sagardighi by-polls in Murshidabad district on Thursday saw the Congress-Left alliance handing down a stunning defeat to the ruling Trinamool Congress barely a year and a half after it roared back to power in the State Assembly elections in 2021 with 212 out of 294 seats reducing the Left-Congress to a naught for the first time post Independence.

Congress' Byron Biswas trounced his nearest rival Debasish Banerjee of the TMC by a whopping margin of 23,000 votes. While the Congress polled 47.35 percent votes as against TMC's 34.94 percent --- a good 5 percent less than what it got in 2021 --- the BJP which had secured about 23 percent votes in 2021

stopped at 13.94 percent votes.

Biswas, bagged 87,667 votes, while Debasish Banerjee of the TMC garnered 64,681 votes. BJP's Dilip Saha received 25,815 votes.

In 2021 the Left and the Congress contested from Sagardighi separately. A strong Left bastion since 1978 before falling into the TMC hands, Sagardighi went to the Congress for the first time since 1972 prompting party Lok Sabha Leader and Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury to say that Thursday's result was the "beginning of the end of Mamata Banerjee in Bengal."

Arithmetically the TMC which won Sagardighi by 50,000 votes one and a half year ago was in deficit of 73,000 votes compared to what it got in 2021, psephologists said



adding "a ruling party losing a by-election is anything but normal ... which means Sagardighi could well be a trend-setter for the coming days."

Curiously the TMC's defeat comes barely a few months ahead of the crucial panchayat elections and little more than a year before the 2024

general polls.

Curiously as well, Sagardighi comes barely a few months after top TMC bosses like Partha Chatterjee and Manik Bhattacharya going to jail on charges of large-scale corruption in school recruitment jobs. It also comes after self-styled TMC "don" --- of neighbouring Birbhum district

--- and party national executive member Anubrata Mondal going to jail on charges of cattle smuggling.

Sagardighi results assume importance against the backdrop of the fact that 65 percent of the voters here belong to the minority community which in respect of the entire State has otherwise been voting --- almost en bloc --- for Mamata Banerjee ever since 2014 general elections.

Reacting to the Thursday's triumph Chowdhury said, "the results here show that Mamata Banerjee is not invincible and that she also can be vanquished ... The message given by the people from this by-election that harder days are going to come for the TMC and that Sagardighi is going to be the trend setter in times to come."

He however said that the

people at ground level could have united against the "TMC's large-scale corruption hooliganism and arrogance which might have seen that many supporters of the TMC or even the BJP might have given vote to us."

Her usual self the Chief Minister however refused to concede defeat saying the Sagardighi was the product of an unholy alliance between the Congress, Left and the BJP. "This is an immoral alliance between the Congress, CPI(M) and the BJP which got 22 percent votes in 2021 but transferred 8 percent vote share to the Congress," Banerjee said adding her party would in any case continue to tow the Ekla Chalo line.

"We will not ally with any party in 2024 and contest the elections on our own," Banerjee said.

Mobile power bank goes off in Howrah-bound train



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The passengers of 12872 Titlagarh-to-Howrah Ishpat Express on Thursday had a providential escape when a power bank (mobile charger), being charged by some passenger suddenly exploded creating panic and a small fire inside the D7 coach of the running train.

Fortunately for the pas-

sengers the train had just passed the Banstala station on its way to Kharagpur when the incident occurred prompting the passengers to pull the chain and stop it.

While the passengers poured water on the plug point which had caught fire "soon the railway staff from Banstala reached the spot with fire extinguishers and put out the flames," sources said adding there was no injury.

Maha Cong wins bypoll in BJP stronghold

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ruling BJP suffered major jolt in Maharashtra on Thursday, as the Congress --- a constituent of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) --- snatched away from it its traditionally strong-hold seat of Kasba Peth constituency in Pune in the State Assembly by-poll after a gap of 27-long years.

However, in what came as a consolation, the BJP retained the neighbouring Chinchwad Assembly seat for which the by-poll was held along with that of Kasba Peth.

Congress nominee Ravindra Dhangekar --- who was the joint candidate of the MVA --- romped home in Kasba Peth constituency with a comfortable margin of 10,950 votes against the BJP candidate Hemant Rase. While Dhangekar polled 73,194 votes, the BJP's Rasane secured 62,244 votes. In Chinchwad, BJP's Ashwini Jagtap, widow of former sitting MLA, trounced the Opposition NCP candidate Nana Kate by a handsome margin of 36,070 votes.

While Ashwini polled 1,35,494 votes, Kate managed to get 99,424 votes.

Independent candidate and rebel Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena nominee Rahul Kalate ---who had been supported by the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi --- played a role of a spoil sport for the NCP candidate, walked away 40,075 votes. Had Kalate not contested the by-poll, the NCP had a chance winning the seat.

The two Assembly by-polls have been necessitated by the death of Kasba Peth's sitting MLA Mukta Tilak ---great-grand-daughter-in-law of the freedom-fighter Bal Gangadhar Lokmanya Tilak --- and



Chinchwad's sitting legislator Laxman Jagtap from Chinchwad, both from the BJP.

Today's was the second occasion when the Opposition MVA has won a by-election ever since hands with the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena

and toppled the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government in June last year. Earlier, in November last year, the MVA-backed Shiv Sena candidate Rutuja R. Latke had an easy walk-over in the Andheri East Assembly by-elections.



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addressing participants of the National Youth Parliament Festival 2023 in the Central Hall of Parliament on Thursday.

Jind killings: Gehlot announces relief of ₹5 L each for families of Junaid, Nasir

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday announced a relief package of Rs 5 lakh each for families of Junaid and Nasir, whose charred bodies were found in Haryana's Bhiwani district after they were abducted from Bharatpur.

"The state government will provide Rs 5 lakh compensation each to the wives and children of both the deceased. An amount of Rs 1 lakh each will be provided as cash whereas a fixed deposit of Rs 4 lakh each will be done so that the dependent families do not face any problem in the education and marriage of the kids," he told reporters.

The chief minister had met the family members of Junaid and Nasir at a temporary arrangement made near a helipad in Ghatmeeka village. He was accompanied by

Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh, Minister of State for Education and local MLA Zahida Khan, Congress state unit chief Govind Singh Dotasra, Chief Secretary Usha Sharma and DGP Umesh Mishra. Nasir (25) and Junaid alias Juna (35), both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes on February 15 and their bodies were found inside a burnt car in Loharu in Bhiwani in Haryana on the morning of February 16.

Nasir is survived by his wife, while Junaid is survived by his wife, six children and a mentally challenged brother.

Gehlot also said that he will talk to his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar to take the incident with utmost seriousness as it is of similar nature to the incident that happened in Udaipur



where a tailor was hacked to death. He said his government is committed to arresting the accused at the earliest and submit the charge sheet. Such a crime deserves nothing less than death penalty, he said.

A total of nine accused, including Bajrang Dal member Monu Manesar who runs a cow protection group, and Srikanth Pandit, whose mother lodged a complaint against the Rajasthan Police, have been named in the case so far.

The accused have been

booked under sections 143 (unlawful assembly), 365 (kidnapping), 367 (grievously hurt after kidnapping) and 368 (wrongfully keeping in confinement) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Two more IPC sections -- 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) -- were later added, police said.

Junaid had a criminal record of cattle smuggling and five cases were registered against him at different police stations, they said.

Have reservations over privileges committee in Raut case, says Pawar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party chief (NCP) Sharad Pawar on Thursday expressed reservations on the composition of the committee formed to hear the breach of privilege notice against Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut.

Speaker Rahul Narvekar on Wednesday set up a 15-member privileges committee of the House for 2023-24 to be headed by BJP legislator Rahul Kul, amid uproar over Raut allegedly calling the Vidhimanal (state legislature) "chor-mandal" (council of thieves). In a series of tweets, Pawar said the complainant has been entrusted with the task of justice delivery and members who demanded strict action against Raut are part of the privileges committee. "How can one expect justice," he



asked. Terming Raut's comments serious and an insult of the legislature, the speaker had said he would conduct an inquiry and give his ruling on March 8.

The committee comprises three MLAs of the NCP, two members of the Congress, two independent MLAs supporting the ruling alliance, two MLAs of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and six BJP MLAs. No MLA of the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction of the Shiv Sena found a place on the panel.

Pawar said Raut's comments need to be seen in totality.

Gaya massacre main accused gets life term

PTI ■ GAYA

A court in Bihar on Thursday awarded life sentence to the prime accused in one of the bloodiest massacres in the state's history by an outlawed Maoist outfit, which had hacked to death nearly 40 people three decades ago.

District and Sessions Judge, Gaya, Manoj Kumar Tiwari, also slapped Ram Chandra Yadav alias Kirani with a fine of Rs 3.05 lakh, holding him guilty under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act and Sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC.

Kirani was named in the massacre that took place in Bara village of Gaya district on February 12, 1992, when 37 upper caste Bhumihars were butchered by the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC).

Central Bihar hogged the limelight in the 1980s and 1990s for a chain of retributive



violence involving ultra-Left guerrillas and private militia of upper caste landlords.

The Bara massacre had been described by the MCC as "revenge" for killing of dalits elsewhere by the 'Savarna Liberation Front', one of the many upper caste militias that had cropped during the time, the most notorious being the 'Ranvir Sena', which was held responsible for the Laxmanpur Bathe massacre of Jehanabad, where 67 dalits were killed.

Kirani's counsel Tariq Ali told reporters after the verdict that "we are not satisfied and look forward to challenging the trial court order before the Supreme Court, since TADA cases cannot be heard by high courts".

Residents of 'city of temples' Jammu chase dream of 'solar city'

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The residents of 'smart city' Jammu have started chasing a new dream of transforming the 'city of temples' into a 'solar city' soon.

To realise this dream, the UT administration is also fully geared up to successfully implement the Government of India's Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme, Phase-II to ensure that the electricity needs of the city are fully met from solar energy.

According to official sources, "more than 5 Mega Watt (MW) capacity has already been installed on the residential buildings in different parts of Jammu city".

To generate more awareness and showcase different options a seven day long Solar expo was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) in Jammu.

The expo received a healthy response. Around 29 exhibitors from across the country displayed their products/technologies.

One of the exhibitors Pradeep Sharma of PK Premium Solar Solutions told The Pioneer, "during the week long 'Solar' expo in Jammu a large number of local residents showed keen interest in switching over to solar power".

He said, "JAKEDA has already set a target of installa-



tion of 200 MW grid-tied rooftop solar power plants on approximately 50,000 residential buildings in Jammu city under its "Solar City Mission" at an estimated cost of Rs 1040

crore. The project will be completed by March, 2024 and will have a lifetime of 25 years".

He said the government has already subsidized installation of solar power panels on

residential houses at the cost of Rs. 58,739, Rs. 53,995, Rs. 52,594, and Rs. 51,309 for Category-A (Up to 1 kW), Category-B (> 1 kW to 2 kW), Category-C (> 2kW up to 3 kW), and Category-D (> 3 kW up to 10 kW), respectively.

Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology, Saurabh Bhagat while inaugurating a week long mega Solar Expo at Rail Head said that the initiative will immensely help in raising awareness among the people about the benefits of rooftop solar plants.

He reaffirmed that the UT Government is committed to provide all support to ven-

dors and the people while asking people to get maximum benefit from the scheme.

He asked JAKEDA to organize more such awareness camps and expos across other areas of Jammu city so that people would know about rooftop solar plant and its financing pattern and scheme.

Commissioner Secretary also apprised of various benefits being extended by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Government of Jammu and Kashmir under Grid Connected Rooftop Solar (GCRT-SPV) and PM-KUSUM schemes.

He informed that under GCRT-SPV, which entails a

collective subsidy of 65 percent, the Domestic Consumers of DISCOM's can offset their monthly electricity bills under Net-Metering mechanism and under PM-KUSUM scheme which is primarily meant for upliftment of farmers. The farmers can install subsidized Solar Powered Pumps upto 10 HP capacity, for irrigation of their farmlands with a choice of AC/DC surface and submersible pumps.

He added that the project is also expected to provide employment opportunities to around ten thousand youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K has a good potential for solar energy and the renewable energy capacity would

help to bridge a part of its power requirement. Under the new budget in PM KUSUM Scheme, 375 Solar Water Pumps will be installed in 2022-23 providing electricity benefit to 47159 souls, direct agriculture benefit to 18750 souls, and indirect agriculture benefit to 160000 souls.

With the implementation of the project, J&K will benefit from the generation of approximately 280 million units of energy annually, with a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 5.44 million tons, besides reaping gains from savings on account of interstate transmission losses to the tune of 224 million units.

Lotus blooms

BJP’s performance in NE shows that Modi’s charisma and Amit Shah’s political acumen are unmatched

The Bharatiya Janata Party has once again shown its electoral prowess, this time in the North East. The fact that it seems to be retaining Tripura on its own is quite creditable. As in other states, the saffron party removed Biplab Deb as chief minister last year. Deb had played a key role in the BJP’s victory in the state in 2018, but he didn’t excel as chief minister. Worse, his loose remarks often attracted ridicule. For instance, in April 2018, he claimed the internet existed during the Mahabharata period. The BJP realised his inadequacies; and it was nimble-footed enough to replace him in May last year with Manik Saha. By the way, Saha has been able to retain his seat in the Town Bardowali constituency. Former royal scion Pradyot Kishore’s Tipra Motha Party doesn’t seem to have damaged the prospects of the BJP, even though the new party did get a good number of seats. The BJP has already said that it would accept all demands of Tipra Motha, except for Greater Tripaland. In Nagaland too, the BJP, in alliance with the local partner NDPP, was marching towards victory at the time of the writing of these lines. Only in Meghalaya has the saffron party not been able to do very good. On the whole, however, the BJP should be satisfied, for it has not just been able to retain Tripura but also made its presence felt in the region.

It may be mentioned here that in the North East, apart from the local parties, it was only the Congress and, in some parts, the Left that were politically strong. Against this backdrop, the saffron party has done a commendable job in the region. It is likely to spread its influence, and this may also be by partnering with local parties. The local parties have always been keen to have good relations with the Central Government and whichever party runs it. Besides, the BJP will rely on its own cadre and that of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The Hindutva party may also undergo ideological and political moderation because of its experience in the North East—particularly its bovine nationalism. Consider this: in July 2021, Meghalaya minister and BJP member Sanbor Shullai encouraged the people in his state to eat more beef than chicken, mutton and fish. Some of the rough edges of the BJP may get smoothened; this will be good for the party as well as the country. Concomitantly, results of the Assembly elections in the three North Eastern states show that the decline of the Congress continues unabated. Despite the enthusiasm party leader Rahul Gandhi’s Bharat Jodo Yatra instilled in the hearts and minds of the cadre, the GOP has failed to translate that enthusiasm into votes—at least in these three states. For the nth time, it has been demonstrated that the charisma of Narendra Modi and the political acumen of Amit Shah are unmatched. The Modi juggernaut marches ahead.



Offline is a new luxury

Digital detox is necessary to rejuvenate oneself, as long exposure to electronic devices could lead to burnout

The digital world has brought us to the age of 24-hour thereby creating a type of behavioural addiction where events have directly or indirectly started affecting our lives. In today’s fast-paced environment, we are constantly connected to our devices, and it has overwhelmed us at times too. In a hyper-connected world, being ‘online’ or ‘available’ is the new normal. Going offline or disconnecting from the digital world is something that is reserved for someone who can afford to use the technology at will rather than treat it as a necessity. The technology that has enabled us to stay connected, live faster and have fuller lives has given birth to a new norm or terminology “Digital Detox”.

Digital detox refers to a period where the person avoids or abstains from the use of electronic devices such as smartphones or computers connected to the internet to reduce stress and focus more on their well-being and interaction with others. A digital detox can be as extreme or light as one wants it to be. By disconnecting, the eyes and the body are allowed to rest and recharge. Excessive screen time causes eye strain, headaches and even distorted sleep patterns. According to the research, in many situations continuous scrolling has proven to be harmful to mental as well as physical health. The addiction has even led to obsessive-compulsive behaviour, anxiety and depression. Not only this, continuous use of work on mobile phones or computers causes inflammation of the tendons of the thumb, and causes back, neck and shoulder pains too. Deleting or uninstalling the most unessential applications, scheduling time to silence notifications, participating in activities without posting or posing for a few days or weeks, having no or low



social media usage, and spending more time with families in terms of vacations or short picnics are a few ways to reduce the screen time and break the chain of digital addiction. Digital detox opens avenues for awareness and insight for everyone in some way or the other. Listed here are the top 5 benefits of an occasional digital detox:-

1. Improved Mental and Physical Health: A digital detox thereby helps giving the brain a break from the constant stimulation of notifications and news followed by relaxation and reduced stress levels.
2. Increased Productivity: Since the individual will be away from the use of digital devices, such detox will help reduce distractions and allow an individual to focus on tasks and activities that are

The mischievous foreign hand

Foreign powers are working overtime to discredit the Modi government but they may be defeated in their own game

Indians and India’s politics are getting a lot of attention from foreign press and individuals/institutions having vast resources at their disposal. BBC, Hindenburg and George Soros are resourceful and they possibly influence the opinion-making process. Two important questions need a thorough analysis of this entire episode. The first question is whether the foreign individuals/institutions who are raising questions on India are impartial in their approach, and can their report be taken as gospel? The second question is will there be any impact on Indian politics due to their active and apparent involvement and if yes, then in which direction?

BBC is known for its partisan reporting and it has been banned twice in India. Left-leaning articles and documentaries are not new for the foreign press. Many British law-makers have slammed the propaganda document which has been released by the BBC. They have gone to the extent of saying that Modi has been exonerated by the judiciary and the documentary insults the democratically elected Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world.

Politics is not a place for saints and this is equally applicable to the financial world. US short seller firm Hindenburg accused Indian conglomerate Adani Group of wrongdoings and also disclosed that it has taken short positions in the Adani group. A short seller makes money when the stock price of the entity in which it holds a position goes down and therefore it was prudent for the Indian media to look into the merits of the accusations because the Hindenburg report can’t be taken at face value when it has vested interest in the downfall of stock and such apparent conflict of interest raises questions on ethics as well.

Instead of raising concrete questions on financial performance, liquidity, solvency, debt position, pledged assets by promoters, cash flow to debt/interest (coverage ratio), profitability, corporate governance etc., the



report was more like beating around the bush. However, a section of the media was in a hurry because for them it was an opportunity to attack Modi due to his alleged proximity with Adani. Opposition and media trained their guns which were loaded with canons supplied by a foreign agency. For perspective, when Air India placed an order for aircraft then leaders from US, UK and French welcomed this move and called it historic which is going to create jobs and improve their economy. Had this happened in India, the entire opposition would have alleged that the PM is on the payroll of the company and he is selling the country.

George Soros is a billionaire who long ago admitted in an interview that he is only interested in making money, and he can’t and doesn’t look at the social consequences of what he does. The man is known for making money out of the financial crisis (e.g., breaking the Bank of England in 1992, and the Asian financial crisis in 1997) for which he has no regret. He has pledged 1bn USD to stop ‘nationalist’. He calls for the furtherance of democracy but he is funding organisations that decline Israel’s right to exist, the only democracy

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GEORGE SOROS IS A BILLIONAIRE WHO LONG AGO ADMITTED IN AN INTERVIEW THAT HE IS ONLY INTERESTED IN MAKING MONEY

in west Asia. The man is trying to project himself as a messiah but his modus-operandi indicates that he is more into influencing politics and making the money out of the chaos. He has a history of funding the organisations which fuel unrest and his organisation Open Society Foundation launched India-specific funds in 2014 (when Modi came to power). Instead of celebrating this man’s involvement in our internal affairs, every Indian should be cautious about the evil designs which he and his organisation perpetrated in the past.

On the second question related to the impact of these developments, it can be safely concluded that BJP has delivered a fool toss ball and the shot is going to hit the stands. Very often Congress which is the largest opposition party gets linked with foreign entities which are not so friendly with India. In a television discussion a few years back, Mani Shankar Aiyar requested Pakistan to help Congress come back to power. A confidential MOU between Congress and the Chinese Communist Party becomes a topic of discussion whenever Indo-China relations go sour. The shady past of the Congress and attack on

Modi from foreign soil is giving a message that ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ was only a façade and the grand old party has allies who want to break our nation. Keeping the politics aside, such blatant accusations and interference in our internal affairs is a clear sign that the West is still living in a colonial hangover and they are unable to digest our rise in the global order.

The recent attack on Modi by BBC, Hindenburg and Soros has given new weapons to BJP’s arsenal. New age BJP knows to harvest every opportunity which has now been given to it on a platter. The ruling party has rightly started giving a message to the people of this country that foreign parties are now hand-in-glove with the opposition and they want to intervene in our democratic process. No matter how much Congress wants to distance itself from these legitimate questions, it’s going to haunt them in the upcoming parliamentary elections. After all, we are the largest democracy and the people of this country will have the last word.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant, author and public policy analyst. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POOR WICKET

Sir — Whatever was said and done, the Madavrao Scindia displayed poor advertisement for test match cricket as wickets fell like ninepins on the opening day. We missed out on competitive games in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as the wickets couldn’t last for 3 days. Spin bowlers dominated the scene of action in this series. It is a matter of concern for International cricket as we make pitches for getting a spot in the WTC final and fooling around in the gentleman’s game of cricket. Having seen test match cricket for the last 60 years it is a matter of now or never situation. The pity is that even the ICC is not questioning the quality of pitches in India. The goodwill amongst cricket playing conditions should be pruned up not by just playing IPL but by playing competitive cricket in bilateral series played in India

Akhilesh Krishnan | Calicut

SMASH PATRIARCHY

Sir — In India, if you ask average people on the street whether they want gender equality to smash the patriarchy, most people won’t have an answer and won’t even know what that means. This includes even the urban population. Most liberal types in India, at max, will talk about oppression and suppression, that’s it. Similarly, if you talk about inter-caste marriage or inter-religion marriage, most people will oppose that. India is a deeply conservative and traditional society with a usual, small share of liberal retards going around and even those will be majorly concentrated in the non-stem educated urban populace. All the progressive talk of smash caste, and smashing the patriarchy, is pushed by the elites and society has to play catch-up with them.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

NEW LITHIUM POLICY

Sir — The Indian government has recently announced its intention to develop a comprehensive lithium policy to promote

Discovery of a galaxy



Astrophysics is one such branch that is centred around the physical conditions responsible for the formation and degeneration of stars that is central to the understanding of the vast and ever-expanding universe. The mysteries of the universe keep unfolding and with every discovery shed fresh insights into how we perceive and interpret our galaxies. The knowledge of this peculiar phenomenon is still minuscule and still

eludes mankind. In this connection, the Hubble Telescope has recently discovered a jellyfish galaxy known as J0201 that lies in the constellation Cetus which is named after a sea monster from ancient Greek mythology. Its trailing tentacles of stars hang in the inky blackness as shown in the image from the Hubble telescope. As they move through intergalactic space they are slowly stripped of gas which trails behind the galaxy in tendrils illuminated by clumps of star formation. The tendrils of jellyfish galaxies extend beyond the bright disc of the galaxy’s core. This discovery can be a pathbreaker in understanding the connection between raw pressure stripping, the process that creates the tendrils of jellyfish galaxies and star formation.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

domestic production and reduce the country’s dependence on imported lithium. The policy aims to facilitate the production of lithium-ion batteries and support the electric vehicle industry in India, which is part of the country’s broader push towards a sustainable, green energy future.

According to reports, India currently imports around 80% of its lithium requirements, primarily from countries like China, Australia, and Chile. However, the increasing demand for lithium-ion batteries in electric vehicles and other applications has prompted the Indian government to focus on the domestic production of lithium.

The lithium policy will aim to establish a robust supply chain for lithium, from mining to processing to battery production, with a focus on creating incentives for domestic production and ensuring the environmentally sustainable mining of lithium reserves. It will also seek to promote research and development in lithium technologies, as well as facilitate collaborations between academia, industry, and government agencies.

The government plans to work with domestic companies to develop a competitive lithium-ion battery industry, which will support India’s goal of becoming a global hub for electric vehicle manufacturing. The policy is also expected to create job opportunities, boost economic growth, and reduce the country’s dependence on fossil fuels.

The development of a lithium policy is a significant step towards achieving India’s sustainable energy goals and promoting a clean energy future. However, it will require substantial investments and collaborations between industry players, research institutions, and government agencies to make it a reality. Nonetheless, the policy is an encouraging sign that India is committed to developing a strong domestic supply chain for critical raw materials like lithium, which will benefit the country’s economy, environment, and society in the long run.

Rajpal Singh Chouhan | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

‘WAR IS SLOWING DOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH’

The G20 meeting stresses the inter-dependence of world security and economy



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Bengaluru last week, brought almost every important eco strategy policy maker, around the globe to sit across the table to deliberate on key policy issues. It also laid bare the interdependent nature of security and economic issues, the globe faces today. In the heart of the difference between the US-led alliance of nations and the Russia sympathising nations, lay two controversial paragraphs with strong condemnation of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Paragraph 2 from the chair’s summary, released at the end of the meeting read “Since February 2022, we have also witnessed the war in Ukraine further adversely impact the global economy. There was a discussion on the issue. We reiterated our national positions as expressed in other fora, including the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, which, in Resolution No. ES-11/1 dated 2 March 2022, as adopted by majority vote (141 votes for, 5 against, 35 abstentions, 12 absent), deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine. ... G20 is not the forum to resolve security issues, we acknowledge that security issues can have significant consequences for the global economy.” Ideally, there would have been a joint press communique but, due to the severe objection from Russia and China, regarding the two paragraphs, it was converted into a chair’s summary. The summary meanwhile highlighted risks of slow global growth, inflationary trends, a resurgence in newer variants of the pandemic and the vulnerabilities of several emerging markets due to tightening financial conditions. India managed to push ahead with its stated agenda of bringing about reforms in the functioning of Multilateral Development Banks, in a nimble



way, by including several small but effective tangible outcomes in the chair’s summary. The summary tasked the expert group under India’s G20 presidency to present a report in the next couple of months on the “*World Bank’s Roadmap for evolving the Bank’s mission, operational approach, and financial capacity within their country engagement model and ... other MDBs to report on their efforts to address similar challenges.*” The world banks’ role, functions, goals and impact on national economies have come under severe criticism in the past several years, which was hugely aggravated during the pandemic. India has been championing multilateral institutional reforms, to reflect the changing dynamic of the geopolitical landscape and the rise of several economic powerhouses, especially in Asia. The G20 finance ministers will seek a roadmap from the international financial architecture working group on implementing the recommendations of the G20 independent review, of the multilateral development banks, within India’s G20 presidency tenure. Similarly, India managed to stay firm on it being the torch bearer of the global south, by getting the right verbiage included in the summary, of maintaining a strong global financial safety net, with a strong quota-based and adequately resourced International Monetary Fund. The debt vulnerabilities of many low and middle-income countries, many of whom are or sitting on the fence before going bankrupt could create chaos in the global economy. India unilaterally has extended relief to its southern neighbour Sri Lanka. Clearly, India did manage a good show at the first meeting of finance policymakers, but the underlying differences over security issues related to Ukraine prevented it from being the picture-perfect finish. India has to keep in mind these sensitivities as it proceeds with the remaining 200-plus meetings around G20, especially those with huge strategic interests such as external affairs, security and finance. It would be a tightrope that India needs to walk on, one step at a time like it has been doing for the last two years.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Creating Champions of the ‘Amrit Yatra’

The digital learning ecosystem is a prerequisite for creating champions of the future. This requires the integration of ICT with education



The Ministry of Education, in the recently presented union budget for FY 2023-24, has a share of ₹1,12,898.97 crores which is nearly 8% more from the preceding year and constitutes the highest ever allocation to the education sector. The focus of this budget is on some key imperatives of Education 4.0 viz., outcome-based education, skill development, Research & Development, technology-enabled learning, teachers’ training & recruitment and access to print and digital learning material across the country. Consequently, the learning system will help bridge the skill-gap and produce a technology-skilled workforce with global competencies, capable of meeting the requirements of IR 4.0 and providing solutions to contemporary issues. This exemplifies that the government is committed to making education a key driver of growth for inclusive development. We all agree that India urgently needs to bring skill development on par with academic excellence. Developed countries have already witnessed a major shift from knowledge-based to technology-driven economies. With a view to leveraging the benefits of the latest and emerging technologies in the solution-production-distribution chain, a provision has been made in this budget for the skill development of youth in new-age disciplines like Coding, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Mechatronics, Internet of Things and 3D Printing, Drones, etc. under PMKVY 4.0. This will help elevate the quality of human excellence in tune with the demands of an ever-evolving technology-driven economy. The budget provides for the setting up of 30 Skill India International Centres across the country to help promote interdisciplinary research for developing cutting-edge applications



DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY WITNESSED A MAJOR SHIFT FROM KNOWLEDGE-BASED TO TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN ECONOMIES

(The writer is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal)

to transform critical sectors and provide solutions for sustainable development. Concurrently, the provision for setting up three centres of excellence for Artificial Intelligence will help develop youth with competencies to leverage new technologies for innovations in different spheres of human endeavour. The target of training 47 lakh youths in 3 years under PMKVY 4.0, National Apprenticeship Scheme, on-the-job training in partnership with industry in new-age courses is indeed a commendable decision as it will help create a huge pool of technically skilled youth to turn India into an IT superpower. Additionally, the decision to extend the stipend to 47 lakh youth under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme through direct transfer benefits will help boost employability and the practical application of skills. This will also promote the integration of critical thinking and problem-solving capabilities through a dynamic and diverse curriculum. One hundred fifty-seven nursing colleges will be attached to the existing 157 medical colleges that will help overcome the shortage of trained health workers as was felt during the Corona pandemic. The digital learning ecosystem is the new normal. A prerequisite for creating such a system is the integration of ICT with education including digital teachers, digital learners, digital quality content and digital connectivity. As such, the provision in this budget for creating a National Digital Library and other IT enablers is appreciable. Budgetary provision for setting up one hundred 5G services enabled labs as incubators in engineering institutions across geographies to develop apps is an initiative with far-reaching consequences. Allocation for three Centres of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence is a major boost for realizing the mission of ‘Make AI in India and Make AI Work for India’. This will also leverage the benefits of AI in all spheres of human indulgence. Facilitating states to provide access to national digital library resources will increase the enrolment ratio in rural India, besides restoring the fast-dwindling reading habits. The online training platform is yet another initiative to help train youth in a unique and speedy manner. These will help create a conducive learning environment and nurture communication and creative skills among students. The provision for professional development of teachers through reskilling and up-skilling on critical components like curriculum design, development, enrichment, transaction, innovative pedagogy & assessment and ICT implementation for ensuring access to quality learning has been made for the first time. District Institutes of Education & Training will be revitalised into vibrant institutes of excellence for empowering teachers with these attributes. The decision to recruit 38,000 teachers for 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools is an intelligent decision for the delivery of uniform quality education across the nation. The vision of NEP2020 to make education equitable and inclusive will be furthered with the setting up of the National Digital Library along with physical libraries at panchayats and wards. This move shall make quality content accessible to millions of needy learners across the country and will help cope-up with the learning loss accrued owing to corona pandemic. Concurrently, this is also an initiative to ensure age-appropriate reading material to inspire people to resume studies that they abandoned due to socio-economic reasons. Facilitating students to learn English and regional languages in partnership with non-governmental organisations will improve their understanding of culture and its local and regional variants. National Book Trust and Children’s Book Trust are to ensure the availability of books in regional languages. These budgetary provisions are expected to fast-track the implementation of NEP 2020 and achieve its end objectives of transforming the extant education system into a learner-centric system relevant for the 21st Century and reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend of ‘Amrit Kaal Peedhi’ and helping them become champions of Amrit Yatra. A full-day webinar in six parallel sessions on the 25th of February on these provisions of the budget demonstrates the commitment of the Government to speedy implementation.

Make public places accessible to the disabled

Wholesome accessibility continues to elude persons with disabilities in India

Disability inclusion is a matter of justice and investment in our common future and shared prosperity. However, there has not been much change in our attitude or ground realities regarding facilitating the accessibility of persons with disabilities in India after 75 years of Independence. It shocked many when former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was moved from the front row of the Rajya Sabha to the last. Dr Singh (90), now uses a wheelchair and his ‘ease of mobility’ was cited as the reason for this change in the allocation of his seat in the Upper House of Parliament. This issue brings back the focus on the challenges of accessibility for the disabled. It is important to take a pause here and imagine



(The writer is Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, a cross-disability organisation working on advocacy for disabled people)

ine the plight of millions of disabled people who have to commute daily via public transport, visit local grocery stores, ATMs, use pavements, etc. when there is absolutely no city that is 100% disabled-friendly in India. For decades, disability has been viewed as an also-do subject. Yet governments as well as other stakeholders have taken many initiatives to address the issues around disability. Still, as the former PM’s case suggests, there are yawning gaps when it comes to universal access in public places. The not-so-satisfying outcomes raise questions about the strategy and methodology of these interventions. The Government of India, under its Accessible India campaign, launched a program to make Central and State government

buildings accessible. After the deadline for this campaign expired in June 2022, the Government reported that out of 1100 Central Government buildings, 1030 were made fully accessible, while only 595 out of 1423 selected buildings had been made fully accessible. Similarly, railway stations and airports have been upgraded to make these more accessible. All this work, in compliance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, is good, but only addresses a part of the problem. In addition to ensuring compliance with provisions of this progressive Act, we need to concerted work towards a focused push on expanding infrastructure support, institutional remodelling of our work culture, continued mass awareness and sensitiza-

tion programs, sustained policy dialogues and capacity building for people employed in the disability sector. The first and foremost task is to expand accessible infrastructure. NCERT’s 8th All India School Education Survey (AISES) brought some startling facts on schooling facilities for children with disabilities. Out of a total of 58,76,273 teachers, only 1.32% (80,942) teachers have received any kind of training in inclusive education. Out of the total schools in the country, only 10% have handrails, 4% have adapted labs and 8% have adapted toilets. Out of 12,99,902 schools, Braille books are available in 89,145 (6.86%), Braille Slate and Stylus in 88,775 (6.83%), Taylor Frame in 88,399 (6.80%), Abacus in 1,08,441

(8.34%), Hearing-aid in 94,882 (7.30%), Computer and Software in 1,00,334 (7.72%) and Audio-visual in 1,09,647 (8.44%) schools. This lack of accessibility is acting as a major hurdle in the holistic growth of disabled children and has led to children and parents opting for open education. The nation’s poor track record in enabling employment for disabled people is another area of concern since this is intricately linked with the issue of accessibility. The RPWD Act mandates a 4 per cent reservation in government jobs for disabled people. However, the record may be dismal - in the Central government, for instance, against 2036 appointments in 2018, the figure went down to 1709 in 2019, and 1375 in 2020. Add to this, the

rigid criteria of employment for disabled people resulted in many vacant posts. With reasonable accommodation, enabling an accessible work ecosystem, and assistive technologies, many persons with disabilities can be included in the workforce. This involved addressing the attitudinal barriers towards disability in society, deep-rooted stigma, and stereotypes. An NCPEDP-Javed Abidi Fellow carried out an independent audit of various tourist spots of Rishikesh, the Yoga Capital for the world and Dehradun in Uttarakhand to check for accessibility. It found loopholes in accessing tourist spots by persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are important to our socio-economic, cultural, and political

ecosystem. Unfortunately, they do not get what they need to live a dignified life. However, for them, the ease of living remains a distant dream. The social model of disability focuses on the interaction between a person and their environment, thereby highlighting the role of society and various institutions - government and private - in combating the stigma attached to people with disabilities. Private sectors, government procurements, and tenders - do not adhere to the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. Unless we create a culture that supports, promotes, and includes disability in all aspects of life, the vision of building a truly accessible, inclusive, and self-reliant India seems very far off.

Haley: Pak home to over a dozen terrorist groups

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian-American Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley has said that Pakistan is home to at least a dozen terrorist organisations and it should not receive any aid from the US, ramping up her attack on America's adversaries.

The 51-year-old two-term Governor of South Carolina and the former US Ambassador to the United Nations formally launched her 2024 presidential bid last month.

"Pakistan is home to at least a dozen terrorist organisations. #CutEveryCent," Haley tweeted Wednesday.

Over the past few days, Haley has been speaking on US foreign policy and asserting that the US should not give any financial assistance to countries that are friends and allies of China and Russia.

On Sunday, Haley in an op-ed in the New York Post wrote that if voted to power, she will cut foreign aid to countries like China and Pakistan which hate America. In an interview with Fox News on Sunday, she repeated her pledge to cut US foreign aid to countries that are friends and followers of Russia



Nikki Haley

and China, the two adversaries of the US.

Haley, who announced her candidacy on February 14 is all set to appear at Conservative Political Action Conference as a star speaker along with her former boss and former president Donald Trump.

As per the schedule, she will speak on Friday morning

and another presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy is scheduled for Friday afternoon. According to Haley, the Biden administration resumes military aid to Pakistan, though it's home to at least a dozen terrorist organisations and its government is deeply in hock to China.

She said that as the US

ambassador to the UN, she strongly supported then-president Donald Trump's decision to cut nearly USD 2 billion of military aid to Pakistan because that country supported terrorists who kill American troops.

"It was a major victory for our troops, our taxpayers and our vital interests, but it didn't go nearly far enough. We've still given them way too much in other aid. As president, I will block every penny," she added.

Born Nimrata Nikki Randhawa to immigrant Punjabi Sikh parents, Haley is the third Indian-American to run for the US presidency in three consecutive election cycles. Bobby Jindal ran in 2016 and Vice President Kamala Harris in 2020.

Days after Haley announced her White House bid, Indian-American tech entrepreneur Ramaswamy, another Republican, also launched his 2024 presidential bid. Before entering the presidential ballot, Haley has to win the Republican Party's presidential primary which will start in January next year.

The next US presidential election is scheduled to be held on November 5, 2024.

Ramaswamy to follow Trump agenda

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Republican presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy on Wednesday said he is taking former president Donald Trump's agenda of 'America First' to the next level to get the job done.

The 37-year-old told Fox News in an interview that observing foreign policy is all about prioritization. He called for decoupling from the Chinese economy, but said it is not going to be easy.

"I am taking the Trump America first agenda to the next level to actually get the job done, Maria, and I believe I am leading and will continue to lead this field with the specificity of policy proposals and vision that I put on the table," he said.

The Indian-American politician said he is also the only candidate in modern Republican memory who's committed to ending affirmative action in this country. That is something the US President can do by executive order canceling Lyndon B Johnson era orders, he claimed.

"A decoupling from the Chinese economy will involve some level of sacrifice, but we can make those sacrifices if we know what we are sacrificing for. That is this thing we call America. At the end of the day, we got into this mess, in part by using capitalism as a vehicle to spread democracy when in fact, China was just using mercantilism on the other side," he said.

"So what do we need to do? We need to take, I would say, dramatic steps to be able to actually declare economic independence and pull the economic rug out from under China. Now they're actually vulnerable... Xi Jinping did a lot of damage to the Chinese economy last year to hold on to power for his third term," he said.

Kailasa submissions 'irrelevant', says UN

PTI ■ LONDON/GENEVA

The UN human rights office Thursday said any submissions made by representatives of the so-called "United States of Kailasa (USK)", founded by Indian fugitive Nithyananda, at its public meetings in Geneva last week were "irrelevant" and will not be considered in the final outcome drafts.

Confirming the participation of the so-called "USK representatives" at two of its public meetings - registration to which was open to everyone, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), however, said they were prevented from distributing promotional material and their "tangential" speech was not taken into consideration.

The comments by the OHCHR spokesperson came even as videos and images showing a USK representative speaking on behalf of the fictional state on "indigenous rights and sustainable development" at one of the events went viral on social media. The two events were held on February 22 and 24.

"Registration for such public events is open to NGOs and the general public. Anyone can submit information to the treaty bodies, who will use their judgment to determine the credibility of the submissions received," the OHCHR spokesperson said when asked about their participation.

"On 24 February, at CESCR's general discussion, when the floor was opened to the public, a USK representative spoke briefly. As the focus of the statement was tangential to the topic at hand, it will not be taken into consideration by the Committee in the formulation of the General Comment," the spokesperson added.

There was no immediate comment from India's permanent mission in Geneva.

However, India's former Permanent Representative at



United States of Kailasa representative speaking at public meeting in Geneva

UN, TS Tirumurti, described it as a "complete abuse" of UN procedures.

"It's a complete abuse of UN procedures to have representatives of an organisation run by a fugitive from law address the UN as NGOs or otherwise. India has been consistent in calling for a robust process to ensure that only credible NGOs get accredited. However, this call has not been heeded to," he said.

"While NGOs continue to have an important say in a range of global issues, we need to preserve the integrity of the UN, which is a member State driven organisation," the former diplomat added.

Vijayapriya Nithyananda, who claimed to be "the permanent ambassador of (so-called) the United States of Kailasa", can be seen making her intervention in videos from the event and has triggered questions over the group's involvement at sessions addressed by the likes of former Australian prime minister Julia Gillard and other human rights experts.

Nithyananda, a self-proclaimed godman, is wanted in India on several charges of rape and sexual assault - allegations he denies. He claims to have founded the "United States of Kailasa (USK)" in 2019 and according to its website, counts "two billion practising Hindus" among its population.

Guterres praises Iraq stability progress

Baghdad (AP): The United Nations chief on Wednesday praised Iraq for its repatriating citizens detained in neighboring Syria on suspicion of ties to the Islamic State group and pledged international support for the country's efforts to regain stability and security.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke to reporters during a rare visit to Baghdad, his first in six years, ahead of this month's 20-year anniversary of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

The years that followed Saddam's overthrow saw widespread sectarian violence and the rise first of al-Qaida in the region and later, the extremist Islamic State group, which at one point controlled wide swaths of territory, including Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul. "We recognize that the challenges Iraq is facing did not arise overnight," Guterres said, speaking at a news conference alongside Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani. "They are the product of decades of oppression, war, terrorism, sectarianism and foreign interference."

He praised the formation of Iraq's new government in October, after a yearlong political stalemate, and the country's "ambitious and forward-looking reform agenda." He also pledged U.N. Support for systematic governance reforms and for measures to address Iraq's looming water crisis, which experts expect to be exacerbated by climate change.

Guterres commended Iraq for repatriating its citizens from northeastern Syria, particularly from al-Hol camp, which holds tens of thousands of women and children - primarily the wives, widows and children of IS fighters - in what human rights groups have described as dangerous and squalid living conditions.

US border authorities arrest two Indians

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Two Indian nationals were among five persons arrested by US border authorities after they were apprehended for illegally crossing into the country from Canada by boat.

US Border Patrol agents from the Detroit Sector arrested the five foreign nationals during a smuggling attempt near Algonac in the US state of Michigan, a statement by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said on Wednesday.

It said Border Patrol dispatchers monitoring the remote video surveillance sys-

tem late in night on February 20 observed a vessel on the St. Clair River cross the international border near a known smuggling route and immediately contacted agents in the area.

The agents responded to the area and immediately encountered five people in the vicinity of where the vessel was observed heading towards the shoreline. The five people admitted that they had crossed the border from Canada, by boat.

Agents also observed two migrants completely drenched and shivering due to the frigid temperature. The individuals told the agents that they had fallen into the river while climbing out of the boat.

All five persons were then taken into custody and transported to a local station for processing.

"During the processing stage of the investigation, agents identified two subjects from India, and the remainder from Nigeria, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic," it CBP said.

The persons are being processed for US immigration violations.

"The smuggler tried to take advantage of darkness and freezing temperatures to mask his criminal activity. Bad people will go to great lengths to avoid arrest, placing themselves and others in danger," Chief Patrol Agent Robert Danley said.

Boris skeptical about Rishi Sunak's new Brexit deal

AP ■ LONDON

Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday poured cold water on current premier Rishi Sunak's new Brexit deal with the European Union, saying he would "find it hard" to vote for it in Parliament.

Johnson said he hoped Sunak's deal would work, but argued that that it did not amount to "the U.K. taking back control" - a key Brexit slogan.

The government has been bracing for a response from Johnson, a strong backer of Brexit who was ousted from office by ethics scandals in July 2022. Johnson is widely believed to hope for a political comeback, and blames Conservative colleagues including Sunak for bringing him down.

Johnson left office with an unresolved dispute between the U.K. and the bloc over trade rules for Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU member nation.

Under Sunak, the two sides struck a deal, which was announced on Monday.

The "Windsor Framework" agreement will ease customs checks and other hurdles for goods moving to Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. that were imposed after Brexit to maintain an open border between the north and its EU neighbour the Republic of Ireland. The open border is a key pillar of Northern Ireland's peace process.

But Northern Ireland's British unionist politicians have yet to give it their blessing. They worry that accepting any aspect of EU trade rules will undermine Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom.

SpaceX launches more astronauts to space station

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL

SpaceX launched four astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA on Thursday, including the first person from the Arab world going up for an extended monthlong stay.

The Falcon rocket bolted from Kennedy Space Center shortly after midnight, illuminating the night sky as it headed up the East Coast.

Nearly 80 spectators from the United Arab Emirates watched from the launch site as astronaut Sultan al-Neyadi - only the second Emirati to fly to space - blasted off on his six-month mission.

Half a world away in Dubai and elsewhere across the UAE, schools and offices planned to broadcast the launch live.

Also riding the Dragon capsule that's due at the space station on Friday: NASA's Stephen Bowen, a retired Navy submariner who logged three space shuttle flights, and Warren "Woody" Hoburg, a former research scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and space newbie, and Andrei Fedyaev, a space rookie who's retired from the Russian Air Force.

"Welcome to orbit," SpaceX Launch Control radioed, noting liftoff occurred four years to the day after the capsule's first orbital test flight. "If you enjoyed your ride, please don't forget to give us five stars."

The first attempt to launch them was called off Monday at the last minute because of a clogged filter in the engine ignition system.

"It may have taken two times, but it was worth the trip," Bowen said.

They will replace a US-Russian-Japanese crew that has been up there since October. The other station residents are two Russians and an American whose six-month stay was doubled,



From left, Russian cosmonaut Andrei Fedyaev, NASA astronauts Warren Hoburg, Stephen Bowen, and United Arab Emirates astronaut Sultan al-Neyadi pose for a photo after leaving the Operations and Checkout building for a trip to Launch Pad 39-A on Wednesday

AP

until September, after their Soyuz capsule sprang a leak. A replacement Soyuz arrived last weekend.

Al-Neyadi, a communications engineer, served as backup for the first Emirati astronaut, Hazzaa al-Mansoori, who rode a Russian rocket to the space station in 2019 for a weeklong visit. The oil-rich federation paid for al-Neyadi's seat on the SpaceX flight.

He thanked everyone in Arabic and then English once reaching orbit. "Launch was incredible. Amazing," he said.

The UAE's minister for public education and advanced technology, Sarah al-Amiri, said the long mission "provides us a new venue for science and scientific discovery for the country."

"We don't want to just go to space and then not have much to do there or not have impact," said the director general of the UAE's space center in Dubai, Salem al-Marri.

The Emirates already have a space-craft orbiting Mars, and a mini rover is hitching a ride to the moon on a Japanese lander. Two new UAE astronauts are training with NASA's latest astronaut picks in Houston.

Saudi Prince Sultan bin Salman was the first Arab in space, launching aboard shuttle Discovery in 1985. He was followed two years later by Syrian astronaut Muhammed Faris, launched by Russia. Both were in space for about a week.

Al-Neyadi will be joined this spring by two Saudi astronauts going to the space station on a short private SpaceX flight paid by their government.

"It's going to be really exciting, really interesting" to have three Arabs in space at once, he said last week. "Our region is also thirsty to learn more."

He's taking up lots of dates to share with his crewmates, especially during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month

Next gen Tesla car to cost half

AP ■ DETROIT

Tesla says it will cut the cost of its next generation of vehicles in half, largely by using innovative manufacturing techniques and smaller factories.

CEO Elon Musk and other executives outlined the goals during a 3 1/2-hour investor day presentation at Tesla's Austin, Texas, headquarters Wednesday as they presented the company's third master plan.

The changes could bring the cost of a new generation of vehicles to around \$25,000. Many investors were hoping to catch a glimpse of the next generation vehicles, but Musk said they wouldn't be shown until a proper product unveiling.

"We'd be jumping the gun if we answer your question," about the new vehicles, he told an analyst.

Shares of Tesla fell nearly 6% in after-hours trading during the presentation that ended just after 8 pm Eastern time.

Musk announced that Tesla plans to build a new factory in Mexico near Monterrey. Company executives said it will not take production from any other factories, where Tesla expects to expand production. They said the Mexican plant would build the next generation of vehicles, which also will be built at other factories.

It's likely that the next generation vehicles will be smaller than the current ones to bring the prices down, but that wasn't clear from the presentation. Many automakers build smaller vehicles in Mexico to save on labor costs

कार्यालय महाप्रबन्धक (तकनीकी)

उत्तराखण्ड कृषि उत्पादन विपणन बोर्ड

गम्भी मवन, कलेक्ट्रेट परिसर कटहर (खाम्बोह नगर)

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पत्रांक: पीओएन/ई-निविदा सूचना/2023-148 निविदा: 27.02.2023

ई-निविदा शुद्धि सूचना

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 145 दिनांक 20.02.2023 के द्वारा प्रकाशित ई-निविदा जगपद टिहरी, ग्राम नीथाम में एग्री प्रोसेसिंग कलस्टर के अवशेष सिविल कार्यालय की निविदा जो दिनांक 28.02.2023 को आमंत्रित की गयी थी वह अब दिनांक 13.03.2023 को आमंत्रित की जाती है।

इच्छुक निविदादाता को दिनांक 10.03.2023 की सांय 05:00 बजे तक एफडीओआर, स्टाम्प एवं ड्राफ्ट मूलरूप में जमा करवाया जाना अनिवार्य होगा। अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेगी।

महाप्रबन्धक (तकनीकी)

उपरो राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

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ई-निविदा सूचना

एलपदद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत संबंधी विकास कार्य हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों/ठेकेदारों से ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	बाईसेलर का ज़रूरत
1.	Upgradation of conventional sodium street lights to LED along with AMC for 03 years at IA, Pilihkani (Saharanpur).	53.82
2.	Upgradation of conventional sodium street lights to LED along with AMC for 03 years at IA, Begrajpur (Muzaffarnagar)	63.22

निविदा दिनांक 03.03.2023को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 22.03.2023 को 18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 23.03.2023 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात् खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा राख्य पत्रों की मूल प्रतियाँ निविदा खोलने के बाद 03 कार्य दिवस में पंजीकृत डाक/व्यक्तिगत रूप से कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। नोट: 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर एवं जीएएसटीएल सहित दरे अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्य हेतु, निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सूक्षा विभाग" उद्घोष शासन, लखनऊ में 'क' श्रेणी, अनुमोदित लाइसेंस एवं Eligibility Criteria के अनुसार समस्त प्रश्न अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी website: www.upsidc.com पर स्थापित लिंक यूपीएलसी की website: <https://tender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

वरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक, उपरोज्य औद्योगिक, गाजियाबाद

G20

भारत 2023

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Rail Coach Naveenikaran Karkhana
Barhi Industrial area, Sonipat-131101

75

Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

ENGAGEMENT OF PHARMACIST ON CONTRACT BASIS

Walk-in-interview is being organised for eligible candidates for the post of **Pharmacist on contract basis** at Northern Railway, RCNK/SNP. Detailed advertisement with **VACANCY STATUS, terms & conditions**, format of application form is available on Northern Railway website <https://nr.indianrailways.gov.in> → Delhi Division.

CHIEF WORKSHOP MANAGER
NORTHERN RAILWAY, RCNK/SNP

File No. E-file no. 172257
681/23

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

UK grappling with vegetable shortages. How did it happen?

AP ■ LONDON

When European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen visited Britain last week, some joked on social media: Can you please bring us some tomatoes?

People in the UK have had to ration salad staples like tomatoes and cucumbers for the past two weeks amid a shortage of fresh vegetables. Shelves of fresh produce in many stores have been bare, and most major supermarkets have imposed limits on how many salad bags or bell peppers customers are allowed to buy.

Officials blame the problem on recent bad weather in Spain and North Africa, saying the shortages could persist for up to a month. But many people were quick to point out that other European countries don't seem

to be suffering the same challenges, leading some to wonder if it was a consequence of Britain's divorce from the EU.

A look at some of the factors contributing to what one European broadcaster has called Britain's "vegetable fiasco":

COLD WEATHER, HIGH ENERGY BILLS

Unusually cold temperatures in Spain and heavy rain and flooding in Morocco — two of the biggest tomato suppliers to the UK — have led to poor yields and are cited as the primary cause of the shortage.

In Spain, farmers blame recent freezing temperatures following record heat and dry conditions last year. Heat and drought in Europe last year also are affecting vegetable harvests in other countries, including Germany.

Separately, the Netherlands, another major tomato producer, has seen a drop in output because skyrocketing energy bills tied to Russia's war in Ukraine meant many growers couldn't justify the cost of turning on the LED lights in their greenhouses this winter. Vegetable growers in the UK Have reported that they, too, were forced to leave their greenhouses empty. Richard Diplock, managing director at the Green House Growers based in southern England, said his energy costs are some six times higher compared with previous winters.

BLAMING BREXIT

The shortages in Britain — and contrasting pictures of full vegetable shelves in supermarkets in mainland Europe — led to a degree of Brexit schadenfreude in some EU news out-

lets. Experts say extra bureaucracy and costs associated with Brexit have played a part, though they stress it's not a main factor.

"One hypothesis for fewer exports to the UK is that if supply is constrained, why would you go to extra paperwork (to export to Britain)?" said Michael Winter, a professor of agricultural change at the University of Exeter. "If transaction costs are greater for exporting to one country compared to another, that's going to dictate where you go."

SUPERMARKET PRICING

Farmers say another factor is how Britain's biggest supermarkets have sought to stay competitive by keeping prices as low as possible even as food costs have spiked, a major driver of inflation that's at the highest levels in

decades. In some EU countries, like Germany, there are no empty shelves, but the prices for fresh vegetables have shot up massively. British supermarkets are reluctant to pay more or charge customers so much, Diplock said.

"WHERE'S THE INVESTMENT?"

Even if energy costs hadn't risen so much, British growers would not come close to making up for the shortfalls in imported produce, Diplock said. During the winter, domestic UK Production only accounts for 5% or less of tomatoes and cucumbers sold in British supermarkets.

The National Farmers' Union has warned for months that overreliance on imported fresh produce leaves the UK vulnerable to unpredictable weather events and other external factors like the war in Ukraine.

Russia accuses Ukraine of sabotage, but Kyiv denies

AP ■ KYIV

Russian officials accused Ukrainian saboteurs of crossing into western Russia and attacking local villages on Thursday, an accusation that Ukraine denied, warning that Moscow could use the claims to justify stepping up its own assaults in the ongoing war.

The exact circumstances of the incident reported in the Bryansk region were unclear, including what the strategic purpose of such an attack might be.

If confirmed, it would be another indication following drone attacks earlier this week that Kyiv could be stepping up pressure against Moscow by exposing Russian defensive weaknesses, embarrassing the Kremlin and sowing unease among Russian civilians.

Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed Ukrainian "terrorists" for an incursion, claiming that they deliberately targeted civilians, including children.

"It was yet another terror attack, another crime," Putin said during a video call. "They infiltrated the area near the border and opened fire on civilians."

While Russian war hawks have expressed dismay about what they saw as Putin's reluctance to declare martial law and a sweeping mobilization of soldiers, the Russian leader's comments Thursday's didn't appear to signal any such moves.

Putin said the attack in the Bryansk region, which he blamed on "neo-Nazis", confirmed that Russia did the right thing by launching its "special military operation" in Ukraine. "I repeat again: They will not succeed and we will finish pushing them out," he said.

Putin is set to chair a weekly meeting of his Security Council on Friday. Asked by reporters whether the attack in Bryansk could warrant a change in the status of the conflict, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded with a coy "I can't say for now."

Peskov said that Putin canceled a planned trip to southern Russia set for Thursday and was receiving reports on the situation from the regional governor.

Thursday's apparent incursion came just days after Putin ordered the Federal Security Service to tighten controls on Russia's border with Ukraine.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak described the Russian reports as "a classic deliberate provocation".

Russia "wants to scare its people to justify the attack on another country (and) the growing poverty after the year of war", he tweeted, suggesting that the attack was the work of Russian partisans.

Amid conflicting initial reports, Russia's Federal Security Service said fighting with the sabotage unit was taking place in the Bryansk region.

The Federal Security Service was quoted by the Russian state Tass news agency as saying that "activities to eliminate armed Ukrainian nationalists who violated the state border" were underway.

Tass, citing Russian law enforcement, reported earlier that the saboteurs were holding up to six people hostage. The local governor said the group had fired on a vehicle there, killing one man and wounding a 10-year-old child.

Tass reported, citing an unnamed security official, that two villages in the Bryansk region — Sushany and Lyubechane — were under attack by "several dozen armed fighters".

Alexander Bogomaz, the governor of the Bryansk region, which borders Ukraine, said the group fired on a vehicle in

UK navy seizes Iranian missiles in Gulf of Oman

AP ■ DUBAI

The British navy seized anti-tank missiles and fins for ballistic missile assemblies during a raid on a small boat heading from Iran likely to Yemen, authorities said Thursday, the latest such seizure in the Gulf of Oman.

The seizure by the Royal Navy comes after other seizures by French and US Forces in the region as Western powers increase their pressure on Iran, as it now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. It also comes as regional and international powers try to find an end to the yearlong war gripping Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, and as Iran arms Russia in its war on Ukraine.

The raid took place Feb. 23 after an American aircraft detected a small boat heading from Iran, with a helicopter from the Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster giving chase to the vessel, the British Defense Ministry said. The boat tried to reenter Iranian territorial water, but was stopped before it could.

Inside the boat, British troops found Russian 9M133 Kornet anti-tank guided missiles, known in Iran as "Dehlavieh" the U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet and the British navy said. Those weapons have been seen in



Pak court drops mischief charge against retired Army general

Islamabad (PTI): A Pakistani court on Thursday quashed the charge of causing mischief against a high-ranking retired Army general and ordered his immediate release from police custody.

Lt General (retd.) Amjad Shoaib, a prominent supporter of former prime minister Imran Khan, was arrested by the Islamabad police on Monday after a first information report was registered against him. Shoaib, who was accused of inciting the public against national institutions, was remanded to police custody for three days. Shoaib was presented before a district and sessions court at the end of his three-day remand. Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Supra conducted the hearing.

His lawyer Mian Ashfaq in his argument termed the case as "bogus" as the accused didn't target any community in his TV talk. "He is owning the statement he has given during the TV program. We are standing by our statement," the lawyer said. The lawyer further said that the late night TV program in question had ended at 11 pm and none of army personnel or civil servants the next day came forward to file a complaint.

Hungary delays vote on Sweden, Finland's NATO accession bids

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Hungary has further delayed a vote on ratifying Sweden and Finland's NATO accession bids, according to an updated schedule published on Thursday on the National Assembly's website, the latest in a series of postponements that have frustrated Western allies.

The delay, which pushes the vote back by two weeks to the parliamentary session beginning March 20, comes as Hungary remains the only NATO member country besides Turkey that hasn't yet approved the two Nordic countries' bids to join the Western military alliance.

Hungary's populist prime minister, Viktor Orban, has said that he is personally in favour of the two countries joining NATO, but alleged that the governments in Stockholm and Helsinki have "spread blatant lies" about Hungary which have raised questions among lawmakers in his party on whether to approve the bids. In a radio interview on February 24, Orban confirmed that Hungary would send a parliamentary delegation to Sweden and Finland to seek "clarification" on such issues before the ratification could come to a vote in parliament.

"It's not right for them to ask us to take them on board while they're spreading blatant lies about Hungary, about the rule of law in Hungary, about our democracy and about life here," Orban said. "(How) can anyone want to be our ally in a military system while they're shamelessly spreading lies about Hungary? So let's stop for a friendly word and ask them how this can be."

The delays, which have come in succession since July 2022, have frustrated some in the European Union as well as members of Hungary's opposition parties. In comments in Hungary's parliament on Wednesday, Agnes Vadai, a liberal lawmaker and a former secretary of state in Hungary's ministry of defence, criticised the governing Fidesz party for the numerous delays, and accused them of deliberately dragging their feet on the vote. "This could have been a quick and simple issue in Hungary's parliament, but it wasn't. It wasn't because there was always some excuse or stalling tactic from the governing party," Vadai said, adding that dispatching a parliamentary delegation to Sweden and Finland was "the newest trick to postpone."

Extradited Indian-origin nurse charged for murder

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

A 38-year-old Indian-origin nurse, who fled Australia after allegedly murdering an Australian woman in 2018 was charged on Thursday, a day after he was extradited from India.

Rajwinder Singh was charged by the police with one count of murder and is expected to appear before the Cairns Magistrates Court court on Friday, The Guardian newspaper reported.

Singh is accused of murdering 24-year-old Toyah Cordingley in October 2018, whose body was discovered by her father at a beach after she failed to return home from walking her dog.

The accused, an Australian citizen, fled the country after killing Cordingley four years ago, leaving behind his wife and three children, and was carrying an AUD 1 million reward on his arrest.

Singh was nabbed by the Delhi Police on November 25 last year.

The Interpol had issued a Red Corner Notice against him, following which the Patiala House Court issued a non-bailable warrant on November 21 under the extradition act.

In an extradition hearing in the Melbourne Magistrates Court in Victoria on Wednesday, prosecutors told the court that police had DNA evidence linking Singh to the murder, ABC News reported.

"Our primary focus has always been ensuring justice for Toyah, her family and friends without compromising the investigation," Detective Inspector Sonia Smith was quoted as saying in the report.

Smith added that she was "relieved" that Queensland police relationships with their federal and international counterparts had resulted in the extradition, the report said.



Rajwinder Singh, centre, is escorted by police to a vehicle at Cairns Airport in Cairns, Australia on Thursday

Greek rail staff strike over conditions after crash

AP ■ THESSALONIKI

Rescuers using cranes and heavy machinery on Thursday searched the wreckage of trains involved in a deadly collision that sent Greece into national mourning and prompted strikes and protests over rail safety.

The death toll from Wednesday's head-on crash involving a passenger train and freight carrier remained at 43 as crews continue to check the burned out and twisted rail car remains for more bodies.

More than 50 people remained hospitalised, most in the central Greek city of Larissa, some in serious condition. Railway workers' associations called strikes, halting national rail services and the subway in Athens, to protest working conditions and what they described as a lack of modernisation of the Greek rail system.

Wednesday's collision occurred near the small town of Tempe in northern Greece, when a freight train loaded with heavy construction equipment smashed into a passenger service on Greece's busiest line between Athens and the country's second largest city, Thessaloniki.

More than 300 people were on board the train, many of them students returning from a holiday weekend and annual Carnival celebrations around Greece.

As Greece reeled from its deadliest ever train disaster, Pope Francis and European leaders sent messages of sympathy. Among them were the Turkish



A crane removes debris after trains' collision in Tempe, about 376 kilometres (235 miles) north of Athens, near Larissa city, Greece on Thursday

Address Myanmar violence, Malaysia PM to ASEAN

Manila (AP): Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to speak up and hold Myanmar's military leaders accountable for blatant human rights violations, but said the country should remain in the regional bloc.

Anwar, who took office in November, has become one of the most vocal critics in ASEAN of Myanmar's military, which seized power from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021.

In a visit to the Philippines, he discussed the Myanmar crisis with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. On Wednesday and called on ASEAN to explore new ways to persuade Myanmar's ruling generals to halt the violence, saying it is affecting the region.

"They need to do more because it is causing us a major problem, we have 200,000 (Myanmar) refugees in Malaysia alone," Anwar told The Associated Press after delivering a lecture Thursday at the University of the Philippines, at which he received an honorary degree for advocating democracy and fighting corruption.

In his lecture, Anwar urged ASEAN to speak up on atrocities in Myanmar and not be restrained by the group's bedrock principles of deciding by consensus and non-intervention in each other's domestic affairs.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
No: CE/HWD/ACCTS-18/22/65 Dt.01.03.2023
Name of the Work: "Development of Storage Plot near JSW Wagon Tippler inside Harbour area". EMD cost: Rs.22,68,751/- . Last date & time of submission of Bid: 23.03.2023 up to 17-15 Hrs. For details please refer our Website: eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Harbour Works Division No.1, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/226/2022-23 dtd.02.03.2023

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
No: CE/HWD/ACCTS-19/22/66 Dt.01.03.2023
Name of the Work: "Development of Plot near BOT Railway bulh and Gate No.1 approach inside Harbour area". EMD cost: Rs.22,86,762/- . Last date and time of submission of Bid: 23.03.2023 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details please refer our Website: eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Harbour Works Division No.1, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/227/2022-23 dtd.02.03.2023

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
TENDER CALL NOTICE
NO. EM/WS-08/2023
File No.EM/WS/TECH-04/2022/329, Date : 01.03.2023
Name of the work : " Grant of license for Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Operation & Maintenance of 03 nos. 100 Ton Capacity HMCs for a period of 05 years." Last date and time of submission of bid : Dt.10.04.2023 up to 1800 hrs. Refer our website for details : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Executive Engineer (M) Workshop Division-I, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/228/2022-23, Dt.02.03.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that Late Mr. Patwardhan, S/o Late Sh. Mr. Patwardhan, R/o Flat No. 255, DDA SFS Flats, Sidhartha Enclave, New Delhi-110014, purchaser/owner valid Agreement to Sell dated 07/12/1987 property bearing DDA SFS Flat No.255,(Duplex)on Second Third Floor, Cat.III in The Layout Plan of Sidhartha Enclave Residential scheme, situated at Sidhartha Enclave, New Delhi-110014,VIDE DDA FILE No.F-19(105)87/79-SFS has applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA.The original documents i.e. Possession Letter,Site Possession slip & Site Possession slip of Servant quarter No.25 & NOC for Electricity & Water Connection issued by the DDA of the above flat have been lost. An FIR/ NCR/LR to this effect has lodged in Police Station,Crime Branch,New Delhi-110014, File No.91/227/2023 dated 21/10/2022. Any person(s)claiming any right,interest,having any objection or found in possession of original documents, June write /contact with above named person at above address/phone No.7217760587 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.The person claiming any right,interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy.Director(LAB) H or Director (H)-1, D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.
VEHICLES FOR SALE
1) ASHOK LEY AL 1214 UP37AT2456- YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE- 860974
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 17.03.2023 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT :GUNJAN SINGH KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 918510032426 EMAIL-gunjan.singh1@kotak.com

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
Tender No. 55/XEN/O&M/A Dated: 01-03-2023
The Department of Municipal Corporation Ludhiana invites online bids for the following:-
Date and time schedule for E-Tender:-
Last Date of online sale/submission of bidding documents 20-03-2023 till 17:00 hrs
Opening of technical bid documents 21-03-2023 till 11:30 hrs
For Detail log onto eproc.punjab.gov.in.
Note: Any Corrigendum (s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.
Executive Engineer-O&M, Municipal Corporation Ludhiana, e-mail: xenzdom@gmail.com
NA/12/14808/2022/21723 Dt. 3/1/2023

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB (DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, PUNJAB)
Bid Ref. no. e-Tender/PHSC/Projects./Lab/AAC/2023-24/1388
The Department of Health and Family Welfare, Punjab (Punjab Health Systems Corporation, Mohali) invites online bids through <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> for Lab Diagnostic Facilities for Aam Adami Clinics and other health facilities of Punjab.
Date, time and place of Pre-bid conference. : 13.03.2023 at 11.30 a.m. in the Committee Room of Punjab Health Systems Corporation, Punjab School Education Building, 2nd Floor, Block -E S.A.S. Nagar - Mohali-160062. Phone no. 0172 -2232245, 2232247.
Closing date & time : 03.04.2023 till 03:00 p.m.
For details log onto : <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
Note: Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PHSC/12/208/2022/21749 Dt. 3/2/2023

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
N.I.T. No. : 47 - 22-23-W/E
Name of work with its location:
(A) Supply & Maintenance of indoor well developed ornamental potted plants, average ht. 1' to 5' on hire basis in HQ Office Baroda House, DRM Office New Delhi, CDP/GSU & Control Room in HRM Office New Delhi in the S/o SSE/Hort./BH & SSE/Hort./NDLS under ADEN/Hort./NDLS
Approx. Cost of work (A) : Rs. 79,98,928.52
EMD amount (A) : Rs. 1,60,000.00
Completion period of work (A) : 11 Months
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender : Closing date of tender on 24.03.2023 at 15:00 hrs.
Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. : Above tender available on website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No.: 128-W/269/OET/22-23/WE/NIT/47 Dated: 01.03.2023 672/2023
Serving Customers with a Smile

UJJAIN SMART CITY LIMITED
Mela Office, Kothi Road, Ujjain (M.P.) 456001 Ph. 0734-2525856
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
No USCL/240 Tender ID: 2023_UAD_257123_1 Date:- 01.03.2023
Ujjain Smart City Limited Invites Expression of Interested parties for "Operation, Maintenance and Management of Swimming Pool Complex & Club House at UMC Compound Under Ujjain Smart City Limited on Public Private Partnership (PPP) Basis". Interested bidders may purchase and submit their proposals online at www.mptenders.gov.in
Cost of Document Nil
Bid Purchase Start date 02.03.2023
Pre-Bid Date 13.03.2023
Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid (Online) 23.03.2023 up to 17:00 hrs
For more details, please visit <https://mptenders.gov.in>. Any Corrigendum or amendments shall be published on this website only.
For, Ujjain Smart City Limited

UJJAIN SMART CITY LIMITED
Mela Office, Kothi Road, Ujjain (M.P.) 456001 Ph. 0734-2525856
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
No USCL/242 Tender ID: 2023_UAD_257175_1 Date:- 01.03.2023
Ujjain Smart City Limited Invites Expression of Interested parties for "Design, Engineering, Construction, Operation and Maintenance of Multi-Level Car Parking on Triveni-Chardham Road, Ujjain on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) Basis Under Ujjain Smart City Limited on Public Private Partnership (PPP)". Interested bidders may purchase and submit their proposals online at www.mptenders.gov.in
Cost of Document Nil
Bid Purchase Start date 02.03.2023
Pre-Bid Date 13.03.2023
Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid (Online) 23.03.2023 up to 17:00 hrs
For more details, please visit <https://mptenders.gov.in>. Any Corrigendum or amendments shall be published on this website only.
For, Ujjain Smart City Limited

GDP growth may exceed 7% this fiscal, says CEA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday expressed hope that the GDP growth for the current financial year will exceed the projected 7 per cent in view of the expected revision of high frequency data.

On Tuesday, the second advance estimate released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) maintained the growth projection of 7 per cent as was projected in the first advance estimate which was released in January.

"Given the high frequency indicators and the pace at which they are recovering, I do believe that the current year's (GDP numbers)... Are more likely to (be) revised upward than downward," he said here.

Real GDP or GDP at



Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 159.71 lakh crore as against the first revised estimate of GDP for the year 2021-22 of Rs 149.26 lakh crore.

The growth in real GDP during 2022-23 is estimated at 7 per cent as compared to 9.1 per cent in 2021-22, the NSO had said. The growth slowed to 4.4 per cent in the October-

December quarter, mainly due to a contraction in the manufacturing sector, as per the data released by the NSO.

On Tuesday, the NSO revised GDP growth data for the past three years -- 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 -- and also released the second advance estimate of GDP for 2022-23.

While the growth rate for 2021-22 has been revised up by 40 basis points to 9.1 per cent from 8.7 per cent, the GDP for 2020-21 too has been revised upwards to (-) 5.8 per cent from (-) 6.6 per cent.

For 2019-20 also, the growth has been revised upwards to 3.9 per cent from 3.7 per cent.

Nageswaran said the rising interest rates need not necessarily be a cause of lower growth but simply reflects the

fact that there is healthy underlying demand for credit.

Real interest rate is not very high at the moment, he said, adding there is pent up demand in certain sectors.

About rural inflation remaining high, he said it doesn't take into account the fact that bulk of the population may be getting their essential food grains at zero cost.

On the economic benefit of digitisation, he said that digital transactions enable increase in formalisation.

"My guesswork is that it is adding between 30 and 50 basis points per annum to the provisional GDP... Nobody has yet done the proper estimation of what the digital infrastructure is adding to the overall potential economic growth (and) that needs to be worked out," he said.

Adani firms complete ₹15,446 cr secondary equity transaction with GQG Partners

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Leading US global equity Aboutique, GQG Partners, has completed a Rs 15,446-crore (\$1.87-bn) investment in a portfolio of Adani companies. The investments are across Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ), Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), Adani Transmission Limited (ATL) and Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL), according to an Adani press release.

GQG announced on Thursday the completion of a series of secondary block trade transactions in the Adani companies which are all listed.

The investment has made GQG a key investor in the development and growth of critical Indian infrastructure, the release said. "Jefferies India Private Limited acted as a sole broker for the transaction."

Rajiv Jain, chairman and CIO of GQG Partners, said: "I am excited to have initiated positions in the Adani compa-



nies. Adani companies own and operate some of the largest and most important infrastructure assets throughout India and around the world."

Gautam Adani is widely regarded as among the best entrepreneurs of his generation, Jain said. "We believe that the long-term growth prospects for these companies are substantial, and we are pleased to be investing in companies that will help advance India's economy and energy infrastructure, including their energy transition over the long-run."

Adani Group CFO Jugeshinder (Robbie) Singh

said: "We are delighted to complete this landmark transaction with GQG. We value GQG's role as a strategic investor in our infrastructure and utility portfolio of sustainable energy, logistics and energy transition. This transaction marks the continued confidence of global investors in the governance, management practices and the

growth of Adani Portfolio of companies."

GQG is one of the world's leading global and emerging markets investor with exceptional long-term track records. It manages more than AUD\$130 billion (US\$92 billion) in client assets as of January 31, 2023, said the release.

SC order on Hindenburg issue: Adani says truth will prevail

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Embattled tycoon Gautam Adani on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court order of a time-bound probe into allegations levelled by Hindenburg Research against his group, saying this will bring finality and truth will prevail.

Shortly after a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud passed the order,

Adani tweeted: "The Adani Group welcomes the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It will bring finality in a time bound manner. Truth will prevail."

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked markets regulator Sebi to complete an investigation into US short-seller Hindenburg's allegations against Adani Group within two months.

Sensex, Nifty fall nearly 1% on weak global trends, foreign fund outflows

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmarks ended nearly 1 per cent lower on Thursday amid weak trend in global equities and continuous foreign fund outflows.

The BSE Sensex tumbled 501.73 points or 0.84 per cent to settle at 58,909.35. During the day, it tanked 544.82 points or 0.91 per cent to 58,866.26.

The NSE Nifty declined 129 points or 0.74 per cent to end at 17,321.90.

"Nifty continued its down-move today after a one day rise, pulled down by weak Asian cues," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

From the Sensex pack, Maruti, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Nestle, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra and Bharti Airtel were the major laggards.

Power Grid, Sun Pharma, HCL Technologies, Larsen & Toubro and UltraTech Cement were the gainers.

In the broader market, the smallcap gauge declined



0.22 per cent and midcap dipped 0.13 per cent.

Among the sectoral indices, teck declined 1.33 per cent, IT fell by 1.24 per cent, bankex (0.87 per cent), auto (0.85 per cent), financial services (0.73 per cent) and consumer durables (0.59 per cent).

Energy, utilities, oil & gas, power, realty and services were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Japan, China and Hong Kong ended lower, while Seoul settled in the green.

Stock markets in Europe were trading lower during the afternoon trade. The US markets had ended mostly lower

on Wednesday.

"Global markets turned back to selling mode with the US 10-year bond yield crossing 4 per cent as a fresh set of US data suggested that inflation will remain elevated for a longer period. Rising bond yields are driving foreign money out of emerging markets, and as a result, FIIs were net sellers in the domestic market for the sixth consecutive day," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

International oil benchmark Brent crude advanced 0.51 per cent to USD 84.74 per barrel.

Grow more millets to help address malnutrition, small farmers told

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Thursday urged small and marginal farmers to grow more millets, which can help address malnutrition in India and the world.

Millets like ragi and jowar are grown with less water but has high nutrition. However, these miracle cereals were kept out thinking it was poor man's food, he said.

In his inaugural address at the annual 'Krishi Vigyan Mela' here at Pusa campus in the national capital, Tomar said millets are grown by small and marginal farmers, and not by big farmers. Amid the problem of malnutrition and challenges of climate change, India took the lead and the current year is being celebrated as the international year of millets across the world, he added.

According to Tomar, millets are not only high in nutrition but also fetch good price for farmers, and it will be good for small and marginal farmers, who comprise 80 per cent of



the total farming community in India.

"We are eating well but not nutrition rich food... There is a problem of malnutrition not only in India but in many parts of the world. We can address the malnutrition problem by growing more millets," Tomar noted.

India is a major millets producing nation. If huge demand is created for millets and millets-based products, income of small and marginal farmers can be enhanced, he said, and added the govern-

ment is making efforts to create the market for millets and encourage value-addition.

To brand them beyond 'poor man's food', the government took a cautious decision of naming eight types of millets as "Sree Anna", indicative of having better nutrition than wheat and rice, he said.

For export of Indian millets, the minister said the government plans to facilitate participation of exporters, farmers and traders in 16 International Trade Expos and Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs).

Steel industry seeks Govt help to ensure availability of 161 MT coking coal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic steel industry has sought a roadmap to ensure 161 million tonnes of coking coal is available for scaling up the country's annual steel making capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030.

Coking coal and iron ore are the two key raw materials used for manufacturing steel through the blast furnace route. While iron ore is available domestically, the industry is dependent on imports for coking coal.

At the sixth meeting of the Advisory Group for Integrated Steel Plants (ISP), a presentation on the roadmap to ensure availability of 161 MT of coking coal for future expansion of



steel industry to 300 MT (Million Tonnes) capacity as per NSP 2017 was made by Indian Steel Association (ISA), sources said.

The presentation was made to Union Minister for Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia and other senior officials of the ministry.

It was agreed upon that future course of action may be charted for exploring the possibility of expanding the sources of coking coal especially from Russia, Mongolia, Canada and USA, the sources said.

Gold prices fall by ₹295/10 gm; silver tumbles ₹640/kg amid weak global trends

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by Rs 295 to Rs 55,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous session, the precious metal had settled at Rs 55,995 per 10 grams.

Silver also tumbled by Rs 640 to Rs 64,380 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 55,700 per 10 grams, down Rs 295 per 10 grams," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

In the overseas markets, both gold and silver were trading lower at USD 1,831 per ounce and USD 20.80 per



ounce, respectively.

"Comex gold prices traded weaker in the Asian trading hours on Thursday as investors continue to worry about the prospect of further monetary tightening from major central banks," Sriram Iyer, Senior research analyst at Reliance Securities, said.

‘Amazing that Govt set-up DMRC has no money to pay arbitral award to DAMEPL’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday said it is "amazing" that two elected Governments have set up Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) which now says it has no money to pay the arbitral award to the Reliance Infrastructure-owned Delhi Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL).

The court asked the competent authority of DMRC to attend the proceedings so that a holistic view can be taken regarding the funds available with the corporation. "I have before me two sovereign and elected governments who have set up this corporation and we are told that it has no money to honour the award," Justice Yashwant Varma said while listing the matter for further hearing on Friday.

The high court was hearing



an execution petition filed by DAMEPL against the DMRC over the arbitral award passed in its favour on May 11, 2017.

An arbitral tribunal had ruled in favour of DAMEPL, which had pulled out of running the Airport Express metro line over safety issues, and accepted its claim that running the operations on the line was not viable due to structural defects in the viaduct through which the train would pass.

Hearing the submissions advanced by the counsel for Central and Delhi government, which are stakeholders in DMRC, that they are not liable

to pay the arbitral award of the corporation, the high court said imagine the message being sent outside. "It is amazing that there are two elected governments who have set up this corporation and today we are told the law. The corporation set up by two governments has no money and it is defunct. Let us not distance ourselves so far which is untenable in law. Imagine what message you are conveying outside that there is a government corporation which is refusing to deal with an award," the judge said.

The central and Delhi governments were invited to participate in the proceedings because DMRC's stand was that it has no funds, the court said. In pursuance to court's earlier direction, the Centre submitted that it has taken a decision on March 1 and has refrained from according sanction for the attachment of properties of DMRC.

"Sanction for attachment of the properties of DMRC cannot be accorded by the answering respondent (Centre) since that would result in closure of DMRC and bring the city of Delhi to a halt.

"Such a situation will cause significant inconvenience to the public and impact law and order in the city. The answering respondent, being the custodian of the public good, cannot permit such circumstances to ensue," the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said in an affidavit filed in the court.

Power prices expected to remain firm next fiscal amid higher demand: Crisil

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Power prices are expected to remain firm next fiscal on the back of elevated demand growth of 5.5-6 per cent, and the demand is set to close this fiscal up 9.5-10 per cent over 8.2 per cent last fiscal, a report said on Thursday.

The fears of a heat wave has seen the short-term power prices soaring by a full 151 per cent. This was on the back of a 42 per cent on-year spike in prices in February, Crisil said in a report.

The demand growth would mark a decadal high rate of growth and almost double the 20-year average of 5.2 per cent, the report added.

The report noted that demand growth weighed in at

7.7 per cent in February and averaged 10 per cent for the 11 months of the current fiscal despite a high base of fiscal 2022 due to extreme weather events and robust industrial and manufacturing activity.

March is unlikely to see any let up amid early warnings on possible heat waves in northern and central regions this summer, the report said.

According to Hetal Gandhi, a director with the agency, a hotter-than-usual summer with a high probability of multiple heat waves is expected to keep power demand growing even next fiscal at 5.5-6 per cent, despite two straight years of robust growth. The first half should see even higher growth.

On generation, non-hydro

renewable sources are estimated to account for 11 per cent this fiscal and their share is expected to rise a notch next fiscal, with solar and wind accounting for 13 per cent. Hydro power accounts for another 11 per cent now.

But with limited storage capacities, thermal capacities will continue to shoulder the burden of meeting any sudden surge in demand, especially in the summer when water levels in hydro projects drop. In fact, the share of hydro dropped to 8 per cent last summer from average 11 per cent for the full year.

Meanwhile, power plants using imported coal, aggregating to 17 GW, or 8 per cent of the total thermal capacity, were operating at a low plant load



factor of 21 per cent as of February, massively down the aggregate thermal plant load factor of 63 per cent. And nearly 97 per cent of these imported capacities are owned by private players, she said, adding, as a result, short-term power prices have surged.

To tame the prices, the power ministry has floated a tender to buy 1.5 GW from

plants using imported coal with untied capacity for one month (April 10-May 10).

Though there is 8-GW overall untied thermal capacity available, the share of imported coal based plants without short and medium term power purchase agreements in this untied capacity remains a monitorable.

According to Surbhi

Kaushal, an associate director at the agency, the government aims to pump this entire 1.5 GW to the short-term market at no cost to tame prices.

Imported coal plants will bid on fixed tariff with an upside of price on variable charge indexed at Rs 5.34/kWh. This implies a 20 per cent mark-up on variable charge of Rs 4.4 at an estimated Rs 7,500 per tonne imported coal prices for Q1FY24. The move is in addition to the government's move to invoke Section 11 of the Electricity Act, mandating all plants using imported coal to operate at full capacity, enabling better supply position.

Coal stocks remain at 12 days with the plants, compared to 14 days over the past 35 months, and all wheels are

focusing on getting coal supplies on stream. Structural steps such as fast-tracking coal-based rail transportation projects are also being expedited.

However, short-term markets have reacted. A surge in demand has led to purchase bids surpassing the sell bids in the short-term market by 6 GW on average in the past 15 days. The result is a 42 per cent on-year increase in prices in February and a 151 per cent increase on the first day of March.

The market clearing price in the day-ahead market (DAM) on the Indian Energy Exchange breached Rs 6.5/kWh in February, which is the highest level seen in the past eight months.

In 2022, the purchase-sell

bid differential started turning positive in the first week of March, averaging over 3.5 GW. High prices forced the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission to intervene and reduce the price upper limit from Rs 20/kWh to Rs 12/kWh in April. Despite this, positive differential averaged over 10 GW in April-May 2022, pushing up prices to Rs 10/kWh on average over the period.

Crisil expects DAM prices to average Rs 6-6.5/kWh this fiscal, compared to average of Rs 3.1/kWh in fiscals 2015-19. Average price for next year in DAM market is expected to remain under Rs 7-8/kWh, with almost non-operational gas-based power generation of 24 GW to become competitive with falling gas prices.

Liverpool climb into top six

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool moved into the Premier League's top six as goals from Virgil van Dijk and Mohamed Salah deepened Wolves' relegation fears with a 2-0 defeat at Anfield.

Jürgen Klopp's men were again far from the force of recent seasons, but have now taken 10 points from a possible 12 in their last four league games to remain in the hunt for a top-four finish.

The Reds close to within six points of fourth-placed Tottenham with a game in hand over Spurs still to come. Wolves remain just three points above the relegation zone in 15th as the visitors were made to pay once more for the lack of a goal threat going forward.

A fourth meeting between the sides in less than two months bred boredom rather than contempt for the first 45 minutes.

Harvey Elliott headed wide the best chance of the opening half and then tested Jose Sa with a drive from outside the box.

One week on from Liverpool's record-equaling home European defeat in a 5-2 humiliation at the hands of Real Madrid, there was far less to get the crowd at Anfield off their feet.

But Klopp sees signs of progress in a fourth consecutive Premier League clean sheet.

"We had a knock against Real Madrid," said the German coach. "We played a really good first half then we started the second really bad. We looked a lot



more stable today, we have to carry that on."

Klopp should at least have more forward options to choose from for the run in with Diogo Jota back available and Luis Diaz close to a return.

A foul by Jota on Max Kilman denied Darwin Nunez the opening goal midway through the second half as the Uruguayan's strike was ruled out after a VAR check.

But Jota did have a hand in

breaking the deadlock as he teed up Van Dijk to head into an unguarded net after Sa had parried the Dutch centre-back's first effort. The home side's second goal was much more like the Liverpool of old as Wolves were cut open by a rapid counter attack.

Konstantinos Tsimikas played a one-two with Cody Gakpo before the Greek galloped into the Wolves box and picked out Salah to force the ball

in with his thigh for his 20th goal of the season.

A rampant Manchester United will pose a far tougher test of Liverpool's road to recovery when the Red Devils visit Anfield on Sunday.

"It's a big game anyway, against a team in form," added Klopp. "We have to be ready, and we will give them a big fight."

Wolves boss Julen Lopetegui lamented his side's second half performance as they were

unable to match the highs of a 3-0 win over Liverpool when the sides met at Molineux last month.

"I think that we did not play in the game plan we had in our head. In the first half much better, in the second we did not keep the ball. It was a shame, but they deserved to win," said Lopetegui.

"Today is not easy for me to keep positive thinking, maybe in a few days."



Arsenal go five points clear

AP ■ LONDON

Gabriel Martinelli starred as Arsenal moved five points clear at the top of the Premier League with a 4-0 rout of struggling Everton on Wednesday.

Bukayo Saka broke Everton's stubborn resistance late in the first half before Brazilian forward Martinelli doubled Arsenal's lead at the Emirates Stadium. Martin Odegaard bagged the third and Martinelli wrapped up Arsenal's biggest victory since October on a night that could serve as another landmark moment in their surge towards the title.

It was essential for Mikel Arteta's side to win their game in hand on second-placed Manchester City as the title race approaches its climax.

With 13 games left, the vic-

tory keeps Arsenal in pole position to win the title for the first time since Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles' in 2003-04.

"Once we scored the first goal, the game unlocked. We needed a magic moment and Bukayo produced that. After that we grew and deserved to win the game," Arteta said.

"It's a statement that we're here and want to continue to do this."

After wobbling during a run of three league games without a win that culminated with City knocking them off top spot with a 3-1 win at the Emirates, Arsenal have bounced back impressively.

Three successive wins since the City defeat have taken the Gunners to 60 points, which is their joint-highest total after 25 Premier League fixtures, along with that famous 2003-04 cam-

paign and 2007-08.

"I'm delighted when I see the team play the way we want to. This league is a different story," Arteta said.

"We had big proof of that at Goodison. I'm really happy with the maturity and quality we showed."

Sean Dyche started his Everton reign with a shock 1-0 win against Arsenal at Goodison Park on February 4.

But Everton have lost three times and won just once since then, leaving them sitting third bottom of the table. Everton have played a game more than all the teams around them at the bottom and remain the league's lowest scorers this season with just 17 goals.

Unless Dyche can fix their malaise, Everton are in grave danger of playing in the second tier for the first time since 1954.



Man Utd beat West Ham to reach FA Cup quarters

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Alejandro Garnacho and Fred struck late as Manchester United came from behind to beat West Ham 3-1 and reach the FA Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday but Tottenham were stunned by Championship side Sheffield United.

In the evening's other fifth-round ties, fourth-tier Grimsby embarrassed Premier League strugglers Southampton 2-1 and Burnley beat 10-man Fleetwood 1-0. Manchester United, who made six changes to the team that started Sunday's League Cup final win against Newcastle, lacked fluency in front of an expectant Old Trafford crowd.

United goalkeeper David de Gea thwarted Michail Antonio when the West Ham forward bore down on goal midway through the opening period and Emerson Palmieri flashed an inviting ball across the box.

United manager Erik ten Hag brought on Casemiro for Scott McTominay at half-time

but the home side remained sluggish. Said Benrahma made them pay in the 54th minute, rifling the ball past De Gea after the home defenders stopped, thinking the ball had gone out for a throw-in.

The goal prompted Ten Hag to introduce top-scorer Marcus Rashford but Antonio had a glorious chance to double West Ham's lead, only to be denied again by De Gea.

Casemiro had the ball in the net in the 72nd minute but his header from a Bruno Fernandes free-kick was ruled out for off-side following a VAR review.

United finally drew level five minutes later when Fernandes sent in a corner and Nayef Aguerd headed into his own goal.

The home side — still on a high after ending their six-year trophy drought at the weekend — poured forward in search of a winner.

They got their reward when Argentine teenager Garnacho produced a superb right-footed curler in the 90th minute to edge

United ahead followed by a stoppage-time strike by Fred.

"The best teams never stop believing," United captain Harry Maguire told ITV. "I am not saying we are one of the best teams yet."

"We have a lot to do but we are getting there, we are taking steps forward... It felt like the Stretford End was sucking the goal in at the end there."

SPURS DUMPED OUT

Tottenham were dumped out of the FA Cup by Championship opposition for the second year in a row after Iliman Ndiaye fired promotion-chasing Sheffield United to a 1-0 win at Bramall Lane.

Spurs, who started Harry Kane on the bench, conceded in the 79th minute and could not find a way back, with Kane heading an Ivan Perisic cross over deep into injury time.

Championship leaders Burnley needed a 90th-minute goal from Connor Roberts to edge out the 10 men of League One Fleetwood.

Kompany takes Burnley to Man City in FA Cup quarters

AP ■ LONDON

Burnley boss Vincent Kompany will return to Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals, while Manchester United host Fulham in the last eight. Kompany has a statue outside City's Etihad Stadium after winning four Premier League titles during 11 years as a player.

The former Belgium captain is leading Burnley back to the Premier League in his first managerial job in England with the Clarets 12 points clear at the top of the Championship.

But Burnley needed a late Connor Roberts goal to see off League One Fleetwood Town on Wednesday to reach the quarter-finals.

United are still in the hunt for four trophies in Erik ten Hag's first season in charge after the newly-crowned League Cup winners came from behind to beat West Ham 3-1 at Old Trafford. Grimsby's reward for shocking Southampton 2-1 is a trip to Brighton in the last eight.

Sheffield United host Blackburn in an all-Championship tie after the Blades beat Tottenham 1-0.

DRAW IN FULL: ■ Manchester City v Burnley ■ Manchester Utd v Fulham ■ Brighton v Grimsby ■ Sheffield Utd v Blackburn. **Ties** to be played the weekend of March 17-19.

Osasuna earn narrow advantage over Athletic

AP ■ PAMPLONA

Ez Abde's fine solo goal earned Osasuna a slim 1-0 Copa del Rey semi-final first leg win over Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday.

The on-loan Barcelona winger burst into the box early in the second half and drilled home superbly to separate the teams in an even clash at El Sadar.

Osasuna, who last reached the semi-finals 18 years ago, eventually losing in the final against Real Betis, will take a narrow lead to the San Mames

for the second leg on April 4.

Athletic have won the cup 23 times, more than any other side apart from Barcelona, and were playing in the semi-finals for the fourth consecutive season.

However, the last time they won the competition was back in 1984, and the Basque side have lost six times in finals since then.

"It was a very even game, and that start to the second half and moment of genius from Abde gives us a little advantage," said Osasuna coach Jagoba Arrasate.

Marseille dumped out of French Cup



AP ■ MARSEILLE

Marseille were dumped out of the French Cup in the quarter-finals in sensational fashion on Wednesday as the tournament favourites lost 7-6 on penalties at home to second-division outsiders Anancy after a 2-2 draw at the Velodrome.

OM were strongly fancied to go all the way and win the competition after beating Paris Saint-Germain in the pre-

vious round, but instead they went out against opponents who had never previously reached the quarter-finals.

Jordan Veretout had Marseille in front at half-time after opening the scoring on his 30th birthday, but Anancy equalised early in the second half through young Ivorian striker Moise Sahi.

Defender Kevin Mouanga then headed Anancy in front, and the home side squandered a chance to

equalise when Alexis Sanchez had a penalty saved, a spot-kick that had been awarded for handball following a VAR check.

Yet Marseille, the 10-time French Cup winners, did equalise in the 96th minute when a cross by teenage substitute Francois Regis Mughe sailed into the net to the delight of the home fans.

With no extra time before the final, that meant penalties, but it was Anancy, sitting in mid-table in Ligue 2, who prevailed in sudden death when Marseille's Leonardo Balerdi put the crucial kick wide.

"That was great! This is why we do this job," said the Anancy coach, Laurent Guyot.

"I am pleased for the players, many of whom are new to Ligue 2 and whose careers have been a bit chaotic. We will savour this on the bus home."

Anancy, who were a regional league club a decade ago, now join three top-flight sides in Thursday's draw for the semi-finals, with Lyon, Nantes and Toulouse already having progressed. Holders Nantes remain on course to retain the trophy after beating Lens 2-1 earlier on Wednesday with Andy Delort scoring two penalties for the Canaries.

Djokovic eyes elusive gold at Paris Olympics

AP ■ DUBAI

Novak Djokovic is hoping the Paris 2024 Games will be his most successful Olympics to date, as he continues to chase the gold medal that has so far eluded him.

After notching an impressive straight-sets victory over Dutch world number 39 Tallon Griekspoor on Wednesday to reach his 13th Dubai quarter-final in as many appearances, Djokovic spoke about his ambitions for the Olympic Games next year.

"I hope that I'll be able to play healthy for next year's Paris Olympics," said Djokovic, whose best showing at the Games so far came in 2008 when he won bronze in singles.

"It's going to be played on clay at Roland Garros, I'm familiar with those grounds, so I hope that the best Olympic result for me will come there."

Two of Djokovic's 22 Grand Slam titles have come at Roland Garros, in 2016 and 2021.

With a far more straightforward display compared to his opening round in Dubai, Djokovic extended his undefeated run this season to 14-0 — and his overall winning streak to 19 matches — with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Griekspoor, who is one of the most improved players on tour these past two months.

It was a clean performance from Djokovic, who dropped just two points behind his first serve and fired 29 winners against a mere six unforced errors.

"It's been a great evening for me tonight. Yesterday I really had to work hard to get a win," said five-time Dubai champion Djokovic, who squeezed past world No.130 Tomas Machac with a third-set tiebreak victory in the first round.

"Tonight I think right from the

blocks, from the beginning I was sharp."

Djokovic broke at the start of the match before play was interrupted due to light rain. The brief delay did nothing to disrupt the top seed's rhythm though, as he comfortably scooped the opening set in 34 minutes.

The 35-year-old leapt to a 3-0 lead in the second set but had to battle through a marathon 16-minute game to make it 4-0.

Djokovic was broken on his first attempt at serving out the match but he recovered immediately, improving to 2-0 head-to-head against Griekspoor with a one-hour 21-minute victory.

'CHRISTMAS PRESENTS'

Djokovic will next square off with weekend Marseille champion Hubert Hurkacz for a place in the semi-finals.

Andrey Rublev thought he



had run out of extra lives when he stared down five consecutive match points in the second-set tiebreak against Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

But the Russian managed to rally back from 1-6 down in the breaker to force a decider, then squeezed past Davidovich Fokina 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/3) to keep his title Dubai title defence alive.

It was the third time this season that Rublev has saved match points en route to victory, having also done so against Holger Rune in the Australian Open fourth round and against Griekspoor in Doha last week.

"I don't even have any emotions now because in my head, the match was done," said Rublev on Wednesday.

"When you're three times lucky, almost last three tournaments — Australian Open, Doha and Dubai — three tournaments in a row, it's

like, how many more Christmas presents can I have there?"

Rublev, who is trying to become the first back-to-back Dubai men's champion since Roger Federer in 2014-15, will face Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp in the quarter-finals.

Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev, a champion in Rotterdam and Doha in recent weeks, claimed an 11th straight win with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Alexander Bublik.

"I think confidence is more important than fatigue, because you don't want to stop," said Medvedev who faces Borna Coric in Thursday's last-eight.

Italian world number 67 Lorenzo Sonego upset fourth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 for his first top-10 win of the season and fifth of his career.

He next takes on Germany No. 7 seed Alexander Zverev in the last-eight stage.

OZ NEED 76 RUNS TO WIN 3RD TEST

PTI ■ INDORE

India were staring at a rare defeat at home despite Cheteshwar Pujara's plucky half-century as veteran Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon flattened the hosts with his eight-wicket haul on day two of the third Test here Thursday.

India did well to end Australia's first innings at 197, conceding a 88-run first innings lead after Steve Smith's side began at 156 for 4 but negotiating quality spin in favourable conditions remained a challenge for them.

The hosts were bowled out for 163 in their second innings, which means that Australia need just 76 runs to cherish a rare Test win in India, who have lost only two Tests at home in the last 10 years.

India have lost to only England (February 2021) and Australia (February 2017) in the past decade and both were crushing defeats.

Australia had won by a massive 333-run margin in Pune while England had hammered India by 227 runs in Chennai.

Australia bring the best out of Pujara (59 off 142) and that was on full display at the Holkar Stadium but he did not get the support that was needed from the other batters as India came up with another underwhelm-

ing batting performance on a rank turner.

India were in the game as long as Pujara was there but a sensational catch from Steve Smith at leg-slip towards close of play put the visitors on cusp of a memorable victory.

Lyon ended with remarkable figures of eight for 64 in 23.3 overs. Siraj getting bowled while attempting a wild slog brought stumps on day four with India's innings lasting 60.3 overs.

Besides being impressive with the ball, the Australians were brilliant in the field, especially with the momentum-changing catches of Pujara and Shreyas Iyer (26 off 27).

The shot selection of Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli left a lot to be desired as Lyon bossed over the home team.

After being reduced to 79 for four at tea, Pujara and Iyer's counter attacking 35-run stand raised hopes of a fighting seconds innings lead but a flying Usman Khawaja took a stunning catch at mid-wicket to send back the latter. Iyer went for horizontal shots against spinners, especially Kuhnemann, and executed them well until a moment of brilliance from Khawaja got the better of him.

Gill (5), coming into the side in place of K L Rahul, suffered his second failure of the game after getting beaten in the flight



by Lyon. He went for an ugly hoick but ended up getting castled.

Lyon also got rid of India skipper Rohit (12), who was trapped in front after misjudging the length of the ball.

Kohli's (13) was adjudged LBW after attempting a pull off left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann on a track offering spin and uneven bounce.

Pujara looked the most solid of the Indian batters. He used his feet brilliantly. Pujara hit the first boundary of the innings, a cover drive, by stepping out to Lyon.

He mostly played on the front foot but stayed back to put a short ball from Kuhnemann between the mid-on and mid-wicket fielder. Four balls later, he came down the track for a confident straight drive.

He was dropped on 50, a tough chance at cover, before coming up with the shot of the innings. Ishan Kishan came out with a message towards close of play. The content of that message could not be confirmed but what followed was a massive six over mid-wicket as Pujara stepped out to a rampaging Lyon.

In the morning session, the pace-spin combination of Umesh Yadav and R Ashwin ran through the Australian batting line-up.

After a rather quiet first hour, when only 30 runs were

scored in 16 overs without any wicket, India lost their last six wickets for just 11 runs after starting the day at 156 for four.

Ashwin and Yadav took three wickets each to script India's fightback after a forgettable opening day.

Though India did not pick up any wicket in the first hour, they did not allow Peter Handscomb (19 off 98) and Cameron Green (21 off 57) easy runs with Mohammed Siraj and Jadeja keeping things tight.

As it has been the case throughout the series, the wickets came in a heap after India broke the resistance of Handscomb, whose ultra defensive innings came to end with an inside edge flying to Iyer at short-leg off Aswhin.

Ashwin surprisingly had to wait for almost an hour to get his first over of the day and when he did, the wily operator made the ball talk. He got also rid of Alex Carey (3) and Lyon (5) to end with figures of three for 44 in 20.3 overs.

Umesh, who targeted the stumps successfully, trapped Green in front by getting one to straighten slightly off middle-stump in his very first over.

He cleaned up the tail by bowling fast and straight from round the wicket, leaving Mitchell Starc (1) and Toddy Murphy clueless (0).



Runs are fewer but anything can happen on this wicket: Umesh

PTI ■ INDORE

Australia need only 76 runs to complete a memorable Test win in India but the wicked nature of the pitch has kept the home team pacer Umesh Yadav hopeful going into day three.

Fourteen wickets fell on the opening day while 16 batters got out on Thursday. The pitch is offering plenty of turn and uneven bounce has also made the batters' job harder.

Umesh acknowledged that his team has not put enough runs on the board but it still has an outside chance.

"In cricket anything can happen. We will try our best and bowl tight lines. It is not an easy wicket, whether it is our batters or theists. It is not easy to step out and hit.

"The ball is keeping low as well, so you can't be sure about stepping out.

"The runs are less but we will stick to tight lines and push as much as we can," said Umesh, who did his job with the ball on Thursday morning by providing three wickets.

The 35-year-old, who does-

n't get to play regularly at home with India going with only two pacers, bowled his heart out in the first session to help the hosts limit Australia to 197 in their second innings after resuming the day at 156 for four.

Umesh bowled fast and straight with a scrambled seam and let the surface do the rest. He trapped Cameron Green in front with a beauty that held its line after landing on middle stump. Mitchell Starc and Todd Murphy could also do little against a charged up Umesh and saw their stumps being dismantled.

"My plan on this surface was to bowl straight and push for a wicket or two. As a fast bowler, I have to hit the deck hard and bowl in the right areas. I have played most of my cricket in India, my mindset is always to get a wicket."

On the scramble seam, he added, "There was seam movement that is why I tried the scrambled seam. If it was not swinging, it was seaming. Whatever length I bowled there was seam movement and skidding after pitching."

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star batter Jemimah Rodrigues admitted on Thursday that India's heartbreaking loss against Australia in the semi-final of the Women's T20 World Cup is still haunting the players, adding that the Women's Premier League (WPL) would help ease the pain a bit.

Jemimah and India captain Harmanpreet Kaur's 69-run fourth-wicket stand had put India in pole position to push for victory but the end of their partnership led the side to a five-run defeat against Meg Lanning's Australia.

"It has taken a while, honestly. We were in South Africa for two days after the semis

(loss). Everyone was not in a great headspace. But coming here (for WPL), being with the family for two days (has helped ease the pain)," Jemimah said during a Delhi Capitals event in Mumbai. "Obviously it (the loss) keeps haunting us but at the same time the WPL is a blessing in disguise because we are directly into this tournament, which will help us keep our mind off the negative thoughts and those things that keep haunting us. (We will) keep working harder — that is how we can shift our focus," she added.

Jemimah said she feels the WPL will help India unearth players who will make a difference in the future. "We have



been pushing the doors for a very long time, we are getting there, we are getting very close. But I am sure the WPL will change a lot for women's cricket. You will find many superstars coming out from it, many

leaders, or many match winners, I would say," she said.

Jemimah, who played a sensational knock against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup opener, said some early lows in her career helped shape

her career.

"What has not changed in the last five years is my height, it has remained the same but mentally I have grown a lot and that is what international cricket does to you," she expressed.

"When I started, I had really few good series and then it was up and down. I made a comeback and played the World Cup, Commonwealth Games. It has not been easy but if I get an opportunity (to go back) to change my journey, I would not change a single thing, because every moment, especially the low times, has prepared me to become the player I am today," Jemimah added.

"One thing I have also

learnt is that maturity does not mean you will not make a mistake, or get it right 10 times in a row. Maturity is when you pick yourself up after a fall. This is one thing that has stuck with me, especially after the time I was dropped from the (50-over) World Cup team because I always thought 'you cannot make a mistake' or you cannot fall. But life happens, you make mistakes... It is all about how you pick yourself up from there," Jemimah said.

The five-team Women's Premier League begins on March 4 at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai and runs until March 26, with top players from around the world set to take part.

NZ announce unchanged squad for Test series against Sri Lanka

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand have named an unchanged squad for the two-Test series against Sri Lanka at home that recently defeated England by just one run at Wellington. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) on Thursday announced a 13-member squad under captain Tim Southee for the series beginning on March 9, with no surprises, although rookie seamer Jacob Duffy, leg-spinner Ish Sodhi, and injured pace bowler Kyle Jamieson have been excluded.

Former captain Kane Williamson will continue to be the batting mainstay along with Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Devon Conway, Daryl Mitchell and Will Young, while Tom Blundell will keep wickets during the Sri Lanka series.

Wagner will spearhead the pace-bowling department along



with Southee, Matt Henry, Blair Tickner and Scott Kuggeleijn.

While reigning World Test champions New Zealand are out of contention for a berth in the WTC final, Sri Lanka are still in with a chance and a 2-0 sweep for the Islanders could help

them make it to the title round.

NZC also announced that they will play a three-match T20I series against the United Arab Emirates in August on their way to England for white-ball commitments.

It will be only the second

time that New Zealand will play the UAE in a full international, following the 1996 World Cup ODI between the two sides at Faisalabad, in Pakistan.

"In terms of the global cricket family, it's important we keep helping each other, and growing the game on an international scale. NZC has a close relationship with the Emirates Cricket Board and our players are very familiar with the environment," said NZC chief executive David White in a statement.

The matches will be played on August, 17, 19 and 20, with the venues yet to be confirmed.

New Zealand Test squad for Sri Lanka Tests: Tim Southee (c), Tom Blundell (wk), Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Blair Tickner, Neil Wagner, Scott Kuggeleijn, Henry Nicholls, Kane Williamson and Will Young.

DC name Meg Lanning as captain, Jemimah her deputy



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Australia's World Cup-winning skipper Meg Lanning will lead Delhi Capitals (DC) in the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) while India's star batter Jemimah Rodrigues will be her

deputy, the franchise announced on Thursday.

Lanning, 30, recently captained Australia to their record sixth title win in the T20 Women's World Cup, where they beat hosts South Africa in the title clash.

Lanning is the third Australian cricketer to be named captain by WPL teams with Beth Mooney set to skipper Gujarat Giants and Alyssa Healy taking charge of the UP Warriorz.

"It is a very proud moment for me," said Lanning after being named the Delhi Capitals captain.

"... first to be involved in a franchise like Delhi Capitals and to be named the captain is a huge honour and it is something that I am very much looking forward to.

Lanning has played 132 T20Is for Australia, making 3405 runs.

Irani Cup: Saini breathes fire after ROI score 484

PTI ■ GWALIOR

A fit-again Navdeep Saini bowled a brisk first spell to rattle the Madhya Pradesh top-order after Yash Dhull's quick half-century took Rest of India to a commanding 484 on the second day of the Irani Cup, here on Thursday.

Saini (2/15) looked in good rhythm and generated fair bit of pace on a dead track to peg MP back before Yash Dubey (53 batting) and Harsh Gawli (47 batting) added 97 runs for the unbroken fourth wicket to take the hosts to 112 for 3 in their first innings at stumps.

In a match like Irani Cup, the national selectors usually don't just look at the numbers but also at specific players with specific purpose.

One such player is Saini, who missed the entire Ranji Trophy season due to abdominal muscle strain and had to undergo extensive rehabilitation work at the National Cricket Academy (NCA).

Asked to bowl in the second session of the day, he did hurry the MP batters with pace and movement off the track.

It was Bengal seamer Mukesh Kumar (1/27), who got the first breakthrough for the Rest as he angled one across for debutant southpaw Arham Aquil (0), who clearly didn't look ready for this level dur-



ing his brief stay at the crease.

He didn't look happy with the caught-behind decision but had to trudge back without troubling the scorers.

Saini then got into the act as he bowled beautifully on the off-stump channel and just got enough movement

to force the batters to play his deliveries.

A hint of an away movement saw MP skipper Himanshu Mantri jab at the delivery and Dhull, nicely warmed up and alert at second slip, pulled off a good catch.

Subham Sharma (4) got a boundary

but never looked comfortable against Saini, whose nip-backer was good enough to find him plumb in-front.

However once the ball started getting older, Dubey and Gawli didn't face too many problems in negotiating the other bowlers.

The track has nothing in it for the bowlers and while the MP duo didn't have the range and flair of players like Yashasvi Jaiswal and Abhimanyu Easwaran, they didn't find bowlers other than Saini very difficult to negotiate.

The third medium pacer Atit Seth wasn't intimidating and bowled enough loose balls to be punished.

With the pitch showing no signs of wear and tear, India A left-arm spinner Saurabh Kumar also didn't trouble the MP batters as there was hardly any deviation from track on offer.

Rest failed to get a breakthrough during the final session of the day but are favourites to get a huge first-innings lead as MP still need 373 runs to get ahead.

Earlier in the day, only Dhull showed positive intent with 55 off 71 balls that had eight fours to his credit.

But Rest batters after a total domination on day one couldn't replicate that show as they lost seven wickets for 107 runs.

Don't think IPL will jeopardise Stokes' Ashes return: McCullum



PTI ■ WELLINGTON

England head coach Brendon McCullum believes the upcoming IPL will not 'jeopardise' Ben Stokes' Ashes return and expressed faith in Chennai Super Kings' medical team to look after the premier all-rounder.

Struggling with a recurring left knee injury, the English skipper bowled only nine overs

in the two-Test series against New Zealand. He also looked in pain during his knock of 33 in their dramatic one-run defeat here.

"I don't think he's jeopardising it (by playing the IPL). The Chennai set-up is excellent in looking after their players and they've a very good medical team and he will be well looked after," McCullum was quoted saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"The skipper has a strong mind and he knows how to get right for the big moments. His life is that, right? So I don't have any concerns."

Stokes was the third most expensive buy at the IPL 2023 auction, where CSK snapped him for Rs 16.25 crore.

The most lucrative franchise league is set to get underway on March 31 with CSK taking on defending champion Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad.

The tournament will conclude on May 28, while the five-Test Ashes will begin at Edgbaston on June 16. The Stokes-led England would be looking to reclaim the series for the first time since 2015.

England's Ashes winners Michael Vaughan and Steve Harmison, however, have urged Stokes not to play in the IPL.

But McCullum looked at the bigger picture and said Stokes would be keen to write the "Ashes script".