

OPINION 6
SPORTS: NEXT BIG
STORY IN THE MAKING**WORLD 8**
BELARUS SENTENCES NOBEL
LAUREATE TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON**MONEY 10**
INVESTORS BECOME RICHER
BY ₹3.43L CR ON MKT RALLY

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MARCH 4, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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12 SPORTDELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADALate City Vol.33 Issue 62
*Air Surcharge Extra If ApplicableQuad to set up group
on counter-terrorismDenounces use of
terrorist proxies,
financial or military
aid to terror bodies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China flexing its muscles in the Indo-Pacific region, the Foreign Ministers of the Quad combine here on Friday reiterated the grouping's resolve for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

After External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, his Japanese counterpart Yoshimasa Hayashi and Australia's Penny Wong met, it was announced that a Quad working group on counter-terrorism would be established to explore measures to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The Quad Foreign Ministers also "unequivocally" condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and denounced the use of terrorist proxies and financial or military support to terrorist organisations which could be used to launch or plan terrorist attacks, including transnational and cross-border strikes.

They reiterated their condemnation of terrorist attacks, including 26/11 Mumbai



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoshimasa Hayashi and Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong before the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

strikes, which claimed lives of citizens from all Quad countries, and Pathankot attacks.

"We are pleased to announce the establishment of the Quad working group on counter-terrorism, which will explore cooperation among the Quad, and with Indo-Pacific partners, to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalisation to violence and violent extremism," they said in the statement.

The Quad also underlined the need for abiding with principles of rule of law and territorial integrity in an apparent reference to the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

"We strongly support the

principles of freedom, rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes without resorting to threat or use of force and freedom of navigation and overflight, and oppose any unilateral attempt to change the status quo, all of which are essential to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and beyond," the statement said.

The Quad alliance comprising India, Australia, United States and Japan denounced the threat of the use of nuclear weapons in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war as "inadmissible".

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China slams
'exclusionary
bloc' Quad

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Friday renewed its criticism of the Quad grouping, saying state-to-state cooperation should be consistent with the trend of peace and development, rather than putting up "exclusionary blocs."

Responding to the Quad statement at a media briefing here, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "We believe that state-to-state cooperation needs to be consistent with the trend of peace and development, rather than be about putting up exclusionary blocs." We hope certain countries can do more things that contribute to security and mutual trust between regional countries and that help to maintain regional peace and stability, Mao said, reaffirming Beijing's oft-repeated opposition to the Quad that it is an exclusive bloc aimed at containing China's rise.

In November 2017, India, Japan, the US, and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

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Rahul at it again; BJP slams
'maligning India campaign'Indian democracy
under attack, says
Rahul in LondonDEEPAK K UPRETI / AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI / LONDON

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegation that "Indian democracy is under attack and several politicians, including himself, are under Pegasus surveillance" has drawn sharp reactions from the BJP, which accused the 52-year-old former Congress chief of maligning the country's image on foreign soil after facing successive electoral setbacks.

"I, myself, had Pegasus on my phone. A large number of politicians have Pegasus on their phones. I've been called by intelligence officers who say please be careful what you say on the phone because we are sort of recording this stuff. So, this is a constant pressure that we feel," claimed Rahul during a lecture on "Learning to Listen in the 21st Century" at the Cambridge Judge Business School, a video recording of which was posted on Twitter by Congress leader Sam Pitroda, ex-adviser to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

An array of BJP leaders on Friday launched a broadside against Rahul, alleging the Congress leader is "hallucinating" and makes such claims as he wants to create headlines wherever he goes. "We can



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacting with people at Cambridge in London

PTI

understand his hatred towards the Prime Minister, but the conspiracy to malign the country on foreign soil with the help of foreign friends raises questions on the agenda of the Congress," said Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur.

Rahul listed five key aspects of the alleged attack on Indian democracy — Capture and control of media and judiciary; surveillance and intimidation; coercion by federal law enforcement agencies; attacks on minorities, Dalits and tribals; and shutting down of dissent. "Everybody knows

and it's in the news a lot that Indian democracy is under pressure and under attack... The institutional framework which is required for a democracy: Parliament, a free press, the judiciary and just the idea of mobilisation, these are all getting constrained. We are facing an attack on the basic structure of Indian democracy," Rahul said, adding, what has prevented Rahul and other Congress leaders from submitting their phones to a Supreme Court-appointed technical committee that probed the Pegasus snooping issue.

He said the Congress leader was aware of the electoral rout the Congress was facing in the Assembly elections and had resorted to levelling allegations from foreign soil.

"Today, the kind of respect that Modi ji has in the entire world and the recognition that India has gained under the leadership of Modi ji... If no one, Rahul Gandhi should have at least listened to Italy's Prime Minister and its leaders," he added. BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya wondered as to who were the advisers of Rahul to give him such an "anti-India" mouth.

Lavrov raps West
for bid to make
G-20 anti-Russia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the G-20 Foreign Ministers here were unable to evolve a consensus on a joint communiqué on the Ukraine conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Friday criticised western nations and charged them with raking up the Ukraine issue during G20 meetings.

He also claimed that nobody "gave a damn" over the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia in previous deliberations of the grouping.

Making his country's position clear at the ongoing Raisina Dialogue here, he also wondered why everyone was asking Russia whether it was ready to negotiate to end the war when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had signed a decree making negotiations with Moscow under President Vladimir Putin a "criminal offence".

Detailed Report on P4

UN defends India over no
G-20 FMs' joint statement'It's due to divisions
seen among nations
in international fora'RAHUL DATTA/AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN) has defended India on the issue of the inability of the G-20 Foreign Ministers' conclave in New Delhi to come out with a joint communiqué on the Ukraine conflict. The UN said it is not a reflection on India's efforts as host but of the "divisions" seen among countries in the international fora.

India as president of the G-20 hosted the Foreign Ministers meeting on Thursday in New Delhi, attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and



Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang among counterparts from other G20 nations.

The meeting failed to come out with a joint communiqué due to a sharp rift between the West and Russia over the Ukraine war despite efforts by India to bridge the differences.

The failure of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting to come out with a joint communiqué over the Ukraine conflict is not a reflection on India's efforts as host but of the 'divisions' seen among countries in the international fora, a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said. Blinken told a news conference in New

Delhi that Russia and China were the two countries that did not support a joint communiqué at the meeting.

"Well, we are not a party to the meeting. I think this is obviously in no way a reflection on the host, and on the efforts of India as the host of the G20. Since we're not at the table, it is not for us to blame and to analyse where the issue may be. It is yet however another reflection of the divisions we see in a number of international fora," Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said at the daily Press briefing late Thursday.

Dujarric was responding to a question on the conclusion of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting without a joint communiqué and Washington putting the blame for this on Moscow and Beijing.

On the sidelines of the G20 meeting, Blinken and

Lavrov spoke briefly face to face for the first time since the Russian invasion of Ukraine a year ago.

"I told the Russian Foreign Minister that no matter what else is happening in the world and our relationship, the US will always be ready to engage and act on strategic arms control just as the US and the Soviet Union did at the height of the Cold War," Blinken said.

In response to a question on how the Secretary-General sees the Blinken-Lavrov meeting, Dujarric said, "On one hand we didn't see an agreement, joint agreement or joint statement, on the other hand, any opportunity for direct dialogue between the Russian Federation and the US is to be welcomed. But I have no more insight into what was said. But we always believe direct discussions and face-to-face discussions are best."

Out-of-box ideas, holy
sites can take tourism
to new heights: Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said 'out-of-the-box thinking' and 'long-term vision' can take tourism to new heights, and added that villages in far-flung areas of India have now come up on the map of tourism.

Addressing a post-budget webinar on 'Developing Tourism in Mission Mode', he also pitched for devolving applications which will have information in multiple languages of India and those listed in the United Nations besides multilingual signage at tourist sites.

The PM said the India of today is moving forward with a 'new work culture'.

He expressed delight at the appreciation shown towards this year's budget by the people of India, and said had it been an old world cul-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a post-budget webinar on 'Developing Tourism in Mission Mode', in New Delhi on Friday

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ture, no one would have thought of such post-budget webinars. 'But, our government before and after the budget, involves all stakeholders and tries to work with them,' Modi said, adding that important suggestions have come from these webinars.

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Deepika Padukone
to present award
at Oscars 2023

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bollywood star Deepika Padukone will be presenting an award at the upcoming Oscars 2023, where India is nominated in three categories — Original Song, Documentary Feature and Documentary Short.

Deepika shared the news on her social media handle on Thursday night.

She will be joining the likes of Emily Blunt, Samuel L. Jackson, Glenn Close, Dwayne Johnson, Michael B Jordan, Janelle Monae, Zoe Saldana, Jennifer Connelly, Riz Ahmed and Melissa McCarthy among others.

The 95th Academy Awards will be held on March 12 at Los Angeles' Dolly Theatre. This year is significant for India at the Oscars as 'Naatu Naatu', the hit dance track from SS Rajamouli's blockbuster 'RRR', is the frontrunner in the Original Song category.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

NOT FULLY OPPOSED TO
RSS MARCH: TN TO SC

New Delhi: The Tamil Nadu Government told the Supreme Court on Friday it is not completely opposed to allowing the RSS's route marches across the State on March 5 but cited intelligence reports to say these cannot be held in every street or locality. P4

₹6 CR SEIZED FROM BJP
MLA'S SON'S HOUSE

Bengaluru: BJP suffered a major embarrassment on Friday in the poll-bound Karnataka when Lokayukta officials recovered over ₹6 crore from the house of BJP MLA K Madal Virupakshappa's son Prashanth Madal. P4

SC EXTENDS INTERIM BAIL
OF KHERA TILL MARCH 17

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday extended till March 17 the interim bail granted to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case related to alleged objectionable remarks he made against the Prime Minister.

'Capt Modi...' Jaishankar's cricket
analogy explains PM's functioning

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

With India's rising stature in the world and its economic growth, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday used cricketing terms to explain the phenomenon and said here, "I'd call it rebalancing. It is history switch hitting."

Using cricket analogy freely, he also said at a session in the ongoing Raisina Dialogue, a multilateral conference, with "Captain [PM] Modi, the net practice starts 6 in the morning and goes on till fairly late... He expects you to take that wicket if he gives you the chance to do it."

The conference was also attended by former British prime minister Tony Blair and former England cricket icon Kevin Pietersen.

Incidentally, he introduced switch hit to tackle bowlers. The ex-cricketer also called



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with former British PM Tony Blair and former cricketer Kevin Pietersen at the Raisina Dialogue 2023 in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Asked if India is a bigger economy than Britain and dominating cricket, the Minister said, "I'd call it rebalancing. It's history switch hitting... India (is) in (a) very

unusual position, once more decisively upwardly mobile which lot of other civilisation-al states aren't in position to do."

During the dialogue, Jaishankar was also asked about the rising interest among people on global issues.

Continued on Page 2

Desi INDIAsize to fit you better

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

In a fresh initiative towards "atmanirbharta", the Centre is mulling to have its own system of measurement for the major apparel industry against the present format being used on readymade clothing based on the UK and US standards.

To be christened as INDIAsize, several rounds of brainstorming sessions have taken place among the prestigious National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), the Textile Ministry and stakeholders of the apparel industry.

Official sources said this is an idea towards self-reliance gaining momentum ever since the Make in India and Local for Vocal calls were given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The concept of having our own measurement system is similar to the one incorporated in the auto sector that has coined the Bharat Stage norms



for pollution categories against the Euro norms which were followed earlier.

"Imagine your favorite Indian apparel brand features INDIAsize," Minister of State for Textiles Darshana Jardosh told *The Pioneer*. This is being made possible because of the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister, he added.

The idea of shedding the colonial mindset has already

started and we are moving towards being a great manufacturing hub in all sectors and hence all the parameters related to the product should be our own, Jardosh said.

Sources said several brainstorming sessions have been held that includes correlating the measurement system of the country's ancient times and researchers are digging up the scriptures of Vedic times

as well.

A top official said the Textile Ministry has also advised NIFT to take suggestions from the National Institute of Design (NID) on INDIAsize initiative and collectively devise apparel size charts best suited to Indians.

In the present format, the apparel industry has alphabetical measurements like "S" for small, "L" large or "M" medium and numerical ones like 10/20/40 cm. These are all based on the US and UK measurement descriptions.

"We want to have our own measurement benchmark for our own apparel industry. While we have been exporting clothes to the US and European countries for decades, we are yet to figure out how to create India's measurement benchmark and the effort has begun," added the official.

"At this point I can only say that we are inclined more towards using the Devanagiri script in the system," he said.

‘Centre working on Digital India Act to curb child sexual abuse material’

Minister: Existing I-T Act doesn't address challenges of present times

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is working on a Digital India Act to incorporate new rules for stopping internet-aided circulation of illegal, criminal and child sexual abuse material, Union Minister Rajeev Chandrashekhar said on Friday.

Addressing a conference on ‘Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), hosted by the National Human Rights



Commission (NHRC) at the Vigyan Bhawan here, the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, said this will make internet service providers (ISPs) and other intermediaries more accountable for hosting offensive content.

He said the existing Information Technology Act

does not address the challenges of the present times.

“Hence, the Government formed the IT Rules, 2021, and amended it in 2022 to make intermediaries liable, and it is also proposing to bring a digital technology law,” Chandrashekhar said.

The Minister said the government is committed to

encouraging the use of internet by people as a tool for their empowerment but it also wants it to be safe and trusted. It is obligatory on the part of intermediaries being the service providers to remove illegal and criminal content, he said.

The government is working on a Digital India Act incorporating new rules for

6 killed as dumper hits car on Fbd-G’gram road

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Six people died when a speeding dumper rammed a car on the Faridabad-Gurugram road. According to police, the accident took place late Thursday night near the Mangar police post. The victims were residents of Palwal who were coming to Faridabad from Gurugram in the Maruti Alto car after attending a party, the police said, adding that all six died on the spot.



Police have seized the dumper but the driver fled the spot. According to the complaint filed by Punit's uncle Suresh Mangla, while returning from Gurugram, the dumper rammed the Alto car from behind. The car overturned and was damaged badly due to the impact. The dumper driver managed to escape, police said.

“I was in another car with Pratham Gulati when the

speeding dumper rammed into the car. All the six people were killed on the spot.

The police were informed and all the six people were rushed to a hospital where doctors declared them brought dead. The accident was caused due to the negligence of the dumper driver,” Mangla said in his complaint. An FIR has been registered against the dumper driver under sections 279 (rash driving), 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code at the Dhauj police station, officials said.

Deepika Padukone to...

From Page 1

Shaunak Sen's ‘All That Breathes’ is nominated for Documentary Feature award, while Guneet Monga-backed ‘Elephant Whisperers’ is competing in the Documentary Short category. Deepika has previously represented India as a jury at the 75th-anniversary celebration of the Cannes Film Festival 2022. She also unveiled the FIFA World Cup trophy in Lusail Stadium on December 18 before the final between Argentina and France.

The actor is riding high on the success of her film ‘Pathaan’, co-starring Shah Rukh Khan. She is currently filming for sci-fi movie, tentatively titled ‘Project K’, which also features Prabbhas and Amitabh Bachchan.

Sisodia applies for regular bail

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday applied for regular bail before Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court after his arrest this week over alleged irregularities in the capital's liquor excise policy. Sisodia — who has resigned from the Delhi cabinet and as deputy chief minister — moved the lower court after the Supreme Court refused to intervene, pointing out he had sufficient legal remedies to pursue before approaching the highest court in the land.

The application is likely to come up for hearing before Special Judge M K Nagpal on Saturday, Sisodia's advocate



Rishikesh said. Sisodia, who was sent to CBI custody on Monday, is scheduled to be produced before the court tomorrow when his CBI remands ends.

Sisodia's lawyers, on the other hand, questioned the timing of his arrest and said that the CBI's case pertains to the period before the excise

policy was cleared, adding that the Delhi Lieutenant Governor had cleared the policy in May 2021.

The court had on February 27 remanded Sisodia in CBI custody to allow the agency to get “genuine and legitimate” answers to questions being put to him for “a proper and fair investigation”.

Assam, UP Govts oppose Khera’s plea for clubbing, transfer of FIRs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Assam and the Uttar Pradesh governments on Friday opposed in the Supreme Court a plea of Congress leader Pawan Khera seeking clubbing of FIRs lodged for his alleged objectionable remarks against the Prime Minister, claiming his party was still continuing with the “very same low level” on their social media accounts.



The Uttar Pradesh government sought dismissal of the plea with a cost by terming it as “misconceived” and “an attempt to leapfrogging the routine normal procedure available under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).”

“That it is submitted that the leaders of the political party (Congress) to which the petitioner (Khera) belongs have, even after this honourable court taking cognizance of the matter, continued the very same low level in their official

Twitter handles and other social media account,” the Assam government said.

The responses were filed in the top court by the two states through Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on the day when a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud extended till March 17 the interim bail granted to Khera in the cases related to his alleged objec-

tionable remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Opposing the prayer for transfer and clubbing of the FIR, registered at Haflong police station in Dima Hasao district, with the complaint lodged at Lucknow, the Assam government filed its reply through Assistant Resident Commissioner Dhrubajyoti Nath.

History switch hitting for...

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He said, ‘It’s because world is in a difficult place, more people are getting interested in the world. The second reason is globalisation of India. Like a cricket team, we don’t want to win matches only at home but abroad as well.’

Backing India to play a bigger role at the international level, Blair said, ‘It is absurd to think that India is not a permanent member [of the United Nations Security Council] but you can say that for other countries as well. The West has no option but to share power. The question is how to make sense of diplomacy in this new world.’

He also said, ‘Real challenge today is how to make sense of the shifting geopolitics, and in that position India is absolutely critical because the progress in India in the last few years has been remarkable. The position of India is potentially more powerful than ever.’

China slams...

From Page 1

US President Joe Biden hosted the first-ever summit of the Quad leaders in the virtual format in March 2021 that vowed to strive for an Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, inclusive, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion, sending a subtle message to China.

Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square miles of the South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

On China's reluctance, along with Russia, to endorse a joint statement on the Ukraine war at the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in New Delhi on Thursday, spokesperson Mao said G20 is a premier forum for international economic cooperation.

The G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi was unable to come out with a joint communiqué due to a bitterly

increasing rift between the US-led Western powers and Russia over the Ukraine conflict despite consistent efforts by host India to bridge the differences.

‘The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. Leaders of member states made it clear in the G20 Bali Leaders’ Declaration last year that the G20 is not the forum to resolve security issues,’ Mao said.

China believes that the G20 should work to follow through on the leaders’ consensus, focus on its mandate and main function, and contribute to promoting stable, inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, she added.

‘We also noted that G20 members have varying views on the Ukraine issue. We hope that G20 members will respect each other’s concerns and send a message of solidarity and cooperation instead of division and mutual recrimination,’ she added.

‘China hopes that the G20 will demonstrate its sense of responsibility and contribute to global development and prosperity,’ she added.

Out-of-box ideas, holy sites can take...

From Page 1

The PM elaborated on how this year's Union Budget would help the tourism sector and create many economic opportunities for the youth. ‘This webinar today is for transformation of the tourism sector, and when all stakeholders come together, we reach desired results and within stipulated time frame,’ he said.

An ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking and long-term vision can take tourism to new heights, Modi said. ‘To give new heights to tourism in India, we will have to think out of the box and work with long-term planning,’ he said.

He also emphasised that rejuvenation of religious sites has boosted tourism. Citing an example of Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi, he said around 70-80 lakh people used to visit the temple in a year before it was rebuilt, but the tourist footfall crossed 7 crore last year after the renovation. He also informed that 15 lakh

devotees have gone to see Baba Kedarnath compared to only 4-5 lakh before the completion of reconstruction work in Kedarghati.

‘Some people think that tourism is a fancy word, for high-income groups, but in India, it has a long socio-cultural context,’ Modi said, citing various yatras undertaken by the masses over the centuries.

‘Tourism is a very old concept and yatras have been happening, and people used to undertake yatras despite challenges. He gave the example of Char Dham Yatra, Dwadash Jyotirling Yatra, 51 Shaktipeeth Yatra and said it is used to connect the places of our faith while also strengthening the unity of the country. Observing that the entire economy of many big cities of the country was dependent on these yatras, the PM lamented the lack of development to enhance facilities suited to the times despite the age-old tradition of yatras.

DDA, WWF join hands for bird’s festival in Sanjay Van on Sunday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and WWF-India have joined hands for bird's festival in the sylvan Sanjay Van on Sunday. Nature walks to spot resident and migratory birds, interaction multimedia exhibits and workshops have been planned as part of this bird festival

“Delhi is the second most bird-rich capital city in the world. Home to a staggering diversity of resident bird species, the bustling metropolis also welcomes winter and summer visitors and passage migrants who stop by on



their incredible journeys,” according to an official statement. Sanjay Van, a reserve forest in the heart of Delhi, supports over 200 species of birds, it said.

WWF-India has curated the ‘Sanjay Van Bird Festival’ as a series of events for the people of Delhi to experience and celebrate birds in the city. This is an extended com-

memoration of the World Wildlife Day (March 3), organisers said.

“We have a lot to learn from birds - patience, resilience, resourcefulness, teamwork, perseverance, adaptability, vigilance and creativity. The Sanjay Van Bird Festival is an endeavour to work with nature, rather than against it. We have successfully held a Moth Festival, Dragonfly Festival as well as numerous nature trails on flora and fauna with experts in the Sanjay Van,” Peush Kumar, Deputy Director (Landscapes), DDA, was quoted as saying in the statement.

THE PIONEER

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THANKSGIVING

Thank you holly spirit blessings Celine.

PD(90289)A

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it Known to all that my client has agreed to purchase Entire Freehold Property bearing Flat/Apartment No.702, 7th Floor Tower No.83, Measuring Super Area of 2413 Sq.Ft., situated in Group Housing Colony known as 'Chloris', Sector-19, 16/3, Mile Stone, Mathura Road, Faridabad, Haryana. Hereinafter referred as 'Said Property', from Smt. Asha Devi Bhaskar Wife of Shri Daulat Ram Bhaskar Resident of Flat No. B3/702, Chloris, Sector-19, Faridabad, Haryana, who has represented herself to be the absolute and exclusive owner of the "Said Property" and she has further represented that the "Said Property" is free from all sorts of encumbrances (registered or un-registered) including but not limited to prior sale, gift, mortgage, charge, lien. Claims, disputes, injunction orders, attachment orders passed by any government authority.

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NITESH CHHABRA, ADVOCATE
Chamber No.606, Lawyer's Chamber,
District Court, Sector-12, Faridabad,
(M) 9871893503

From Page 1

This message was conveyed in a joint statement issued after the Foreign Ministers of the Quad combine reviewed the situation in the strategically important Indo-Pacific and the adverse impact of the Russian military action

in Ukraine. Australia will host the summit of the Quad heads of states later this year.

The meet held on the sidelines of the G-20 Foreign Ministers' conclave was hosted by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. His Quad counterparts Antony Blinken (US),

Penny Wong (Australia) and Yoshimasa Hayashi (Japan) participated in the breakfast meet here. Incidentally, the joint statement refrained from naming China.

‘We strongly support the principles of freedom, rule of law, sovereignty and territori-

al integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes without resorting to threat or use of force and freedom of navigation and overflight, and oppose any unilateral attempt to change the status quo, all of which are essential to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and beyond,’ it said.

The Foreign Ministers said the Quad is acting as a force for regional and global good, and it will be guided by the priorities of the Indo-Pacific region through its positive and constructive agenda.

The statement said through the Quad, the countries seek to support the region through practical cooperation on contemporary challenges such as health security, climate change and the clean energy transition, critical and emerging technologies, infrastructure and connectivity.

It also talked about

addressing the debt crisis through sustainable, transparent and fair lending and financing practices. ‘We concur that the rules-based international order is anchored in international law, including the UN Charter, and the principles of sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of all states,’ it said.

‘We are committed to cooperate to address attempts to unilaterally subvert the UN and international system, in consultation with our partners and through multilateral and international platforms,’ it added. The Ministers also said, ‘We continued to discuss our responses to the conflict in Ukraine and the immense human suffering it is causing, and concurred that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.

‘We underscored the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in

accordance with international law, including the UN Charter. We emphasised that the rules-based international order must respect sovereignty, territorial integrity, transparency and peaceful resolution of disputes’.

Later, Blinken said at the Raisina Dialogue here that ‘if we allow with impunity Russia to do what it’s doing in Ukraine, then that’s a message to would be aggressors everywhere that they may be able to get away with it too’.

‘The principles that underlie the entire international system that are necessary for trying to keep peace, the stability that grew out of two world wars are being challenged, being aggressed along with Ukraine,’ he said.

‘And part of the reason that countries way beyond Europe are also so focused on this and are working to support Ukraine and deal with the challenge is because they know it could

have an effect here,’ he said.

Expressing concern over terrorists exploiting technology for their ulterior motives, the statement ‘We welcome the focused discussions on these themes at the Quad Counter-Terrorism Policy Meeting and tabletop exercise hosted by Australia in October 2022.’

Following the meeting, the four Ministers attended a session at the Raisina Dialogue here and spoke largely about the convergence of interests of the Quad member nations.

‘For us the future is so much in the Indo-Pacific. Our engagement throughout the region, both through the Quad and in other ways, is as comprehensive and as deep as any time I can remember, Blinken said.

While Blinken and Wong were in India to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers’ meeting, Hayashi came to Delhi to participate in the Quad meeting.

3 of Noida firm held for selling adulterated drugs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

Three employees of a city-based pharmaceutical firm, whose cough syrup is alleged to have led to the death of 18 children in Uzbekistan last year, were arrested on charges of manufacturing and sale of adulterated drugs.

The arrests were made after an FIR was lodged late Thursday night against five officials of Marion Biotech, including two of its directors, over a complaint by a drugs inspector of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).

Police said the directors are at large and a search is underway to apprehend them. Central and Uttar Pradesh drug authorities had checked samples of Marion Biotech products and found 22 of them to be "not of standard quality" (adulterated and spurious), according to the complainant

Uzbek cough syrup deaths



drug inspector. "Three people associated with Marion Biotech, which is located in Sector 67, were today arrested by the local Phase 3 police station officials.

These people were engaged in preparation and sale of fake drugs which caused serious harm to public," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Rajiv Dixit said. "Besides the three suspects who have been arrested, there are two more directors

Singh, analytical chemist. The absconding directors of the firm who have been booked are Jaya Jain and Sachin Jain, Kumar said.

The FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code sections 274 (adulteration of drugs), 275 (sale of adulterated drugs), 276 (sale of drug as a different drug or medical preparation) as well as under section 17 (misbranded drugs) and related violations of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Marion Biotech had come under scanner in December last year for its cough syrup Dok-1 that is suspected to have led to death of 18 children who consumed it in Uzbekistan after which CDSCO launched a probe into the matter. The production licence of the firm was suspended in January after inspections at its site by central and state drug authorities in wake of controversy.

70 kids in Gambia died of kidney injury caused by India firm's substandard drugs: US study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In an observation that is likely to put a question mark on the Indian drug surveillance system, a US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigation has now found that contaminated medications made by India-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals were "associated" with the deaths of 70 children in Gambia between August and December last year due to acute kidney injury.

The US-CDC report is published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Incidentally, the Haryana-based firm is already facing

allegations of exporting sub-standard drugs to Vietnam a decade ago, for which two of its executives have been recently sent to jail by a city court.

In fact, the links between contaminated cough syrup and the kids' mortalities in Gambia was reported last October, when the World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert saying four cough syrups made by Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd contained toxic levels of diethylene and ethylene glycol and should be withdrawn.

The company had denied that its drugs were at fault for the deaths of kids in Gambia while the Union Health

Ministry said the syrups showed no toxicity when it tested them. The US CDC report based on its detailed investigation has, however, again brought the drug quality being provided to Gambia or for that matter exported by the Maiden Pharma under the scanner.

The CDC in its report said that its investigation "strongly suggests" that medicines contaminated with the toxins, imported into Gambia, led to the cluster of acute kidney injury among 78 children, of which 66 died between June and September 2022. Four more children have since died, bringing the official toll up to 70.

It said, it reached its conclusions by "looking at medical records of patients where available, as well as interviews with their parents and caregivers." It also says other evidence, such as the tests of the medicines, the wide geographic spread of the cases, and the fact that the illness did not spread to adults, pointed towards "a toxin rather than an infectious agent." There have been a number of poisonings linked to diethylene and ethylene glycol in past in countries including Haiti and Nigeria, but report says this is first known incident when imported medicines were at fault rather than domestically developed drugs.

Govt misusing kids to seek Sisodia's release: BJP

AAP forcing kids to write letters against arrest of Sisodia by running 'I Love Manish' desks: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the AAP leaders sharing messages on social media penned by students to support Sisodia and project him as "Manish chacha", the Delhi BJP alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal Government is setting up 'I love Manish Sisodia' desks at Government schools in the city to garner "forced support" for him.

According to BJP leaders, there has been no official announcement of such a campaign by the AAP Government but WhatsApp forwards, alleged desks were being set up at Government schools to this effect. After AAP started trending on the social media, the BJP leaders also started sharing messages penned by students highlighting excise policy scam and role of Sisodia.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has condemned the AAP for forcing children to write letters and make cards against the arrest of Sisodia by running "I Love Manish Sisodia" campaign in Government schools.

It is regrettable that even after Sisodia's arrest, the Delhi Government "is not stopping its dirty politics in the name of



education and has now stooped as low as to involving innocent school kids in it," Kapoor said.

"Under the patronage of the Delhi government, special 'I love Manish Sisodia' desks will be set up in government schools to garner forced support for Sisodia from students," Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor alleged. Sharing a copy of a purported message regarding it on social media, Kapoor said that as part of the programme, school students were supposed to scribble messages in support of Sisodia and express concern at his arrest.

BJP leader Tejinder Pal Singh Bagga claimed that he received a call from Delhi Govt school kids parents and they said their kids are getting threats from the school administration. "School will fail their kids if they do not create drawing in support of Sisodia", he said.

BJP leader Kapil Mishra also claimed on his social media handle that students are writing about Sisodia's corruption saying that they are upset with his corruption charges.

Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri criticized the AAP saying Kejriwal government is using students and children to garner support for Sisodia who is in jail in connection with corruption charges. In response, the Delhi government issued a statement saying, "There is no involvement of any government department or government employee in any such activity. It is just BJP agenda." The BJP leader said, "Under the patronage of Delhi government, special 'I love Manish Sisodia' desks will be set up in government schools to garner forced support for Sisodia from students."

"Delhi BJP strongly condemns this dirty politics of

forcing school kids to support Sisodia and urge that this 'I love Manish Sisodia' desk scheme be immediately shelved," he said.

In another tweet, the BJP leader tagged NCPCR chairperson Priyanka Kanoongo and alleged that parents were being pressured by AAP to get such messages penned for Sisodia. "@NCPCR_ & @KanoongoPriyanka ji Please see how shamelessly AAP is campaigning for Manish Sisodia by pressurising government school students. Parents are being pressurised to write letters otherwise students will be failed in exams."

Sisodia, who had 18 portfolios in the Delhi government including education, resigned from the Cabinet following his arrest by the CBI in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped liquor policy for 2021-22.

AAP's Twitter handle shares students' messages in support of former Dy CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a befitting reply to BJP's claim that Delhi Government is setting up "I love Manish Sisodia" desks in State-run schools as a show of support for the former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia whose is in CBI custody for five days, AAP's Twitter handle on Friday shared messages penned by students in support of Sisodia.

According to an AAP functionary, more than 20,000 letters to Manish Sisodia were collected on first day itself; special desk was set up for just 1.5 hours. AAP leaders claimed that "I love Manish Sisodia" desk set up by the parents outside their schools and thousands of students from Delhi government schools and private schools came out in support of Sisodia.

In their letters to Sisodia, students wrote that they are studying well and working hard to score well in exams as appealed by their 'Manish Chacha'.

They also wrote that 'Manish Chacha' need not worry about that. They said they are always with their beloved education minister. Through these letters, some of them even questioned why their 'Manish Chacha' has been



put behind bars if he hasn't done anything wrong. "Since the arrest and resignation news of Sisodia broke out a few days ago, these students were restless to send their messages to their beloved Education Minister, so their parents came up with a solution by setting up 'I love Manish Sisodia' desks outside their schools," the party said.

Atishi, who will soon be included in the Cabinet as a minister, shared images of the messages on Twitter. "BJP people: No matter how many false allegations you make, but the love that the children of Delhi have got Manish Sisodia, you cannot shake it," she said. Jasmine Shah also retweeted similar messages and said: "Wow... Children of Delhi are showing an unprecedented outpouring of love for their favourite Education minister with messages of #ILoveManishSisodia." MLA

Somnath Bharti tweeted, "today Manish Sisodia has taken the form of an idea and his ideas have reached every house through children! There are 18 lakh Manish Sisodias in Delhi schools."

How will you stop? Make an effort, no matter how many parrots you blow away, the education revolution is not going to stop," MLA Kuldeep Kumar wrote, "Today in this country if people know any education minister by name then it is Shri Manish Sisodia."

BJP people should be proud that there is such an Education Minister in their country who is being talked about even abroad. The politics of hate is not going to last long."

AAP leader Sarita Singh went so far as to upload a video wherein numerous young schoolchildren are seen sitting on chairs holding pieces of paper with some message scribbled on them.

Don't appoint tainted Saurav, Atishi Ministers: Cong to L-G

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar has written to Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, urging him not to accept the recommendation of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to make tainted MLAs Saurav Bhardwaj and Atishi as Ministers, following the resignations of corrupt Ministers Satyender Jain and Manish Sisodia, who were involved in the liquor scam, and were in jail and in CBI custody, respectively.

Kumar appealed to the Lt. Governor not to further ruin the tarnished image of the National Capital, which has already earned the notorious name of the "Capital of Scams" and pollution in the country.

The Congress leader said that the Lt. Governor should ask Kejriwal to suggest the names of two MLAs with clean images from among the 62 AAP legislators for filling up the Ministerial berths.

In his letter, Kumar said that both Bhardwaj and Atishi were also in the ambit of the liquor scam probe, and their induction in the Ministry will only legitimize corruption.

He said that due to the corruption of Sisodia and Kejriwal, Delhi had earned the notorious image of "Nashe Ki Rajdhani", and after a CBI probe was ordered into the liquor scam, Delhi also earned the notoriety of the "Capital of Scams".

Will flatten 3 garbage mountains by Dec 2024: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday visited the Okhla landfill site and said the target is to clear the city of all three mountains of garbage by December 2024.

Kejriwal, during his visit to the site in south Delhi, was accompanied by his cabinet colleague Kailash Gahlot, Mayor Shelly Oberoi and Municipal Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti further said that the target is to clear the Okhla landfill site by May 2024, but we will try to clear it by December 2023.

The monstrous Okhla landfill was commissioned in 1990s and it reached its saturation point several years ago. The Okhla landfill site contains about 40 lakh MT of legacy waste in it. In the last few years, about 20-25 lakh MT have been removed from it, but about 40 lakh MT still remains



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, along with officials, visits Okhla landfill site in New Delhi on Friday

in it, Kejriwal told reporters at the site. "The scheduled set target to remove this mountain of garbage is by May 2024. But, all

officers and engineers are working on it, and our target is to try to remove it by December 2023, instead of

May next year," he said. There is a lot of capacity for biominer here (about 17,000 MT), but the capacity to remove

waste from the landfill and dispose it is less, the chief minister said. Its current daily disposal capacity is 4,000-4,500 MT. But, by April 1, "we will augment it to 10,000 MT daily", he added. Kejriwal said he will visit the Okhla landfill site again to carry out an inspection on April 1. "And, by June, we expect to augment it further to 15,000 MT daily disposal capacity."

If we go by 15,000 MT capacity, then by December-January, we will reach our target of cleaning this (Okhla) site by December-January, and local residents will also get relief," he said.

Similarly, work is underway at Ghazipur and Bhalswa landfill sites, and when we will visit there in the next couple of days, we will take stock of the situation there too, he said. Asked when will Delhi become free of these landfill sites, he said, "One will be cleared by

May, and another one six months later." So, December next year, that is our target, he added. Urban Development Minister Kailash Gahlot noted that the AAP government is hopeful that Delhi will be free from all the landfill sites by December 2024. On the Okhla landfill site, he said, "We are hopeful of achieving the daily disposal rate of 10,000 MT by April, and 15,000 MT by June." The minister also spoke on the upcoming Delhi budget.

"The budget will be on time. We are having a series of meetings, and very soon we will finalise the budget. Delhi will get it on time," he said. Talking about the alternatives once the landfill sites are cleared, Kejriwal said waste-to-energy plants and biometanation plants will help in the disposal of waste. However, he did not elaborate on it, more so when Delhi generates a massive amount of waste daily.

People from all over world should consider Delhi as hub of edu: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said the national Capital has a uniform education system in both private and Government schools where equal facilities are being provided to students.

He also said that people from all over the world should consider Delhi as the "hub of education".

The chief minister was speaking during the 'Excellence in Education' award programme where several students were awarded under various categories.

"Delhi has a uniform education system in private and government schools. There is no inequality in our education system."

"It is our government which bridged the gap between government and private schools. We will also fix the MCD schools gradually and all

our councillors will work hard to improve them. We have around 1,800 MCD schools and they are in very bad condition. Our aim is that people from all over the world should consider Delhi as the hub of education," he underlined.

Handing over the awards, Kejriwal said transformation of the education system in Delhi would not be possible without the efforts of teachers, students and parents.

"When we started parent-teachers meetings at government schools, parents of the underprivileged students appreciated how we invited them inside the school premises and treated them with respect. The education system in Delhi would not be possible without the efforts of the teachers, students and parents," he said.

The CM congratulated the schools and the students who received the awards this year.

Commission earned by AAP leaders invested in T: Sukesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a fresh attack, jailed con-man Sukesh Chandrasekhar has launched an attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), after the arrest of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, stating that his complaints regarding the Arvind Kejriwal-led party "have now started to vindicate".

On Kejriwal's claim that no money was found at the resi-

dence of Sisodia during CBI searches, Sukesh alleged that money earned by the AAP leaders in the form of "commission" are invested in Telangana and most of it is in shell companies in Singapore and Hong Kong.

In his five pages letter through his lawyer, Sukesh claimed that the arrest of Sisodia by the CBI in connection with the Delhi Excise policy case "is only the start".

5 use Telegram to dupe startup

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two engineering graduates, two Aadhaar enrollment centre employees and a private firm worker ganged together through a Telegram group and duped a Pune-based fintech startup after procuring credit cards using names and PAN details of celebrities like M S Dhoni, Abhishek Bachchan and Madhuri Dixit.

The accused were arrested recently following a complaint filed by FPL Technologies

Private Limited which issues "One Card" — a contactless metal credit card. The company got wind of the fraud after the fraudsters used some of these cards to purchase products worth Rs 21.32 lakh.

The accused were identified as Sunil Kumar (42), Puneet (25), Mohammad Asif (32) — all residents of Babarpur in Delhi — and Vishwa Bhaskar Sharma (42) and Pankaj Mishra (37), both residents of Jaipur in Rajasthan, they said. Sharma, an engineer, had earlier worked

at a government college in Rajasthan. He left his job and subsequently started defrauding people and firms, the police said. He is the key conspirator and technical mind behind the scam, they said.

Mishra earlier worked at an IT firm and had an annual package of around Rs 15 lakh. He met with an accident in 2020 and later was suffering from fits due to which he lost his job, police said.

Sharma was an admin of a Telegram group called "Loan

App" where he came in contact with Mishra as they both belong to Jaipur. Later, the other three accused also joined the group, police said.

Police said Sharma took a loan of Rs 2,500 from a Chinese App and later deposited whole amount. Despite that his family members and other relatives were receiving calls from its recovery agents who were forcing them to deposit more money. The accused persons took loans from several Chinese apps and got to know about financial trail

Cousin booked for burning minor's cheek with cigarette

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has lodged a case after a seven-year-old boy alleged that his cheek was burnt with a cigarette by his cousin in South Delhi's Neb Sari area.

According to police, the incident was reported to the police on February 28, they said, adding that a case under relevant sections of the Juvenile Justice Act has been regis-

tered. Police said since the boy's parents are going through a divorce procedure, the child stays alternatively with his mother and father for a period of three months each as per court orders.

After conducting the medical examination, the boy was counselled and produced before the Child Welfare Committee which gave his custody to his mother, according to the police.

Russia raps West for Ukraine rant at G20

Nobody gave a damn over Iraq, Af and Yugoslavia situations in previous deliberations, claims Lavrov

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A day after the G-20 Foreign Ministers here were unable to evolve a consensus on a joint communiqué on the Ukraine conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Friday criticised western nations and charged them with raking up the Ukraine issue during G20 meetings. He also claimed that nobody "gave a damn" over the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia in previous deliberations of the grouping.

Making his country's position clear at the ongoing Raisina Dialogue here, he also wondered why everyone was asking Russia whether it was ready to negotiate to end the war when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had signed a decree making negotiations with Moscow under President Vladimir Putin a "criminal offence".

Lavrov said US President Joe Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg have publicly stated that Russia must



be defeated on the battlefield. "They say Russia must suffer a strategic defeat and this they say is existentialist for the west in the context of global domination. This is a blunt admission," he said. Referring to the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Thursday, the Russian minister said the western leaders had raised the Ukraine issue, but wondered whether previous declarations of the grouping ever discussed the situation in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan or Yugoslavia.

"Nobody was giving a damn about anything but

finances and macroeconomic policies which the G20 was formed for... When Russia has started to defend itself, there is nothing except Ukraine that is of interest to the G20," he said.

"It is a shame. If they say it is existentialist for them, it is existentialist for us," he said, adding that Moscow had been warning the West for decades against the expansion of NATO and pushing arms into Ukraine to prepare them for war against Russia. Lavrov said the countries in Europe were not affected by what Russia was doing in Ukraine, but by the reaction of the West on Moscow's actions in the region after ample warnings.

"They do not remember when Serbia was bombed. Joe Biden, a senator at that time, bragged that he promoted that approach. When Iraq was ruined as a state, a few years later Tony Blair said it was a mistake. You think the United States has the right to declare a threat just like they did to other countries, but no one questions it for that," the minister added.

₹6 crore 'bribe' money seized from house of BJP MLA's son in K'taka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP suffered a major embarrassment on Friday in the poll-bound Karnataka when Lokayukta officials recovered unaccounted cash of more than ₹6 crore from the house of BJP MLA K Madal Virupakshappa's son Prashanth Madal, close on the heels of his arrest after allegedly accepting a bribe of ₹ 40 lakh.

Virupakshappa, MLA from Channagiri constituency in Davanagere district, is the chairman of the Karnataka Soap and Detergents Limited (KSDL) and Prashanth was allegedly receiving 'first installment' of the bribe on behalf of his father, according to Lokayukta sources.

Facing the heat, Virupakshappa on Friday tendered his resignation from the post. In his resignation letter to the Chief Minister, he said there is no "relation" between him and the Lokayukta raid which he termed as a 'conspiracy' against him and his family.

Prashanth, the chief accountant of Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, was caught red-handed on Thursday evening while accepting bribe from a contractor Shreyas Kashyap of KSDL office. Within hours of the trap, a team of Lokayukta



Lokayukta police recovers cash from the house of BJP MLA Madaal Virupakshappa's son Prashanth Kumar a day after he was allegedly caught taking bribe from a contractor, in Bengaluru PTI Photo

officials raided his house and recovered the unaccounted cash. "Despite that since an allegation has been levelled against me, I am taking moral responsibility and submitting my resignation from the post of KSDL Chairman". He said.

In his reaction, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said the trap was proof that the Lokayukta has been "revived" to check corruption unlike the previous Congress regime which created a separate anti-corruption bureau apart from Lokayukta institution to cover up their wrong deeds. Former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah said the MLA's son demanding bribes is "proof of the 40 per cent commission government functioning in state". Karnataka Lokayukta Justice (Retd) B S

Patil said today Rs 2.02 crore was recovered from the KSDL office and Rs 6.1 crore from Prashanth's house. "Five persons have been apprehended and they have been taken into custody", he said, adding an FIR has been registered.

In the FIR, MLA Virupakshappa is the accused number one and his son is the second accused. Bommai said due to the absence of a strong Lokayukta in the past, many corruption cases during the Congress regime could never get investigated. He also said many corruption cases during the Congress regime have been given to Lokayukta, which will investigate and bring out truth. Karnataka which is to elect a new state assembly before May is witnessing hectic campaigning.

BJP rolling red carpet for China's Qin instead of showing red eyes: Cong



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang in New Delhi PTI Photo

A day after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang, the Congress on Friday attacked the Government over the border standoff and alleged that a red carpet was rolled out for the Minister instead of being shown "red eyes".

Congress media department and publicity head Pawan Khara said Jaishankar shook hands with the visiting Chinese foreign minister and reportedly discussed the "abnormal" current state of relations with China and the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Khara cited Jaishankar's recent reported remarks on China and it being a bigger economy to attack the government. "The Chinese foreign minister was on Indian Soil, the Modi government's external affairs minister was discussing the Line of Actual Control (LAC), but they cannot discuss the same issue in Parliament and take the people of India into confidence," Khara said.

"A red carpet was rolled out for the minister instead of being shown "red eyes". There is no change in status quo ante even after almost three years of the Galwan clash," the Congress spokesperson alleged at a press conference at the AICC headquarters.

He alleged that India "lost access to 26 out of 65 Patrolling Points" which was not the case before May 2020, and questioned the Modi government's "silence" on the issue.

Chinese build-up in Doklam up to the Jampheeri Ridge is threatening India's strategic "Siliguri Corridor" - the gateway to Northeastern states - Khara claimed.

He alleged that the BJP is celebrating its electoral performance in three northeastern states but does not mind "giving up the Northeast". Posing questions to the

Modi government, Khara asked whether it is true that the talks with the Chinese foreign minister have been "virtually inconclusive" as far the illegal Chinese occupation at the LAC and our borders is concerned.

"Is it true that 17 rounds of military talks have also taken place on the LAC, and there is yet another 18th one proposed at an earlier day.

How is Modi Govt putting across the argument of India's territorial integrity, especially in the backdrop of EAM's latest assertion of China being a 'bigger economic power'? Let this be very clear, that the Congress party stands solidly behind India's national interests and urge the Modi government to strongly raise the border issue with China," Khara said in a statement.

"Indian National Congress salutes the sacrifice and courage of our soldiers. We are indebted to their families. We want the LAC issue to be resolved in a transparent and expedient manner.

If Modi government has an iota of national interests ingrained in its DNA, it shall never let go off the sacrifice of our bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice fighting the Chinese at Galwan," he said.

The Congress' attack on the government came a day after Jaishankar conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Qin at a meeting that the state of India-China relations is "abnormal" as their talks focused on addressing the challenges in bilateral ties, especially that of peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Jaishankar's first in-person meeting with Qin came on the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers conclave amid the over 34-month-long border row in eastern Ladakh. Qin took charge as Chinese foreign minister in December, succeeding Wang Yi.

Not opposed to RSS march routes but cited intel reports: TN to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu Government told the Supreme Court on Friday it is not completely opposed to allowing the RSS' route marches and public meetings across the State on March 5 but cited intelligence reports to say these cannot be held in every street or locality.

The State Government sought some time to come up with a list of routes for the march. Granting the prayer of senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing the Tamil Nadu Government, a bench of Justices V Ramasubramanian and Pankaj Mittal deferred the hearing till March 17.

Rohatgi said the Government will try and work out a solution and decide the routes it wanted the processions to take by then. "The idea is not to ban the processions but it needs to have some conditions," he said. Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani,

appearing for the RSS, said the state has allowed similar events by organisations like the 'Dalit Panthers' but the RSS was being singled out for harsh treatment. He said RSS was allowed to conduct marches in six districts which it did. However, it has been asked to hold the event in enclosed spaces in 42 places.

"In the areas where we were allowed, we went ahead and there was no law and order problem. Now, they say that the PFI has been banned by the central government and it is a threat (to RSS events). They are not able to control a terrorist organisation and that is why they are banning us. I cannot exercise my right. Can this be a ground?" Jethmalani said.

Jethmalani said that on March 5, the RSS is not going to hold march anyway and, if the state wants time, there is no difficulty. "We are not going to do anything till at least March 10 or 12, even a week later if my friends want," he said.

Decide on passport renewal of Mehbooba within 3 months, HC directs passport officer

NEW DELHI : The Delhi High Court on Friday ordered the Regional Passport Officer in Srinagar to decide the passport renewal application of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti within three months.

The order was passed after the court was informed today by Central Government that the passport authority in Srinagar has been directed to re-examine and take a fresh decision on Mufti's application. Justice Prathiba M Singh noted that the matter has been pending for nearly two years.

"Considering that matter has been remanded to passport officer and the initial rejection was almost two years ago, let the concerned passport office

take the decision expeditiously and in any case in three months," the Court ordered.

The PDP leader had approached the Delhi High Court seeking an early decision in her appeal against the order denying her passport renewal.

She said that her passport was cancelled on March 26, 2021 and though she approached the Jammu & Kashmir High Court against the decision, she was later informed that an appeal against the order would lie under the Passports Act.

Mufti recently also wrote External Affairs S Jaishankar seeking his intervention for issuance of her passport and that of her mother's. **PNS**

SC to set up bench on 'hijab in exam hall' plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Refusing to give urgent hearing, the Supreme Court Friday said it will set up a three-judge bench to hear a plea of Muslim girl students to sit for examinations in Karnataka Government schools while wearing hijab.

"I will create a bench," said a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala when sought urgent hearing of the plea saying girls are on the verge of losing another academic year as the exams are being held in government schools which are not permitting wearing of headscarf.

Initially, the CJI said the

matter will be listed for hearing after Holi vacations.

The examinations are scheduled to be held after five days, the lawyer said, adding, "They have missed one year."

"They will miss another year." Without specifying the date, the bench then said it will create the bench. On March 15, 2022, the High Court had dismissed the petitions filed by a section of Muslim students of the Government Pre-University Girls College in Karnataka's Udupi seeking permission to wear the hijab inside classrooms, ruling it is not a part of the essential religious practice in the Islamic faith.

The apex court gave split verdict, leading to the validity of hijab ban order of the High Court.

India, Israel discuss key def projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and Israel on Friday reviewed their growing defence and strategic ties during a telephonic conversation between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Israeli counterpart Major General Yoav Gallant. They also discussed key projects relating to co-development of military hardware.

The talks came in the backdrop of Israel emerging a major defence partner of India in terms of weapon development since diplomatic ties between the two countries were established in 1992.

Israel is now engaged in many projects providing cutting edge technology to India in fields like missiles, upgradation of various systems, rifles and close quarter battle weapons besides electronic warfare systems.

As regards his talks, Rajnath said in a tweet India attaches "tremendous importance" to its relations with Israel. "Was happy to speak with the Defence Minister of Israel, Major General Yoav Gallant. India attaches tremendous importance to its relations with Israel," he said.

"Looking forward to work closely with him towards strengthening defence cooperation between both the countries," he said.

Giving details of talks, defence ministry officials later said Rajnath underlined government's priority for indigenous and domestic manufacturing of defence equipment under 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

₹3 cr cash seized in searches at Hazaribagh in PMLA case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday seized about Rs 3 crore cash during searches at a location in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand as part of a money laundering investigation against suspended IAS officer and former Mining Secretary Pooja Singhal and others.

Wads of cash, largely in the denomination of Rs 500 and a few Rs 2,000 notes, were seized from the premises of a person identified as Mohammed E Ansari, officials said.

The agency recovered the cash while the searches were being carried out in an ongoing money laundering investigation against Singhal.

Singhal, a 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Jharkhand cadre, was arrested by the ED on May 11 on money laundering charges linked to alleged irregularities in the MGNREGA scheme.

In February, the Supreme Court had granted the accused officer an interim bail for a period of two months so that she could look after her ailing daughter.

The ED is also probing her role in connection with alleged irregularities in the mining sector of the State as part of a second case filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In December, the ED had provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 82.77 crore belonging to Singhal on money laundering charges. The attached properties include one Super Speciality Hospital 'Pulse Super Speciality Hospital', one diagnostics centre 'Pulse Diagnostic and

Imaging Centre' and two land parcels situated in Ranchi, the agency had then said in a statement. The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by Jharkhand Police and Vigilance Bureau Jharkhand.

"Investigation revealed that Proceeds of Crime generated from the MNREGA Scam in the form of commission was deposited in different bank accounts belonging to Pooja Singhal and her relatives.

The said Proceeds of Crime was mixed and layered with the other unaccounted money generated by Pooja Singhal, by misusing her official position," the agency had said.

The agency further said, "Initially, the Proceeds of Crime was generated from MNREGA scam only, which was subsequently intermixed with other unaccounted fund generated from the corrupt practices of Pooja Singhal and these funds were deployed as capital/investment and further funds were generated from these funds, both as legitimate profit as well as by further infusion of POC."

By this modus-operandi, Singhal amassed huge wealth disproportionate to her known source of income. The source of funds invested in these immovable properties was primarily from the unaccounted cash profits generated from the Proceeds of Crime. This led to the categorisation of these attached assets as Proceeds of Crime, it said.

Singhal was arrested by the ED on May 11 and a Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet) was filed against her on July 5.

Now, CRPF Day parade to be held on March 25

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The first ever CRPF Day Parade proposed to be held at Jagdalpur in Naxal-hit Bastar district of Chhattisgarh has been rescheduled from March 19 to March 25.

"Due to certain administrative reasons the date of the CRPF Day Parade at Jagdalpur is rescheduled/postponed to 25/03/2023 in place of 19/03/2023.

Therefore, all stakeholders are requested to ensure action accordingly," reads an official order issued on Thursday. Jagdalpur is an active operational theatre of the CRPF in the Naxal-infested Bastar region. The CRPF establishment in Chhattisgarh is engaged in administrative mea-

sures for the conduct of the Parade. While officials remained tightlipped on the reasons for shifting the raising day parade, sources said the change could be mainly due to the unavailability of the chief guest on March 19.

Insiders and veterans of the CRPF rued the change in the designated date for holding the Annual Raising Day Parade especially when it is being held in an active operational area as the resources will be stretched for organizing the event by one more week.

Through an order on January 28, 2022, as reported earlier by The Pioneer, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) had decided to celebrate March 19, the day it was granted President's Colour in

1950, as the CRPF Day Parade every year.

Earlier, the raising day was celebrated as CRPF Anniversary Parade on one of four dates every year—March 19 (President's Colour was awarded to CRPF on March 19, 1950, July 27 (Crown Representative Police (CRP) was originally raised on this date in 1939 by the British India Government, October 31 (Birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel who was born on this date in October 1875 and December 28 (After Independence, CRP was rechristened as Central Reserve Police Force by enacting CRPF Act 1949 on this date granting it the status of the Armed Force of the Union).

The reasons for the change

in dates were attributable to the heavy rain in the month of July, coinciding birthday of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel on October 31 with assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and extreme winter in the national capital in December besides availability of Chief Guest for the event, according to the order issued last year.

Since 2018, the anniversary function has been conducted on March 19 every year. An online meeting was held in January, 2022 under the chairmanship of then Director General of CRPF Kuldeep Singh with all the Zonal Commanders and other Sector officers to discuss various issues regarding celebration of 83rd CRPF Anniversary Parade last year. The reason to

celebrate CRPF Anniversary Parade on different dates/days was discussed in depth and it was unanimously agreed and decided that henceforth, the CRPF Anniversary Day will be re-designated and celebrated as "CRPF Day on March 19 every year.

"It has been decided by the Competent Authority that henceforth, the nomenclature of CRPF Anniversary is hereby changed as CRPF Day Parade," reads the 2022 order.

Necessary correction /amendment in the Hand Book on Ceremonies was also made and the decision in connection with the fixation of March 19 as the date for anniversary celebration and the change in nomenclature was approved by the DG, CRPF.

Property of Pak-based listed terrorist attached in Baramulla

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday said it has attached property of Pakistan-based listed terrorist Basit Ahmad Reshi in Baramulla under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"Continuing the strong action against terrorists operating from Pakistan soil, the NIA has attached the property of Basit Ahmad Reshi located in district Baramulla. This action closely follows the attachment of the Srinagar-based property of Mushtaq Zargar alias Latram, the

founder and Chief Commander of Al-Umar Mujahideen yesterday," the NIA said in a statement.

Reshi is a 'listed terrorist' under the UA (P) Act and has been operating from Pakistan after his ex-filtration to Pakistan. He has been found funding terror activities and acts in the Valley, it said.

Reshi joined the militant ranks in 2015 and was involved in planning and execution of a terror attack at Police Guard Post in Sopore that killed one Constable and injured others. **PNS**

NIA attaches ₹20.65 crore assets in CPI-Maoist case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday said it has attached over Rs 20.65 crore in CPI (Maoist) case under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act which is the largest amount ever to be attached by the agency in a Naxal case.

The agency attached over 153 bank accounts/ STDR (Special Term Deposit) / Mutual Fund Accounts. "Striking a major blow to the

funding of Left-Wing Extremism, NIA has attached 152 bank accounts (including 124 STDRs) and one SBI Mutual Fund account containing a total of Rs. 20,65,20,496 belonging to a firm Santosh Construction, and its different partners, under section 25 (1) of the UA (P) Act," the NIA said in a statement.

These accounts had earlier been frozen under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code but have been found to be 'proceeds of ter-

rorism' during investigations warranting their 'attachment' under UA (P) Act, the agency said.

Investigations by the NIA had revealed that the accused Mrityunjay Kumar Singh alias Sonu Singh, one of the partners of Santosh Construction, had a close nexus with top CPI (Maoist) cadres. He had provided cash funds to Maoist cadre Ravindra Ganju, a Regional Committee Member of CPI (Maoist) for furtherance of Maoist activities, it said.

Need to neutralise ecosystem aiding terrorism in J&K: LG

PTI ■ KATHUA (J-K)

Lauding the role of THE Jammu & Kashmir Police in its fight against terrorism, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday highlighted the need to neutralise the ecosystem providing "ideological and financial" support to terrorists in the Union Territory.

He said it is the sacred duty of the J and K administration to provide a safe, secure and right environment to the common man.

The Lt Governor was speaking at the attestation-cum-passing out parade of recruit constables of 29th Basic Recruitment Training Course (BRTC) at S Prithinandan Singh Police Training School here.

Director General of Police Dilbag Singh also attended the function, which saw a total of 480 new recruits, including 49 women recruit constables, formally joining the police after completing their rigorous training.

Out of 480, as many as 330 constables have already served as Special Police Officers (SPOs), a police spokesman said, adding recruit constable Sunali Bhagat emerged as the best all-rounder.

Recruit constables Sarleen Kour, Sapna Saini, Heena Choudhary and Nitika Rajput were also felicitated by the Lt Governor for their excellent performances during the training.

Congratulating the new recruits on becoming a part of "one of the finest police forces in the country", Sinha said, "I am confident that you will discharge your responsibility towards the nation with utmost sensitivity, commitment and dedication."

"The integrity, dedication and professionalism of J and K Police is pivotal in the fight

against terrorism. We all take pride in the excellence and professionalism displayed by J and K Police in handling narco-terrorism and enforcing the rule of law," he said.

Sinha stressed upon the future-ready policing strategies to tackle the new forms of internal security challenges.

"These are challenging times for our police forces as the world today is facing conventional and non-conventional threats. We need to be vigilant and determined to neutralise the ecosystem providing ideological and financial support to terrorists," the Lt Governor said.

He said, "We believe in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and peaceful coexistence. There is no place for subversive elements in a civilized society."

Referring to the smuggling of large quantities of narcotics from across the border to fund terrorism, he said narco-ter-



rorism has become one of the biggest threats to the society.

"The administration, J and K Police and our security forces are committed to dealing with challenges of narco-terror in a comprehensive manner. Jammu & Kashmir is on the march and is being transformed," he said.

Sinha said, "It is our sacred duty to provide a safe, secure and right environment to ful-

fill the aspirations of the common man."

Noting that the top positions in the batch has been secured by women constables, the Lt Governor said these achievements show that the women in J and K are no less than anyone.

The Lt Governor asked the DGP to consider increasing the quota of reservation for women in the police force.

7kg heroin, ₹2 crore cash recovered from house of narco-drug peddler in Poonch

PTI ■ JAMMU

In a major breakthrough in its drive against narco-terrorism, the Jammu & Kashmir Police on Friday recovered seven kilograms of heroin, over Rs 2 crore cash and a pistol from the house of a notorious drug peddler along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, a senior police officer said.

Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh said a major narco-terror module has been busted in the Union Territory, adding the search operation is still going on.

The recovery was made from the house of notorious drug peddler Rafi Dhana alias "Rafi Lala", who was recently detained under the stringent Public Safety Act, in Mandi sector, Singh said here.

He said police along with components of the National Crime Agency and the CRPF raided the house of Rafi near the LoC on specific infor-



mation, leading to the recovery of seven kgs of heroin, over Rs 2 crore and a pistol with one magazine and 10 rounds and seven rounds of SLR. The counting of the cash is still going on, the officer said.

With Friday's development, police and security forces have been able to bust a major narco-terror module in the Union Territory, Singh said. "The searches are still going on in the presence of magistrates and prominent citizens. The nexus of this module with Punjab-based narcotics smugglers is being investigated," the ADGP said, adding a case has been registered at police station Mandi and further investigation set into motion.

PM's statement on BJP coming to power in Kerala kicks up debate

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Prime Minister's claim that the BJP-led alliance will capture power in Kerala has kicked up a debate in the southern state with the ruling CPI(M) and the opposition Congress on Friday terming it as a "dream", which will never come true and the saffron party asserting that Narendra Modi's wish will be fulfilled with the people's support.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of Opposition in the state assembly V D Satheesan said that BJP will not gain power here as the people are against communal forces.

BJP's Kerala state unit chief K Surendran, on the other hand, vowed that the party will make all possible efforts to make the PM's "wish or direction" come true.

He said that the "double engine of development" has to come to Kerala and added "we will bring it here".

Buoyed by his party's poll performance in three minority dominated northeastern states, Modi on Thursday said that BJP's alliance will form government in Kerala too in view of the increasing support of minorities for the saffron party.

In response to his claim, Vijayan in a statement said that



the saffron party coming to power in Kerala was "wishful thinking" as even minority groups will not take a pro-BJP stand owing to the alleged harassment they are facing at the hands of the Sangh Parivar.

Earlier in the day, the Congress, CPI(M) and the IUML, said that the PM's statement was a "dream" and that it was made without being conscious of the ground reality in the state.

Dubbing the statement as a "daydream" which the PM was entitled to have, senior CPI(M) leader and Politburo member M A Baby said Modi should remember that his party lost the only seat it ever had in the Kerala Assembly in the 2021 state elections.

"The PM is entitled to daydream, but he should remember that the only seat the BJP had in the state legislature has been lost. That sole seat was wrested by the Left front in the last election and the BJP in Kerala is now in a deplorable condition."

Senior Congress leader Satheesan too spoke along similar lines when he said that the BJP will never come to power in Kerala as the people here would "unite against the fascist and feudal movements".

"It (BJP coming to power) will never happen in Kerala. There is no space for the BJP here. There will be no space as people of the state will never allow any communal forces here.

Shinde to Opp: If voters defeated BJP in Kasba Peth, what about Chinchwad

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday mocked the Maha Vikas Aghadi over its excitement following the victory of an MVA-backed candidate in Kasba Peth by-election, saying the BJP has historically swept state and general elections after a few setbacks in bypolls.

Speaking in the legislative assembly during the debate on the governor's address to the joint sitting of both Houses, Shinde said, "Now in the next elections, I am also with the BJP. We are the Shiv Sena that contested the last election in alliance with the BJP while you all had contested the election separately."

The undivided Shiv Sena under Uddhav Thackeray and the BJP had contested the last state polls together, though they fell out after the results. Shinde later broke away from Sena and joined hands with the BJP to become the CM. His group was recently recognised by the Election Commission as the real Shiv Sena and given the party's 'bow-and-arrow' symbol.

Shinde said the Shiv Sena and BJP have identified what went wrong in the Kasba Peth bypoll and the government will win over the people of the constituency in 2024 when assembly elections are to be



held in Maharashtra.

Two Assembly segments in Pune district - Kasba Peth and Chinchwad - voted on February 26 in bypolls necessitated due to the death of BJP MLAs Mukta Tilak and Laxman Jagtap, respectively.

Of these, the Kasba Peth bypoll was won by the Congress, a constituent of the MVA, with a margin of 10,950 votes. BJP candidate Ashwini Jagtap, the wife of late MLA Laxman Jagtap, won from Chinchwad by defeating Vitthal alias Nana Kate of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), another MVA partner, by 36,168 votes.

"How is it that the NCP is rejoicing over the win in Kasba

saying the common man defeated the BJP.. Then can it be said that people defeated you in Chinchwad," he asked.

Despite the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's foot march from Kanyakumari to Srinagar, the party lost all three assembly polls in the northeast, he said, referring to the BJP's dominance in the recently held elections in Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

Shinde hit out at the Opposition for calling his government "illegal". He said, "We have done nothing wrong and functioned on merit."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. RAJ KUMAR is the owner of Plot No. - THIRD FLOOR PORTION WITH ROOF RIGHTS, BUILT ON FREE-HOLD PROPERTY NO. 252-253, ADMEASURING 70.00 SQ. YDS., OUT OF KHASRA NO. 642, SITUATED AT LAL DORA KNOWN AS BARA THAKUR DWARA, BEHIND ANAJ MANDI, VILLAGE CHANDRAWALI @ SHAHDARA, ILAQA SHAHDARA, DELHI, vide General Power of Attorney dated 22.12.2010 along with agreement to sale and Will. All Persons are hereby informed that Mukesh Kumar is purchasing the above-mentioned property from Mr. Raj Kumar by way of registered Sale Deed and they are mortgaging the said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited. General public hereby informed that if anybody has any change/interest/claim in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Mrs. Praseon Lata, Advocate
SG Associates (Law Firm)
Unit No. 7, Basement, Plot No. C 78, Sector 2, Noida
UP 201301. E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com
Ph: 7011712764, 8130206371

AIADMK vote share declines in Erode East

PTI ■ ERODE

The AIADMK lost the Erode East bypoll by a huge margin but more worrying is the dip in vote share, which has come down significantly compared to 2021 Assembly polls.

The ruling DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) on Thursday retained the Erode East Assembly constituency in this western Tamil Nadu town with a spectacular win against the K Palaniswami-led AIADMK.

Congress candidate EVKS Elangovan defeated AIADMK candidate Thennarasu by a huge margin. Nam Tamizhar Katchi's Meneka Navaneethan and DMMDK's Anand forfeited deposit.

According to statistics available on the Election Commission of India website, Congress candidate Elangovan secured 1,10,156 votes (64.58 per cent), which is 20.29 per cent more than the 2021 Assembly election as the then INC candidate secured 66,300 votes and won the seat.

When it comes to AIADMK, its ally Tamil Manila Congress (TMC) contested the 2021 polls and secured 58,396 votes (38.41 per cent). The TMC contested on AIADMK symbol and lost by a slender margin. This time, AIADMK contested the bypoll and secured 43,923 votes (25.75 per cent), decrease by 12.66 per cent of vote share.

Similarly, the Nam Tamizhar Katchi's vote share dropped this time around. In 2021 election, the party secured 11,629 votes (7.65 per cent) and now it secured 10,827 votes (6.35 per cent).

Nitish agreed to send all-party team to TN on migrants' crisis: Opp



PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has agreed to send an all-party delegation to Tamil Nadu to look into allegations of attacks on migrant workers, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Vijay Kumar Sinha claimed on Friday.

Sinha was talking to reporters outside the Vidhan Sabha premises after he led a delegation of BJP legislators from both Houses to call on the chief minister at the latter's chamber.

"I have received a distress call from a migrant from my own constituency of Lakhisarai. The chief minister agreed to our demand for sending a delegation to Tamil Nadu. The delegation will comprise representatives from all political parties and will leave tomorrow," he said.

He also said that a team of officials from Bihar will also accompany the delegation and the chief minister 'summoned the chief secretary and the director general of police and advised them accordingly'.

Sinha, who had led his party members in staging a walkout from the assembly

earlier in the day, was sore over the behaviour of Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav inside the House, whom he accused of "using a language befitting goons".

The BJP leader, who was the Speaker till his party lost power in last year's upheaval also alleged that his successor Awadh Bihari Chaudhary, from the RJD, "appears to be taking instructions from the treasury benches".

The Speaker had turned down the Opposition's demand for constituting a committee of the House which could visit Tamil Nadu.

Yadav, who has drawn flak from the BJP for visiting Tamil Nadu recently to attend a function on the occasion of Chief Minister M K Stalin, had dared the opposition party to approach the Centre if it felt that the responses of governments of the two states were not satisfactory.

He cited a statement issued by the Tamil Nadu DGP who has denied any attacks, in the recent past, on Hindi-speaking people and accused the BJP of "trying to drive a wedge between states" for political gains.

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for general information that I Sandeep Kumar Chaudhry S/o Ram Singh resident of C 106 FF BRUJI VIHAR GHAZIABAD Declare that my name as per pan card is Sandeep Kumar Chaudhry S/o Ram Singh Chaudhry, as per Aadhar card is Sandeep Kumar Chaudhry S/o Ram Singh & as per marksheet of 10th class is Sandeep Kumar S/o Ram Singh and my date of birth as per pan card & Aadhar is 30.06.1982 and 30.06.1981 as per 10th Mark sheet. I hereby declared that all the above mentioned details belongs to me and I want to be known as Sandeep Kumar Chaudhry S/o Ram Singh in future.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Kulwant Singh and Mr. Prince Sachdeva are the owners of the plot property bearing No. 13, area measuring 75 Sq. Yds., out of area measuring 125 Sq. Yds. Situated in the area of Village Khala, Delhi State abadi known as Ravi Nagar Extn., New Delhi, vide GPA, ATS and Will dated 08.02.1995. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owners want to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said floor, its sale/mortgage/litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 11th Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-4112527-28 kumarassociatesadvocate@gmail.com

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

Whereas

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s. Shyam Sunder Ashok Kumar & Co./ Mr. Manoj Kumar Patodiya/ Shiv Kumar Patodiya/ 031605002400	Property No. 2/35, Block 2, Roop Nagar, Delhi- 110007/ February 28, 2023	November 11, 2022 Rs.1,61,40,405/-	Delhi

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

Date : March 04, 2023
Place : Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi- 110005

Contact No. 8584874809

Public Notice

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited u/s.13 (12) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (4) read with Rule 9(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule 2002 has sold the immovable property situated at Property No. 40, Sector 53, Phase-1, Industrial Estate Kundli, Sonipat, Haryana 132103, (hereinafter "secured asset") on behalf of ICICI Bank Limited in favor of the auction winner. The undersigned informs the General Public that, certain movable items were found at the property situated at Property No. 40, Sector 53, Phase-1, Industrial Estate Kundli, Sonipat, Haryana- 132103 ("secured asset") and M/S. French Arabian Aroma, M/S Eliotsha Pan, Neeta Bedi and Subir Bedi (Borrower/ Guarantor/Co-applicant) were informed by letter dated Feb 02, 2023 and vacation publication dated Oct 29, 2022 to claim possession of the same within 7 days from the date of this notice. In absence of any claim from anyone in general and M/S. French Arabian Aroma, M/S Eliotsha Pan, Neeta Bedi and Subir Bedi (Borrower/ Guarantor/Co-applicant) in particular, the undersigned wishes to invite offers for sale of movable items on AS IS WHERE IS BASIS and AS IS WHAT IS BASIS.

Interested parties can inspect the moveable items kept at Property No. 40, Sector 53, Phase- 1, Industrial Estate Kundli, Sonipat, Haryana- 132103 between 11:00 A.M 3:00 P.M on March 06, 2023 and must submit their offer along with earnest money deposit (EMD) of Rs. 25000/- in a sealed envelope super scribed "Offer for purchase of moveable articles lying in the property", so as to reach the office at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi- 110005 on or before 5:00 P.M on March 14, 2023. EMD DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank favouring "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the offers without furnishing any reasons thereof.

Sd.
Authorised Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Date: March 04, 2023

Bypoll loss: OPS calls Palaniswami 'traitor'



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Deposed AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam on Friday launched a scathing attack on the party's interim chief K Palaniswami for the Erode East bypoll loss, calling him a "traitor", who was heading an "authoritarian" group.

OPS, as Panneerselvam is known, squarely blamed Palaniswami for the party's poor electoral show.

The Congress bettering its victory margin from 9,000 in 2021 to the 67,000 now showed that the main opposition party AIADMK was in a "weakened position," he said.

In a fiercely contested

Erode East bypoll, Congress' EVKS Elangovan drubbed AIADMK's K S Thennarasu. The counting of votes polled on February 27 was taken up on Thursday and the DMK-backed Elangovan emerged victorious.

He recalled he had withdrawn the candidate proposed by his faction "on the advice of the Supreme Court" and with the aim of securing the popular Two Leaves symbol of the party for the bypoll.

Further, Palaniswami also failed to capitalise on the "heavy public discontent" against the ruling DMK and worse so, the party has suffered an "unprecedented defeat," he added.

FORM No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector- 17A, Chandigarh (Additional
space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/206/2022

Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with
sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure)
Rules, 1993.

Exh. 16161

ICICI BANK LIMITED Versus SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK

To,
(1) SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK D/W/S/O- SUDARSHAN PRASAD PATHAK SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK S/O. SHRI SUDARSHAN PRASAD PATHAK R/O. FLAT NO. H- 505, FLOOR 5, TOWER H, CAPITAL GATEWAY, GURUGRAM, HARYANA - 122101. PAN NO. AJUPP9211F. GURGAON, HARYANA- 122101
Also At. SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK S/O. SHRI SUDARSHAN PRASAD PATHAK R/O. FLAT NO. 35, ANUPAM APARTMENT, B-13 VASUNDHRA ENCLAVE, DELHI-110096 NORTH, DELHI-110096
Also At. SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK SON OF SHRI SUDARSHAN PRASAD PATHAK C/O. E1 DUNIPAT CENTRE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED, BLOCK NO. 3, 6TH FLOOR, DLF CYBER CITY, PLOT NO. 129-132, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA- 500019. HYDERABAD, TELANGANA- 500019
Also At. SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK S/O. SHRI SUDARSHAN PRASAD PATHAK R/O. HOUSE NO. 81-398, BM/183, PLOT NO. 403, FLAT NO. 501, DREAMZ APARTMENT, PARAMOUNT HILLS, TOLICHOWKI, HYDERBAD, TELANGANA- 500008 HYDERABAD TELANGANA- 500008
(2) TANUSHRI PATHAK WIFE OF SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK R/O. FLAT NO. H-505, FLOOR 5, TOWER H, CAPITAL GATEWAY, GURUGRAM, HARYANA - 122101.
Also At. TANUSHRI PATHAK WIFE OF SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK C/O. DSP MERRILL LYNCH LIMITED, 2ND FLOOR, DLF BUILDING, SANSAD MARG, DELHI-110001. CENTRAL, DELHI-110001
Also At. TANUSHRI PATHAK WIFE OF SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK AT HOUSE NO. 81-398, BM/183, PLOT NO. 403, FLAT NO. 501, DREAMZ APARTMENT, PARAMOUNT HILLS, TOLICHOWKI, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA- 500008 HYDERABAD, TELANGANA- 500008
Also at TANUSHRI PATHAK WIFE OF SHRINIWAS PRASAD PATHAK RESIDENT OF FLAT NO. 35 ANUPAM APARTMENT, B-13, VASUNDHRA ENCLAVE, DELHI-110096
(3) M/S. TASHREE LAND DEVELOPERS PRIVATE LIMITED HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT 517A, NARAIN MANZIL, 23 BARAKHAMBRA ROAD, CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI-110001.

SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/206/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 02/02/2023.

WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs.11285296/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed). In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-

- (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
- (ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
- (iii) if you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
- (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
- (v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 07/08/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 13/02/2023.

Signature of the Officer
Authorised to issue summons

Sports: Next big story in the making

Sports get a push in the budget; along with the new sports policy it could be a giant leap for Indian sports

More than 50 per cent of the increased allocation of Rs 723.97 crore in the recent Union Budget to “Khelo India”, the nation’s flagship sports development programme, is a timely step in the right direction. It is heartening to note that an increase of Rs 439 crore for Khelo India carries the sports budget to a new high of Rs 3,397.32 crore- Khelo India’s budget of Rs 1,045 crore accounts for just under a third of the total allocation. Last year, the sports budget saw an increase of Rs 305.58 crore whereas this year the reflected gross increase stands at over Rs 700 crore. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) budget has seen only a marginal increase of Rs 36.09 crore for a total of Rs 785.82 crore. The National Sports Federations will receive Rs 325 crore as against Rs 280 crore last year. The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) is all set to receive funding of Rs 21.73 crore while the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) shall get Rs 19.50 crore. National Centre of Sports Science and Research (NCSSR) received Rs 13 crore. However, some downsides have also been noticed.

The incentives for sportspersons comes down from Rs 55 crore last year to Rs 45 crore and the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) stands at Rs 15 crore, down by one crore from the previous budget. Obviously, the sports budget received appreciation from all stakeholders. Welcoming the overall increase in the sports budget, the Director General of the Confederation of Sports and Recreation Industry (CSRI), Rajpal Singh said that the government should grant industry status to the sports sector. “The inclusion of the sports industry in the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure sub-sectors will make it eligible for long term financial support from the banks”, he added.

In the given situation of rampant drug abuse and the prevailing lethargic attitude amongst our young generation, the heavy allocation of the budget for sporting activities is a positive development for society in general and the youth in particular.

Participation in sports is a great unifier and equaliser. Irrespective of various differentiating factors which include culture, language, colour and geographical boundaries, sporting activities are a key driver for creating feelings of harmony, goodwill and mutual cooperation in society. Thanks to the Central and states governments’ persistent efforts and impetus towards sports which are reflected in the nation’s impressive performance in the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth games, there has been a tremendous shift in the public perception towards sports. Good performance of our athletes in National and International sporting events and celebration of their success as a nation’s success motivated the young kids, youth and their parents leading to boosting their morale and more and more parents are now open towards their children pursuing sports as a career. The significant role played by the government and the corporate sector in supporting the nation’s athletes had helped in creating realization in the society that sports make for an attractive and rewarding career.

Realizing that identifying sporting talent at a young age is advantageous because by doing so children best suited for a particular sport can be selected and trained from an early age, more than 23 lakh school-going children in the age group of 5-18 years have been assessed using the Khelo India Mobile App and more than 82,000 physical education teachers have been trained to assess the sporting talent amongst the children. One of the key pillars of the Khelo India Scheme is to make quality sports infrastructure equitably accessible to the citizens. In order to make it possible, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has sanctioned 294 sports infrastructure projects across the country at the cost of more than Rs 2,500 crore.

The Ministry and Sports Authority of India are working in a mission mode, supporting athletes and other stakeholders in the sporting ecosystem through various initiatives under the Khelo India Scheme including the establishment of district-level Khelo India Centres, Khelo India State Centres of Excellence, organizing annual Khelo India Games, community coaching development programmes (e-Khel Pathshala), promotion of women’s participation in sports through women sporting leagues in various sporting disciplines, large-scale sports and fitness promotion events through the FIT India programme. The scheme has a robust early-stage talent identification and development

mechanism through which talented sportspersons in various sports disciplines are identified and supported through an out-of-pocket allowance and training support through Khel India Accredited Academies.

At present, there are 2745 identified sporting talents across 21 sports disciplines (including Para sports) selected under Talent Search & Development. These budding athletes are being groomed to be our future Olympic Medallists. A total of 264 Sports Academies (190 Non-SAI and 74 NCOE & SAI) have been accredited for the training of athletes identified under the Khelo India scheme across the country. The identified athletes have state-of-the-art training programmes designed for them at these academies. Sports competitions and programmes are organized for youth living in extremism and terrorism-infested areas so that the energy of the youth can be channelized, constructively. In addition to promoting rural and indigenous games, persons with disabilities are supported through the Khel India Scheme.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman of the Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal)



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JUDICIAL OVERREACH

Sir — There is yet another overstepping by the Supreme Court in the business of the executive by forcing the appointment of CEC and Election Commissioners with keeping CJI and the leader of opposition in the lok sabha on board. This is against the spirit of the democracy and the constitution and displays the arrogant and biased attitude of the judges because of their personal liking or disliking of the politicians in power and in the opposition.

What more can be expected from the judiciary which quashed the NJAC passed by the parliament just because that could make the judicial appointments more transparent and constitutional. The judges at SC want to exhibit their “Boss” image who would do every irrational and undemocratic activity because they happen to be in the chair which can’t be challenged. People are watching their behavior with anguish and anger because each day the judges convey their notorious feelings against the people they dislike through their judgements and remarks.

Dr. Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

INDIAN AUTHOR AWARDED

Sir — Coming close on the heels of ‘Ret Samadhi’ written by Geetanjali Shri which won the prestigious Booker Prize, another reputed poet, an acclaimed author Vinod Kumar Shukla has bagged this year’s PEN / Nabokov Award for Achievement in International Literature. Hailing from a tribal belt in Chattisgarh Raipur, his life and works, poetry such as Lagbhag Jai Hind 1997 and novels that include the seminal Naukar Ki Kameez 1979 later made into a film by Mani Kaul, A Silent Place etc. capture not only the evocative, emotional and lively life of cities but also the slow cadence of small towns and villages, its struggles, aspirations while being experimental in style and genre. It is conferred annually on an author when a body of work is of enduring originality and consummate craftsmanship. It is one of the most coveted global literature prizes. It is also a fitting reply to

Avoid junk Food



a layman can understand that junk food spoils the health. Even educated and highly educated persons are falling prey to junk food. The intake of junk food is in excess of home food among many people.

Consumption of junk food among children starts from the pre-nursery level. Homemade food has become secondary. Once upon a time, diabetes was regarded as a very dreadful disease. Since people are learning to live with junk food and are believing that it is sine qua non of the present day life system, people are rather prepared to incur more medical expenses than to avoid junk food. Expenditure on junk foods and expenditure on medical bills are going hand in hand. The only people who can be healthier are those who cannot afford to have the luxury of buying junk food. People who are averse by nature to eat and drink anything and everything can also have a long span of life.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

those publishers who are being accused of giving an honest and innocent writer less royalty than he is entitled to. Last year, he drew media’s attention because of his outspoken nature when he revealed how he was paid very little in the form of royalties by reputed publications like Vani and Rajkamal.

Several talented writers have to struggle to make ends meet because they do not get the publicity they deserve.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

GAS PRICE HIKE HURTS

Sir — The recent increase in cooking gas costs is particularly painful. Cooking gas cylinder prices have gone up by a one-time rise of 50 rupees with the conclusion of voting in the north-eastern states. A gas cylinder for cooking already costs more than Rs1,000. An increase of Rs 350 has been made to the cost of a commercial cylinder. It is obvious that costs have risen proportionately in different states. Fuel prices are starting to generate problems for the public and inflation is already out

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

MBA IN THE POST PANDEMIC ERA

Make no mistake, MBA will always be in demand in the industry.

By Allwyn Agnel

As the admission cycle approaches its peak this year, this is probably the most common dilemma that 80% of candidates might be suffering at the moment. They hunt around to find answers to the interviewer's classic question - "Why MBA?" and often get disappointed with no right answers in their hands. Moreover, two years of the pandemic have completely transformed the fabric of the global market. Economic uncertainty and job losses are casting doubts on the worth of an MBA degree in these times. However, despite these challenges management courses have been able to uphold their relevance and glory. Here are some differentiators that might help candidates frame a better answer to - "Why MBA?" especially in a post-pandemic world. MBA is still one of the most sought-after career options for graduates, specifically in T-1 and T-2 cities. Applications in top B-schools have increased by 25% in 2023, as per reports. According to a Graduate Admissions Council (GMAC) survey, 81% of Indian students want to study abroad in 2022, which is up from 76% previously. Pandemic-induced digital transformations of businesses globally have created new opportunities in the market. The demand for management talents has topped in the previous three years. According to experts, companies like McKinsey, Bain, and BCG increased salaries for MBA consultants in 2023. The average salary of top B-schools in the country has risen 10-15%. Startups are willing to pay about 30% more than multinational companies for leadership roles. The growth of the Indian startup ecosystem and government initiatives has created numerous opportunities for MBA graduates with entrepreneurial and bold aspirations.

The mentioned data hint at the growing popularity of the degree is the new normal. The avenues and opportunities suggest that the road after MBA is flourishing even in the post-pandemic times. Leadership skills taught in MBA programs are designed to equip individuals to navigate complex organizational challenges and thrive as effective leaders, regardless of the industry they choose. The curriculum covers a range of critical areas, including strategic thinking, decision-making, ethics, and change management among others. By developing these competencies, MBA graduates can exercise leadership in a manner that is grounded in a deep understanding of the intricacies of modern organizations as well as the challenges of the future. Coming to the fundamentals, it is also critically important to rethink upskilling in the turbulent times of global recession. We are witnessing mass layoffs as companies nav-



igate the tightrope of budget and talent management. The focus of the business world has shifted towards the acquisition and development of specific skills. This has resulted in a greater demand for individuals with a broad range of capabilities. Business schools are now changing models to help students adapt to the ever-changing and complex workplace. According to a report by MBA Roundtable, around 47% of B-schools report a change to the content of the business school curriculum due to COVID-19, and 17% report having developed a new course specific to the COVID-19 pandemic. Courses that provide a dynamic syllabus in sync with the industry requirements are becoming candidates' priority over legacy. Thus, the adaptability and sustainability of this course have helped it retain its charm in these testing times and beyond. As the lockdown is behind us, the campus experience has reopened for students and professionals.

To sum it up and envision the larger picture, reflecting upon the profile, skills, role, and company one aspires to be essential before taking the initial steps towards MBA. The post-pandemic challenges professionals to take bold risks and display proactive efforts on the career front. MBA is a substantial investment, and to get the best returns, thorough investigation and weighing every option is very significant. As we enter the new era, the 'one-size-fits-all' approach has become a thing of the past. Every career path is unique, and so is the need for enrichment. Every candidate's answer to the question of "Why MBA?" will be subjective. But the broad relevance of the dynamic degree continues to thrive today, and it will also maintain its charm in the future.

(The writer is the Founder and CEO of online education community, Pagalguy.com)

The changing face of journalism

AI is changing the norms of journalism and data collection. Can it give new insights, make news unbiased and responsible remains to be seen



In the wake of the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism, data journalism and the nature of storytelling are taking shifts which have further invited deliberations on news values, the political economy of news media and media ethics. There is no doubt that AI tools are immensely contributing to the news industry. Subsequently, there are paradigm shifts in the realm of journalism, as a form of art and profession. However, excessive and unstructured use of technologies in newsrooms has plummeted to various ailments in the media industries. Inculcated forays of AI into newsrooms have accumulated pointless pitfalls.

Due to the bottlenecks that such complicated and opaque systems pose for undermining accountability, decision-making, and professional judgment, this intelligibility issue is especially acute for public service media. Unravelling the dichotomy between the Global North and Global South has further worsened the feasibility of using AI tools in data journalism. Inclusive journalism has become a distant dream. Moreover, there are other several unidentified factors plaguing the news industry, that are to be scientifically probed.

Tellingly, journalism is the process of gathering, analysing, producing, and presenting news and information. History demonstrates that society tends to have more news and information the more democratic it is. Journalism as a means of craft and business remains a dynamic field at the same time. With the pace of time and demand, data journalism is increasingly significant these days. And subsequently, this approach to storytelling is getting apparent in newsrooms across the globe.

The practice of reporting on facts while using structured data as the central element of the narrative and managing it impartially is known as data journalism. It covers an expanding range of storytelling tools, methods, and approaches. It can include everything from conventional computer-assisted reporting to the most cutting-edge news applications and data visualization. The overarching objective is a journalistic one: disseminating data and analysis to help us all learn more about

pressing current affairs.

Digital tools are used to streamline data collection in data journalism, which is news-making that is fuelled by quicker data collection and visualization and first emerged in the US in the 1950s. Probability and computation play a large role in data journalism. Big data has the potential to produce news more quickly and with greater depth than ever before. Like the internet, big data is an infinite reservoir of ever-expanding data that belongs to no one in particular. Big data can be used for a wide range of intricate tasks with the right equipment and personnel, including improving public healthcare in smart cities and personality-based psychometric profiling.

Applications with AI that use big data from the media can search through millions of forums and social media posts. By analysing the tone of social media posts, forum posts, emails to government agencies, and other sources of information, sentiment-based big data in media can reveal the underlying problems in a particular area. In these posts, elements like the use of negative or positive sentences, word choice, length and readability of posts, and the characteristics of images or other media within the posts are evaluated to ascertain the mood of the public in a specific area. News networks can use technology to bring the issues of citizens to the attention of the ruling government once it has developed sufficiently and is more practical to use for journalism.

AI tools have become instrumental in mitigating the biases in mainstream journalism. Because of the polarization of news coverage, viewers enjoy picking sides and demonizing people who disagree with their way of thinking and opinions. Even though from a TRP

standpoint this may be profitable for news channels, if it is not addressed in the beginning it can eventually cause a fractured society.

News outlets can publish and curate content using machine learning and AI to make data journalism impartial and unbiased. Machine learning involves finding distinctive and subtle patterns in vast amounts of data. This enables AI-based applications to distinguish between authentic data and fake data with great clarity. Data journalists can produce factually accurate articles and news reports once the non-factual data has been separated from it. News production becomes more moral when using this method to develop new campaigns.

The impact of AI extends beyond the newsrooms of a specific news network. Media companies can more effectively manage their financial operations thanks to technology, big data, and NLP. Through data-driven financial management and expense control, these technologies enable media businesses to make money by simplifying the analysis of financial documentation. In addition to identifying instances of fraud and errors in financial statements, AI-based accounting systems can also lower the number of false positives in fraud detection. False positives are decreased, which lowers the costs associated with financial fraud investigations that would otherwise be incurred. News networks are safe when it comes to complying with financial regulations thanks to a well-calibrated financial management framework guaranteed by AI and big data in media and journalism.

AI, big data analytics, and machine learning will support human journalists and remove human error from newsgathering, making journalism more integrity-driven. To be fair, the news media is regarded as the fourth pillar of any democracy. Data journalism must

uphold this goal to strengthen society and preserve a nation's democracy. Big data's emergence in journalism-related media is expected to achieve this goal. The news media cannot escape bias because it is a global problem. But because AI's machine learning algorithms are trained to take accuracy into account, it helps to reduce the subjective interpretation of data by humans.

The use of AI tools in data journalism has developed certain flaws in newsrooms across the globe. Certain newsrooms are not equipped with AI tools and their orientation towards technological implications in Global South compared to Global North remains lethargic. The tendency of AI algorithms to reproduce existing bias is one of the main issues with their growing use. At the moment, AI-written articles can only be found on straightforward, formulaic subjects like stock market data and sports scores.

Considering how quickly technology is developing, data journalism will play a significant role in the way we tell and visualize stories going forward. Additionally, audiences are becoming more engaged and will anticipate seeing more journalism and articles that focus on the power of the data. However, the future of AI in the domain of data journalism remains undecided. Some newsrooms already use artificial intelligence to mine data, develop algorithms, and produce content automatically. Journalists face new issues as a result of routinely using this technology. Some experts assert that we are in a transitional period and must decide how this technology will be used in the media going forward, particularly in data journalism. It's difficult to know exactly what all of the limitations may be because we are still in the early stage of the adoption of AI techniques in journalism.

agreed on the point that the dream of a 'New Healthy Self-Reliant Health System' is only possible when quality health services are provided to all equitably. Moreover, increasing service accessibility to various healthcare systems leveraged with evidence, accreditations, and the latest medical technologies, is also essential.

Furthermore, integrative healthcare based on evidence-based traditional medicine practices and modern systems may help achieve universal health coverage through quality, efficiency, equity, accountability, sustainability and resilience. These attributes also function as the core principles to guide the decision-makers in designing comprehensive and

India spearheads to create global health architecture

The recent pandemic has made it essential to have high-quality, affordable and accessible health services equitably available for all

Covid has also brought to the fore the much damaging mental and social health-related issues, making it also flagrant that no force in the world can confront a situation of such scale and complexity in isolation, hence concerted global efforts are needed. Here, the health-related meeting held under India's G20 presidency may be very effective in addressing the vulnerabilities and disparities of the systems, besides advocating holistic and universal health and well-being. Covid resulted in a paradigm shift in the global healthcare sector and larger considerations of health issues, which was largely seen in the early meeting when everyone talked of holistic health and well-being. All



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

(The writer is a senior Journalist)

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much helpful in achieving Universal Health Coverage. Recognising that the pandemic policy must be a defining part of our health policy, as any health crisis of today leads to a humongous economic crisis of tomorrow in an interconnected world, is now becoming an essential part of the agenda for our preparedness and response

together. To meet future health challenges, the budget 2023 has also announced a lot of measures. 157 new nursing colleges are proposed to be established in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established since 2014. A mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047, will also be launched, which will entail universal screening

of seven crore people in the age group of 0-40. For medical research, facilities in select ICMR Labs will be made available for research by public and private medical college faculties and private sector R&D teams for encouraging collaborative research and innovation.

In India, a new programme to promote research and innovation in pharmaceuticals has also been planned through centres of excellence. The government also plans to encourage the pharma industry to invest in research and development in specific priority areas. The B2B conference & expo on traditional medicine under SCO, scheduled from 2nd to 5th March 2023 at Guwahati, also provides an opportunity

for regulators, industries and business leaders in all the SCO and partner countries to deliberate on various aspects of traditional medicine aspects such as products, services, education, skill development, cosmetics, herbal extracts, and further deepen the trade and friendship among each other in the area of traditional medicine and allied field. With the G20 health meeting, budget 2023 and then the SCO meeting on health, focusing on broadening health services almost simultaneously, the foundation and framework of a global health architecture, envisaging to equip countries to face the next health emergency with robust healthcare systems, appears to be coming into existence.

Belarus sentences Nobel laureate to 10 years in prison

AP ■ TALLINN

A Belarusian court on Friday sentenced Ales Bialiatski, Belarus' top human rights advocate and one of the winners of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, to 10 years in prison.

Bialiatski and three other top figures of the Viasna human rights centre he founded were convicted of financing actions violating public order and smuggling, Viasna reported Friday.

Valiantsin Stefanovich was given a nine-year sentence; Uladzimir Labkovicz seven years; and Dzmitry Salauyou was sentenced to eight years in prison in absentia.

Bialiatski and two of his associates were arrested and jailed after massive protests over a 2020 election that gave authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko a new term in office. Salauyou managed to leave Belarus before he was arrested.

Lukashenko, who has ruled the ex-Soviet country with an iron fist since 1994, unleashed a brutal crackdown on the protesters, the largest in the country's history.

More than 35,000 people were arrested, and thousands were beaten by police.

During the trial, which took place behind closed doors, the 60-year-old Bialiatski and his colleagues were held in a caged enclosure in the courtroom. They have spent 21 months behind bars since the arrest.

In the photos from the courtroom released on Friday by Belarus' state news agency Belta, Bialiatski, clad in black clothes, looked wan, but calm.

Viasna said after the verdict that all four activists have maintained their innocence.



In his final address to the court, he urged the authorities to "stop the civil war in Belarus." Bialiatski said it became obvious to him from the case files that "the investigators were fulfilling the task they were given: to deprive Viasna human rights advocates of freedom at any cost, destroy Viasna and stop our work."

Exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya denounced the court verdict on Friday as "appalling." "We must do everything to fight against this shameful injustice (and) free them," Tsikhaouskaya wrote in a tweet.

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, a non-governmental organisation working to ensure that human rights are respected in practice, said that it was "shocked by the cynicism behind the sentences that were just issued to our Belarusian friends in Minsk."

"The trial shows how Lukashenko's regime punishes our colleagues, human rights defenders, for standing up against the oppression and injustice," Secretary General Berit Lindeman said in a statement.

China accuses US of attacking companies after export curbs

AP ■ BEIJING

China accused Washington on Friday of improperly attacking Chinese companies after genetics analysis giant BGI Group and 17 others were hit with curbs on access to US technology on security or human rights grounds.

The Commerce Department said it saw a danger that two BGI units might contribute to the government's surveillance apparatus, which human rights groups say is trying to create a database of genetic samples that Muslims and other minorities were compelled to provide.

Other companies were cited for their role in the ruling Communist Party's military modernisation or weapons development by Iran and Pakistan and suspected human rights abuses in Myanmar.

Washington has accused China of trying to use civilian companies to obtain processor chip, aerospace and other technologies that can be used to make weapons. Beijing retorts that the US government is trying to stop potential commercial competitors.

The United States is "fabricating excuses to suppress Chinese companies," said a foreign ministry spokeswoman, Mao Ning. She called on Washington to "abandon ideological prejudice" and "stop



Security personnel guard Tiananmen Square ahead of the annual Congress in Beijing on Wednesday

AP

abusing various excuses to unreasonably suppress Chinese enterprises."

Mao said Beijing would "firmly safeguard the legitimate rights" of its companies but gave no indication of possible retaliation. The government has made similar statements following previous U.S. restrictions but often takes no action.

BGI Research and BGI Tech Solutions (Hongkong) Co., Ltd. were added to an "Entity List" that requires them to obtain government permission to acquire sensitive U.S. technology.

Their genetic analysis "poses a significant risk of contributing" to surveillance and repression of minorities, the Commerce Department said. It said there was a "significant risk of diversion" to military programs.

BGI Group didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

BGI previously denied accusations it provided technology to surveil Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China's northwest.

Beijing retaliated for earlier US restrictions by creating its

own "unreliable entity" list of foreign companies that might endanger China's national sovereignty, security or development interests.

Lockheed Martin Corp. and Raytheon Technologies Corp's Raytheon Missiles and Defense unit were added to the restricted list last month after they supplied weapons to Taiwan, the island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory.

They are barred from importing goods into China or making new investments in the country.

South Carolina attorney gets life for murder of wife, son

AP ■ WALTERBORO

South Carolina attorney Alex Murdaugh was sentenced to life in prison without parole Friday, a day after he was convicted of murder in the shooting deaths of his wife and son.

Judge Clifton Newman asked Murdaugh if he had anything he wanted to say

before sentencing him to two consecutive life terms, and the one-prominent lawyer maintained his innocence.

"As I tell you again, I respect this court. But I am innocent. I would never under any circumstances hurt my wife Maggie and I would never under any circumstances hurt my son Paul Paul," Murdaugh responded.

"And it might not have been you. It might have been the monster you become," when taking large amounts of opiates, Newman replied, noting Murdaugh's decadeslong addiction to painkillers.

Prosecutor Creighton Waters said none of the victims of the crime — members of Murdaugh's family and the parents and relatives of his

wife — wished to speak on behalf of the prosecution before sentencing.

"The depravity, the callousness, the selfishness of these crimes are stunning. The lack of remorse and the effortless way in which he is, including here, sitting right over there in this witness stand — your honour, a man like that, a man like this man, should

never be allowed to be among free, law abiding citizens," Waters said.

Prosecutors asked for a life sentence to hold Murdaugh responsible for what they say are decades of lying, stealing and using his family's considerable clout in their tiny county to his advantage. Any sentence would have no chance of parole.

As Murdaugh stood before the judge to learn his fate, he was in the same courtroom on the circuit where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather tried cases as the elected prosecutor for more than 80 years.

His grandfather's portrait hung in the back of the room until the judge ordered it taken down for the trial.

Sri Lanka local polls date to be announced next week

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's election commission on Friday said it will announce the new date for the delayed local body election next week after talks between relevant authorities after the Supreme Court ordered the government to release funds to conduct the polls.

The Election Commission of Sri Lanka formally postponed the polls last week from the planned date of March 9 due to a plethora of reasons linked to the country's current economic crisis.

The Commission's chairman, Nimal Punihiwewa, said that discussions would be held next week with the secretary to the Treasury, the Government Printer, and the police to announce the date for the local body polls.

The Supreme Court on Friday issued an interim order for the Secretary to the

Treasury to release the funds allocated in the 2023 government budget for conducting the election.

The interim order came as a result of the Chief opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party's lawmakers filing a fundamental rights petition in the apex court, calling for a writ against state officials who, they alleged, were denying funds necessary to conduct the elections. They claimed that Rs 10 billion was allocated for conducting the local election in the 2023 budget.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe hinted that conducting the local election with already lean state finances would only impede his efforts to revive the island nation's crisis-struck economy.

But opposition parties, like the SJB, pin the blame on Wickremesinghe, also the country's finance minister, for trying to sabotage the local

body election, fearing a loss by blocking the funds from the Treasury.

They also accuse him of influencing the state officials and the Election Commission against the holding of the polls.

Commenting on the court order, Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa said, "the historic order today on an application made by the SJB confirms the fact that democracy in Sri Lanka is very much alive and the independence of our noble judiciary is further reaffirmed".

The election to appoint new administrations to 340 local councils for a four-year term has been postponed since March last year due to the ongoing economic crisis.

The ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) won the majority of councils in the last election held in 2018. It has suffered major splits since the economic crisis.

'Pak Punjab assembly polls on April 30'

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's Punjab province will go to polls on April 30, President Arif Alvi announced on Friday, hours after the country's top electoral body wrote a letter to him suggesting possible poll dates as directed by the Supreme Court.

According to the President's Office, the decision was made by Alvi after "considering the dates proposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan".

"President Arif Alvi has announced the date of 30th April 2023 (Sunday) for holding the general elections of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab," the President's office

tweeted.

Earlier on Friday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in its letter to Alvi, recommended that the polls for the provincial assembly in Punjab be held between April 30 and May 7.

The announcement comes two days after the Supreme Court ruled that the elections to the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies be held within the stipulated period of 90 days.

It, however, allowed the ECP to propose a poll date that deviates from the 90-day deadline by the "barest minimum", in case of any practical difficulty, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Greece: Crash victims returned to families in closed caskets

AP ■ LARISSA

Checks of all the human remains recovered so far from the scene of the deadliest train crash in Greece's history indicate the the number of people killed in this week's rail disaster still stands at 57, authorities said on Friday.

Recovery teams spent a third day scouring the wreckage in Tempe, 380 kilometers (235 miles) north of Athens, where a passenger train slammed into a freight carrier just before midnight on Tuesday.

The force of the head-on collision and a resulting fire has complicated the task of determining the death toll. Officials are matching parts of dismembered and burned bodies with tissue samples to establish the number.

The remains were being returned to families in closed caskets following the identification of victims through next-of-kin DNA samples. Relatives of passengers still listed as unaccounted-for waited outside a hospital in the central city of Larissa for news. Among them was Mirella Ruci, whose 22-year-old son, Denis, remained missing.

"My son is not on

any official list so far and I have no information. I am pleading with anyone who may have seen him, in rail car 5, seat 22, to contact me if they may have seen him," Ruci, who struggled to stop her voice from cracking, told reporters.

Health Ministry officials said all victim identifications would be carried out by cross-matching DNA samples from relatives due to the condition of so many of the bodies. Police and civilian forensics specialists set up teams to run the complex, round-the-clock identification process, which involves two stages: Matching body parts to each individual victim and then establishing identities using DNA samples from relatives of missing passengers.

Flags at the ancient Acropolis, parliament and other public buildings in Athens remained at half-staff on the third day of national mourning, while national rail services were halted by a strike for a second day. Anger against authorities in the wake of the tragedy grew over reports that the rail network lacked adequate safeguards to reduce the impact of human error. Not far from the hospital in Larissa, several thousand school chil-

dren gathered in protest in a central square, chanting "You never arrived, we will avenge you!"

A demonstration organized by student groups was also underway in Athens, where hundreds of protesters chanting "Murderers!" and held up white balloons for the victims, blocking traffic in the centre of the capital.

Police early on Friday searched a rail coordination office in Larissa, removing evidence as part of an ongoing investigation.

The facility's 59-year-old station manager, who was arrested and charged with multiple counts of negligent manslaughter, is due to testify before a public prosecutor on Saturday.

Stelios Sourlas, a lawyer representing a 23-year-old victim of the collision, said the responsibility for the deaths went beyond the station manager.

"The station manager may have the principle responsibility ... but the responsibility is also broader: There are the rail operators and public officials whose job it was to ensure that safety measures and procedures were properly in place," Sourlas said.

Cambodian opposition leader gets 27 years on treason charge

AP ■ PHNOM PENH

A court in Cambodia on Friday found Kem Sokha, leader of the dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party, guilty of treason and sentenced him to 27 years imprisonment to be served under house arrest.

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court said he had colluded with a foreign power from 2010 until his arrest in September 2017. It said he had one month to file an appeal against its ruling.

The Cambodia National Rescue Party was dissolved shortly after his 2017 arrest on related charges.

The ruling, four months ahead of a general election, is the latest blow against the opposition, which has faced years of legal harassment from the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen. Kem Sokha, 69, is the country's most prominent opposition politician not in exile — others having fled abroad to escape what were generally seen as politically inspired prosecutions.

The court said Kem Sokha is barred from all political activity, including voting, and not allowed to meet with outsiders, Cambodian or foreign, except for family members. He may leave the house only with the court's permission.

Kem Sokha was head of the Cambodia National Rescue Party when he was arrested in September 2017 based on an old video that showed him speaking at a seminar about receiving advice from US pro-democracy groups. Prime Minister Hun Sen's government said it was proof of collusion with a foreign power to illegally take power.

His arrest marked the beginning of a fierce campaign by the government to use the courts — widely considered to be under its influence — to silence its critics in the political and media spheres or drive them out of the country.

Kem Sokha's trial started in January 2020 but was soon suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak and resumed in 2022. The maximum sentence would have been 30 years.

The popular CNRP was seen as an electoral threat to Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party ahead of the 2018 general election. Kem Sokha's arrest



Kem Sokha greets from his car in front of his house in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Friday

AP

Jailed Malaysia ex-PM Najib acquitted in latest trial

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysian former Prime Minister Najib Razak was acquitted Friday in the latest trial in response to the multibillion-dollar looting of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad state fund.

Najib, who is serving a 12-year prison term after losing the final appeal in his first of several corruption trials linked to the 1MDB scandal, was found not guilty on the charge of tampering with an audit report to cover up wrongdoings. Defence lawyer Mohamad Shafee Abdullah said the High Court ruled that prosecutors did not have sufficient evidence to prove Najib guilty of abusing his position as Prime Minister and Finance Minister to order amendments to the 1MDB audit report in 2016 before it was presented to Parliament.

"My client is very grateful to Allah for the decision today because it really uplifted his spirit and the desire to fight for his innocence," Shafee said Friday at a news conference.

The 1MDB development fund was set up months after

Najib became prime minister in 2009. Investigators allege more than USD 4.5 billion was stolen from the fund and laundered by Najib's associates through layers of bank accounts in the United States and other countries to finance Hollywood films and extravagant purchases that included hotels, a luxury yacht, art and jewelry. More than USD 700 million landed in Najib's bank accounts. He and his wife, Rosmah Mansor, were hit with multiple graft charges after the saga led to his ruling coalition's shocking defeat in 2018 general elections. Rosmah was sentenced in 2022 to 10 years in prison and a record fine of 970 million ringgit (USD 217 million) for corruption over a solar energy project and is out on bail pending an appeal.

Shafee said financier Low Taek Jho — believed to be the mastermind of the scandal — remained at large.

Former 1MDB CEO Arul Kanda Kandasamy, who was jointly charged with abetting Najib and appeared as a prosecution witness during the trial, was also acquitted by the court Friday.

was swiftly followed by the dissolution of the party by the Supreme Court in November 2017, after the government accused it of plotting its overthrow.

The CNRP had been the only credible opponent of Hun Sen's party, which consequently swept all the seats in the National Assembly. Rights groups and Western nations charged that the election was

neither free nor fair.

Hun Sen's latest opponents in this year's election have come under similar pressure.

Hun Sen has been in power for 38 years and has vowed to stay in office until 2028. He has endorsed one of his sons to succeed him.

He uses guile and threats to exercise authoritarian power in the framework of electoral democracy.

US to bolster Ukraine with more ammo

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US is expected to announce a new package of military aid for Ukraine Friday, including—for the first time—eight armoured vehicles that can launch bridges and allow troops to cross rivers or other gaps, US officials said Thursday.

The officials said the total cost of the package will be about USD 400 million and will also include large amounts of ammunition, such as rockets for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems. It comes just a week after the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and as Ukrainian forces are preparing for a spring offensive.

Officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the aid package has not yet been publicly announced.

The so-called Armoured Vehicle Launched Bridge is a portable, 60-foot folding metal bridge that is carried on top of a tank body. Providing that system now could help Ukrainian troops as they launch the

Biden, Scholz to discuss Ukraine war

AP ■ WASHINGTON

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is visiting the White House on Friday for a private meeting with President Joe Biden as both allies become increasingly vocal about their concerns that China may step off the sidelines and supply weapons to Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

Such a step could dramatically change the war's trajectory by allowing Moscow to replenish its depleted stockpiles.

China is Germany's top trading partner, and European nations have generally been more cautious than the United States in taking a hard line with Beijing. However, there are signs that may be shifting as



global rivalries grow more tense. In a speech to the German parliament on Thursday, Scholz called on China to "use your influence in Moscow to press for the withdrawal of Russian troops, and do not supply weapons to the

aggressor Russia."

The US and Germany have worked closely together to supply Ukraine with military and humanitarian assistance. But there has also been friction over issues such as providing tanks, and Washington has

occasionally grown frustrated with Berlin's hesitance.

Maintaining a steady flow of weapons to Kyiv will be critical in the war's second year, especially with both sides planning spring offensives.

"We're proud of the collective efforts that we've taken together," John Kirby, a White House national security spokesman, said Thursday.

He said the US has not seen any indication that China has made a decision on whether to provide weapons to Russia.

Scholz last visited the White House a little more than a year ago, shortly before Russia invaded Ukraine. Very little of Friday's meeting will be open to the public, and no announcements are expected

for vehicle maintenance and repair.

The announcement comes on the heels of a brief meeting Thursday between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a meeting of top diplomats from the Group of 20 nations in New Delhi. It was the highest-level in-person talk between the two countries since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But there was no indication of any movement toward easing the intense tensions between the two nations. Blinken said he told Lavrov the US would continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Lavrov, who did not mention speaking with Blinken when he held a news conference after the meeting, told reporters Moscow would continue to press its action in Ukraine.

The war had largely slowed to a grinding stalemate during the winter months, but both sides are expected to be preparing to launch offensives in the spring.

Russia questions Serbia over rockets found in Ukraine

AP ■ BELGRADE

Russia is seeking an official explanation from its ally Serbia about reports that the Balkan country has delivered thousands of rockets to Ukraine for its fight against Russia's invasion.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova expressed "deepest concern" about the reports, which first came from pro-government Russian media last month.

"We are following this story," Zakharova said in a statement posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry website late on Thursday. She added that the possible arming of Ukraine represented a "serious question" for Serbian-Russian relations.

The media reports said a Serbian state arms factory recently delivered some 3,500 missiles for the Grad multiple rocket launchers used by both the Ukrainian and Russian armed forces.

The 122 mm rockets were allegedly transported to Ukraine via Turkey and

Slovakia.

Serbian Defence Minister Milos Vucevic has denied the country exported the missiles to Ukraine but left open the possibility they could have gotten there via a third party.

"If private companies buy weapons in third states' markets and then sell them to other companies in other countries, that is not a question for Serbia, that is international trade," he said.

Serbia is Moscow's closest ally in Europe, with historic, religious and cultural ties that are bolstered by decades of pro-Russian propaganda campaigns in the Balkan country.

Russia backs Serbia's claim over its former province of Kosovo, which declared independence in 2008 with Western support. And Serbia has refused to impose sanctions on Moscow over the invasion.

Western officials fear Russia could use simmering tensions in Kosovo to try to destabilize the Balkans and avert some attention from the invasion of Ukraine.



A self-propelled artillery vehicle fires on the frontline, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Thursday

Climate activists protest German transport policies

AP ■ BERLIN

Thousands of climate protesters, young and old, gathered on Friday in Berlin and other German cities to demand tougher government action against global warming, particularly when in curbing greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector.

A small pro-business party that controls Germany's Transport Ministry, the Free

Democrats, has pushed back against efforts to impose a general speed limit, phase out combustion engines and massively invest in public transport.

The refusal has frustrated the party's larger coalition partners—Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats and the environmentalist Greens—as well as climate campaigners who say Germany is missing its own emissions targets.

US, S Korea to hold biggest joint field exercises

AP ■ SEOUL

The South Korean and US militaries announced Friday they will hold their biggest joint field exercises in five years later this month, as the US flew a long-range B-1B bomber to the Korean Peninsula in a show of force against North Korea.

The North has threatened to take "unprecedentedly" strong action against such exercises. It's likely that it will respond to the upcoming training with missile tests because it views it as an invasion rehearsal.

In a joint news conference, the South Korean and US militaries said they will conduct the Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, from March 13 to 23 to strengthen their defence and response capabilities, and separate large-scale joint field training exercises called Warrior Shield FTX.

Col. Isaac L Taylor, a spokesperson for the US military, said the field training will include a combined amphibious drill and that their size would return to the scale of the allies' earlier biggest springtime field exercises called Foal Eagle.

The two countries last conducted Foal Eagle in 2018. They then cancelled or downsized some combined drills to support now-stalled diplomacy with North Korea and guard against the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, how-



Col. Isaac Taylor, left, of the United Nations Command (UNC), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK) and Col. Lee Sung-jun of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff attend the press briefing of the Freedom Shield Exercise at the Defense Ministry on Friday in Seoul

ever, the two countries have been expanding their joint military exercises in the face of an evolving North Korean nuclear threat.

Friday's deployment of a US B-1B was the aircraft's first such flyover in joint aerial training with South Korean warplanes since February 19. North Korea is highly sensitive to the deployment of B-1Bs, which are capable of car-

rying a large conventional weapons payload. It responded to the previous flights of multiple B-1Bs by test-launching two short-range missiles the next day. South Korea's Defence Ministry said the use of a B-1B demonstrated the US determination and ability to use the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear, to defend its allies.

North Korea test-fired more than 70

missiles last year, the most ever in a single year, and several more this year. Many of the missiles were nuclear-capable weapons designed to strike the US mainland and South Korea.

North Korea has also threatened to use its nuclear weapons preemptively in potential conflicts with the United States and South Korea. The US military has warned it that the use of nuclear weapons "will result in the end of that regime." In January, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the US would also increase its deployment of advanced weapons such as fighter jets and bombers to the Korean Peninsula.

Last month, North Korea's Foreign Ministry warned that the US and South Korea would face "unprecedentedly persistent and strong counteractions" if they carry out planned military drills this year that the North regards as "preparations for an aggression war."

Later, Senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official Kwon Jong Gun said the only way to reduce military tensions on the Korean Peninsula is for the United States to reverse its plans to deploy strategic assets in South Korea and halt joint drills with the South. He said if the United States continues its "hostile and provocative practices" against North Korea, it can be regarded as a declaration of war.

North Korea has previously issued similar rhetoric in times of animosity with the United States and South Korea.

Two Americans arrested for selling tech to Russia

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Justice Department on Thursday arrested two Kansas men on allegations that the pair illegally exported aviation-related technology to Russia and provided repair services for the equipment.

Cyril Gregory Buyanovsky and Douglas Robertson are charged with conspiracy, exporting controlled goods without a license, falsifying and failing to file electronic export information, and smuggling goods in violation of U.S. law.

The charges come as the US has drastically ramped up sanctions and financial penalties on Russia since its invasion of Ukraine began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Along with thousands of sanctions on people and firms, export controls on the Kremlin are meant to limit access to computer chips and other products needed to equip a modern military.

Opposition seeks PM's resignation in Albania

AP ■ TIRANA

Thousands of Albanian opposition supporters protested anew in the capital Tirana on Friday, calling for the prime minister's resignation for alleged corruption and mishandling of the small Balkan nation's economy.

Demonstrators gathered in front of the main government building in pouring rain, chanting slogans and bearing banners. They were addressed by Sali Berisha, a former president and prime minister who leads the centre-right Democratic Party, and former president Ilir Meta, who leads the left-wing Freedom Party.

The opposition leaders renewed calls for Socialist Prime

Minister Edi Rama to step down.

Berisha exhorted protesters to "Join us in this revolution to throw down this criminal organisation (the government) and save Albania and its citizens".

It was the fourth anti-government rally in a month. The opposition accuses Rama and his Cabinet of alleged corruption, links to organized crime and poor economic policies. They also blame Rama for the exodus of young Albanians seeking jobs in Western European countries.

The government denies that, arguing it has kept inflation low compared to elsewhere in Europe, raised the minimum salary and subsidized electricity bills for families and small businesses.

The opposition also has accused Rama of involvement in the alleged bribery and preferential treatment of a former high-ranking FBI counterintelligence official who has been indicted in the United States.

Speaking in Parliament Thursday, Rama refused to step down saying the opposition wanted "to politically exploit a legal process in the US that has no links at all to Albania, the government or me personally".

The opposition claims that Rama corrupted Charles McGonigal, who is accused in the United States of hiding from the FBI key details of a 2017 trip to Albania with a former Albanian intelligence official alleged to have given him at least USD 225,000.

New crew arrives at In'tl space station

Cape Canaveral (AP): A new crew arrived at the International Space Station on Friday for a six-month mission, after overcoming trouble with one of the capsule's docking hooks.

The SpaceX capsule and its four astronauts had to wait 65 feet (20 meters) from the orbiting lab, as flight controllers in California scrambled to come up with a software fix.

It's the same problem that cropped up shortly after Thursday's liftoff. Although all 12 hooks on the capsule appeared to be fine, the switch for one of them malfunctioned. SpaceX Mission Control urged patience, telling the astronauts they could stay in this holding pattern for up to two hours.

Turkish opposition faces split over joint candidate

AP ■ ISTANBUL

One of Turkey's leading opposition politicians indicated on Friday that her party is breaking with a major alliance formed to challenge President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in elections scheduled for May.

A split in the opposition bloc ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections would be a major boost for Erdogan, whose popularity has been battered by a weak economy and his government's response to a catastrophic earthquake.

Meral Aksener, head of the nationalist Iyi Party, said she was distancing herself from the six-party group, known as the Table of Six, over a dispute about selecting the candidate to

run against Erdogan.

"I'm sorry to say that, as of yesterday, the Table of Six has lost its ability to reflect the will of the nation in its decisions," she told a news conference in Ankara, referring to a failed Thursday meeting to nominate a joint opposition candidate.

Erdogan is facing what many consider his toughest challenge amid economic turmoil and criticism of the government's response to the February 6 earthquake in southern Turkey that killed tens of thousands.

It has been clear for months that the leader of the largest opposition party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu of the Republican People's Party, or CHP, had put himself forward to stand in the May 14 vote.

California's snow-stranded residents need food, help

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Olivia Duke said she's been trapped in her home in the snow-plastered mountains east of Los Angeles for so long that by Thursday the only food she had left was oatmeal.

Snow ploughs have created a wall of ice between her driveway and the road in the San Bernardino Mountains, and there are at least 5 feet (1.5 metres) of snow weighing on her roof. While her power has been restored, she only has half a gallon of gas left for her generator in case it goes out again.

"California is not used to this. We don't have this kind of snow," said Duke, a corporate recruiter who lives in the community of Cedarpines Park. "I thought I was prepared. But not for this kind of Godzilla bomb of snow. This is something you couldn't possibly really have prepared for."

With Southern California's mountain communities under a snow emergency, residents are grappling with power outages, roof

collapses and lack of baby formula and medicine. Many have been trapped in their homes for a week, their cars buried in snow. County workers fielded more than 500 calls for assistance Wednesday while firefighters tackled possible storm-related explosions and evacuated the most vulnerable with snowcats.

Californians are usually elated to see snow-covered mountains from Los Angeles and drive a couple of hours up to sled, ski and snowboard. But what started out as a beautiful sight has become a hazardous nightmare for those renting vacation homes in the scenic, tree-lined communities or who live there year-round.

Back-to-back-snowstorms have blanketed the region repeatedly, giving people no time to even shovel out.

Some resort communities received as much as 10 feet (3 metres) of snow over the past week, according to the National Weather Service. So much snow fell that ski resorts had to close and

roads became impassable. No snow was falling Thursday, and authorities said they hoped to clear as much as possible from the roads while the weather was benign.

California Governor Gavin Newsom declared an emergency in 13 counties late Wednesday and called up the National Guard to assist. In the northern part of the state, mountain communities are grappling with similar conditions, though the population is smaller and residents are more accustomed to significant snowfall, said Brian Ferguson, a spokesperson for the governor's Office of Emergency Services.

"These are just areas that don't typically get that much snow," he said of Southern California's mountain communities. "It exceeded the public's perception of what the risk is."

James Norton, 39, said he and his girlfriend have been stranded in Crestline for nearly a week after their SUV got trapped in the snow. They've been racking up credit card debt to pay for a hotel while buy-

ing TV dinners from a nearby convenience store. Norton, who lives about 45 minutes away in San Bernardino, said he is worried about losing his job at an Amazon packaging facility because he's missing shifts. He said they made the trip to dog sit for a friend on Friday and thought they were prepared because he installed chains on the tires of the SUV.

"We knew there was going to be a snowstorm," Norton said. "We didn't know it was going to be a disaster."


Firefighters have been evacuating residents who are medically vulnerable and have no heat or damaged homes to a Red Cross shelter set up at a local high school. They have also been responding to reports of gas leaks and storm-related fires with hydrants buried in deep snow, said Mike McClintock, San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief.

Two homes reported explosions that are under investigation but atypical for the area and likely storm-related, he said.

More than 1,000 customers lacked power as of Wednesday night, he said. Many roads were closed and emergency escorts provided to motorists earlier in the week to access the area were suspended as the region received a fresh 2 feet (60 centimetres) of snow.

About 80,000 people live in the San Bernardino Mountain communities either part- or full-time. The county has fielded more than 500 calls on a hotline set up for the emergency, many from people seeking plough assistance, baby formula and medicine, said Dawn Rowe, chair of the county board of supervisors.

Community members also have been helping each other through the Rim Guardian Angels Facebook group. They responded to requests to get an elderly man with high blood pressure to a hospital after he ran out of medication, to provide bandages to someone who suffered a deep laceration and food to people who were trapped in a rented house.



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

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert-No.	Dist-No.	Lost Shares
1	V 0003912	VANESSA DE SOUZA	13507	1680426-50	25
		MR EDGAR DE SOUZA	86599	1364001-50	50
			154468	6091253-77	25
			351811-3	16764288-437	150
			500811-3	24784080-229	150
2	SRF0039937	KRISHAN AUTHAAR DWIVEDI	377797-801	17176841-954	114
		BASUDHA DWIVEDI	526797-801	25196633-746	114
			90083771-3	9471130-229	100
			90195874-5	15153175-274	100
			1126436	308605934-7645	1712

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

for SRF LIMITED
Place: Gurugram
Date: 03-03-2023
Sd/-
RAJAT LAKHANPAL
Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance)
& Company Secretary

Investors become richer by ₹3.43L cr on mkt rally



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity investors became richer by ₹3.43 lakh crore on Friday amid an overall positive trend in the market and the benchmark Sensex jumping nearly 900 points. The BSE Sensex zoomed 899.62 points or 1.53 per cent to settle at 59,808.97 points. During the day, the benchmark rallied 1,057.69 points or 1.79 per cent to 59,967.04 points. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms rose ₹3,43,173.59 crore to ₹2,63,42,218.11 crore. “The market had more reasons to cheer today than to

worry about concerns regarding inflation. PSU banks led the sectoral rally as reports of foreign investments in Adani stocks helped the sector in recouping the dampened sentiment. “The sentiment was further lightened as FIIs turned in strong buyers,” Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) bought shares worth ₹12,770.81 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. The embattled Adani Group has sold minority stakes in four of its listed companies

to US-based GQG Partners for ₹15,446 crore as the conglomerate, recovering from a sell-off triggered by a short-seller report, looks to shore up liquidity ahead of the \$2 billion debt repayment due in the coming months. Also, the Indian services sector expanded at the strongest rate in 12 years in February supported by favourable demand conditions and new business gains, a monthly survey said on Friday. From the Sensex pack, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, ITC, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Tata Motors, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Titan were the major gainers. Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Nestle and Asian Paints were the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.68 per cent and midcap index jumped 0.58 per cent. All the sectoral indices ended in the green, with services rallying 3.17 per cent, bankex jumping 2.13 per cent, utilities (1.84 per cent), financial services (1.76 per cent), commodities (1.69 per cent) and power (1.60 per cent). In Asian markets, Seoul, Japan, China and Hong Kong ended in the green. Equity markets in Europe were trading in the positive territory. The US market had ended higher on Thursday.

‘Size of India’s real estate industry to touch \$1 trillion by 2030’



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The size of the country’s real estate industry is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030 from \$200 billion in 2021, according to a joint report prepared by NAREDCO and EY. The report was released on Friday at NAREDCO Finance Conclave held here. The sector is likely to contribute 18-20 per cent to India’s GDP by 2030, NAREDCO said in a statement. As per the report, there is a favourable demand-supply gap which will propel the growth of this sector. In a separate statement, NAREDCO said that more

than 50 MoUs have been signed among developers, financial institutions and industry body for financing real estate projects. “The total estimated value committed on the MoUs is estimated at over USD 15 billion in which NAREDCO would play the key role of a facilitator,” the industry body said. The objectives of the MoUs is to mobilise funds from national and international funds to assist the developers. The National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has set up a committee to make it simpler for developers to get funding for projects on the basis of their viability and merit.

BSE working to revive Sensex-30 derivatives: CEO

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The BSE is planning to reintroduce its Sensex-30 derivatives and is in the process of collecting feedback from members, the MD and CEO of the premier bourse, Sundaramaram Ramamurthy, said on Friday. The Sensex-30 derivatives products (options and futures), which were launched in 2000, had failed to generate much interest among investors compared to the rival exchange’s Nifty-50 derivatives. “We are trying to reintroduce Sensex-30 derivatives, and have started the consultation process by taking the feedback of market participants,” Ramamurthy said at an Assocham-organised event. “The feedback will help us in understanding what improvements could be made to the Sensex-30 derivatives products to make those more attractive to investors,” he said. The Sensex-30 derivatives is made up of 30 of the largest and most actively traded companies on the BSE. The top BSE official, however, did not give a timeframe for the relaunch. Ramamurthy, who assumed charge in January, also pointed out that the Sensex-30 derivatives is similar yet different to the Nifty-50. “When you have two different but similar products... There could be interplay between the products, and trading strategies evolve, helping the marketplace in growing,” he said.

Mukesh: Reliance to set up 10 GW solar plant, invest ₹40K cr for 5G rollout in AP



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy with Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani at the Global Investors Summit 2023, in Visakhapatnam on Friday

PTI

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Friday announced plans for setting up a 10 gigawatt solar plant in Andhra Pradesh as his oil-to-telecom conglomerate bets big on renewable sources which can be converted into carbon-free green hydrogen. Speaking at the Andhra Pradesh Global Investors Summit, Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Ltd, said his group is investing ₹40,000 crore for rollout of ultra-high speed 5G telephony network in the state. “This morning, I am happy to announce that we will continue our investments and we

will invest in 10 gigawatt of renewable solar energy in the state of Andhra Pradesh,” he said without giving investment details. Reliance had in 2021 announced plans to create by 2030 capacity to generate at least 100 GW of electricity from renewable sources, which can be converted into carbon-free green hydrogen. It is also investing in setting up giga-factories to manufacture components for the green energy value chain. Ambani said his company has invested more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore in developing oil and gas discoveries it made off the Andhra coast and in supporting gas pipeline infrastructure to transport the fuel to consumers.

Indian Energy Exchange trade volume falls 7% to 8,200 mn units in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The total trade volume at the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) declined seven per cent to 8,200 million units in February on an annual basis, due to lower availability of electricity. Sell side liquidity continued to be affected due to high input costs, the IEX said in a statement. According to the bourse, supply constraints are expected to ease in the coming months due to the conducive policy and regulatory initiatives that will lead to an increase in coal and gas-based generation. This will also provide cost optimisation opportunities to discoms and open access consumers. The overall trade volume on the IEX in February was 8,200 Million Units (MU), a de-growth of 7 per cent on a year-on-year basis. The 8,200 MU included 7,673 MU of conventional

power, green power trade of 341 MU, 3.74 lakh of Renewable Energy Certificates (equivalent to 374 MU) and 1.54 ESCerts (equivalent to 154 MU). ESCerts are Energy Saving Certificates. In February 2022, the trade volume stood at 8,760 MU, comprising 7,695 MU in the conventional power market, 453 MU in the green power market and 6.12 lakh Renewable Energy Certificates (equivalent to 612 MU). According to the IEX, the demand for power increased due to unusually warm temperature witnessed in February across several parts of the country, and sustained momentum in economic activities. While the average daily volume traded on the IEX increased five per cent on a month-on-month basis in February, the overall volume declined 5 per cent the month-on-month basis.

Adani companies’ shares rally; Adani Enterprises jumps nearly 17%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of all listed Adani Group companies rallied on Friday, with Adani Enterprises jumping nearly 17 per cent after the group sold minority stakes in four of its listed companies to US-based GQG Partners for ₹15,446 crore. In three trading sessions, the combined market valuation of the ten listed firms have jumped more than ₹1.42 lakh crore. Shares of Adani Enterprises zoomed 16.97 per cent to settle at ₹1,879.35 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 18.56 per cent to ₹1,905. Besides, stocks of Adani Ports rallied 9.81 per cent, Ambuja Cements climbed 5.70 per cent, AACC advanced 5.11 per cent, Adani Transmission jumped 5 per cent, Adani Green Energy rose 5 per cent and Adani Total Gas gained 5 per cent. Shares of Adani Power



jumped 4.99 per cent, Adani Wilmar climbed 4.99 per cent and NDTV went up 4.98 per cent. Most of the group firms also hit their upper circuit limits in morning trade. In the broader market, the BSE Sensex zoomed 899.62 points or 1.53 per cent to settle at 59,808.97 points. The embattled Adani Group has sold minority stakes in four of its listed companies to GQG Partners for ₹15,446 crore as the conglomerate, recovering from a sell-off triggered by a short-seller report, looks to shore up liquidity ahead of the \$2 billion debt repayment due in the coming months.

Cargo traffic at major ports rises 12% in Feb: IPA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cargo traffic at the country’s major ports increased 11.79 per cent to 65.45 million tonnes in February from 58.55 million tonnes in the same month a year ago, according to Indian Ports Association (IPA). The positive growth in cargo traffic was recorded by all major ports except Visakhapatnam, Kamarajar and Chennai Ports, it said. India has 12 major ports - Deendayal (Kandla), Mumbai, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore (Kamarajar), Tuticorin (V O Chidambaranar), Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) and Jawaharlal Nehru Port. Deendayal Port registered the highest cargo growth at 26.98 per cent during the month under review followed by V O Chidambaranar Port with 26.04 per cent and Paradip Port with 23.63 per cent, respectively.

Fairfax Financial Holdings settle case with Sebi, pays ₹29.25L as settlement charges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa-backed Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd (FFHL) has settled with Sebi a case pertaining to alleged violation of mutual fund regulations. Fairfax paid ₹29.25 lakh as settlement charges to the regulator. The order came after Fairfax proposed to settle the instant proceedings through a settlement order “without admitting or denying the findings of fact and conclusions of law”. “The instant proceedings initiated against the applicant (Fairfax) vide show cause notice dated October 8, 2021 is disposed of,” Sebi’s Whole Time Member S K Mohanty said in the settlement order passed on Wednesday. In March 2018, Sebi amended the MF (Mutual Fund) regulation. Under the rules, the regulator does not allow any entity



to hold more than a 10 per cent stake in more than one mutual fund house. It also provided one-year time to sponsors of the mutual funds to comply with norms for shareholding and governance of mutual funds, if they, inadvertently acquire shares or voting rights due to merger or acquisition. It was alleged that Fairfax was not compliant with the provisions of mutual fund norms even after completion of the one-year grace period. Thereafter, a show cause notice was issued on October 8, 2021 for the alleged violation of mutual funds regulations.

RBI imposes ₹3.06 cr penalty on Amazon Pay (India) for norms violation

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday said it has imposed a penalty of over ₹3.06 crore on Amazon Pay (India) Private Limited for non-compliance with certain provisions related to Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) and Know Your Customer (KYC) direction. “It was observed that the entity was non-compliant with the directions issued by RBI on KYC requirements,” the RBI said in a statement. The RBI had issued a notice to Amazon Pay (India) advising it to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed for non-compliance with the directions. “After considering the entity’s response, RBI concluded that the aforesaid charge of non-compliance with RBI directions was substantiated,” it said.

Axis Mutual Fund aims to collect ₹50 cr from new fund

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Axis Mutual Fund aims to collect around Rs 50 crore from the new fund it is launching next Monday during the primary subscription period. The fund offer — Nifty G-Sec September 2032 index fund — is an open-ended target maturity debt index fund investing in the constituents of the Nifty G-Sec September 2032 index. Aditya Pagaria and Hardik Shah will be managing the new fund which has no exit load. The new fund will open for subscription on March 6 and close on March 13, it said in a statement on Friday. The chief business development officer at the fund house Raghav Iyengar said the company is looking at collecting at least ₹50 crore during the primary offer period.

Rupee gains 63 paise to close at 81.97 against US dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee appreciated by 63 paise to close at a one-month high of 81.97 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as fresh foreign fund inflows and positive domestic equities supported investor sentiments. Forex traders said positive PMI services data also boosted investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.28 against the American currency and finally settled at 81.97 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 63 paise over its previous close of 82.60. During the trading session, the rupee touched a high of 81.92 and a low of 82.35



against the dollar. The Indian rupee touched a one-month high on hot services PMI data, said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. The Indian services sector expanded at the strongest rate in 12 years in February supported by favourable demand conditions and new business gains, a monthly survey said on Friday. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services

PMI Business Activity Index rose from 57.2 in January to 59.4 in February -- its highest level in 12 years. “We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on improved global risk sentiments and fresh FII inflows. Weak crude oil prices may also support the domestic currency,” Choudhary said. However, any pullback in the US dollar amid rising expectations of hawkish Federal Reserve and concerns over slowdown in India’s GDP growth rate may cap the upside and weigh on rupee at higher levels, he added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.19 per cent to 104.82.

Gold jumps ₹160; silver climbs ₹220

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price jumped Rs 160 to Rs 55,940 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a rise in rates of the precious metal in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 55,780 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver also climbed Rs 220 to Rs 64,700 per kilogram. “Comex gold prices edged higher in the Asian trading hours on Friday,” Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, gold and silver were quoting higher at USD 1,843 per ounce and USD 21.03 per ounce.

Tech Mahindra to invest ₹700 cr in products, platforms division in 2 yrs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

IT services company Tech Mahindra on Friday said it will invest up to Rs 700 crore in the newly carved out division of products and platforms in the next two years. The Mahindra group company is already present in the products and platforms business with its acquisition of the telecom sector-focused Comviva and other offerings which are delivering an annual revenue run rate of USD 450 million, company’s chief executive and managing director C P Gurnani said. “In the next two-three years, we are aiming to take the revenue from products and platforms to USD 1 billion,” he told PTI in a virtual interaction in Pune after making the



announcement about the new division at ‘investor day’. The investment in the new division, to be led by Gurugram-headquartered Comviva’s team, will be Rs 500-700 crore over the next two-and-half years, Gurnani said. The Comviva team, which also has presence in Bhubaneswar and Bengaluru, has been tasked with leading the entire products and platforms play, he said. Apart from telecom, Tech

M’s products and platforms also extends to the banking, financial services and insurance vertical and other sectors in the enterprise business at present, he said, adding that Comviva’s standalone contribution to the USD 450 million pie will be about USD 200 million. Company’s president for corporate development Vivek Agarwal said the company will be leveraging on existing customers who will form the first of the clients for the products and platforms offerings, and also the embedded domain knowledge it has earned by working for customers. He also said the products and platforms play will help expand the margins for the company, which has been aspiring to improve on profitability for some time now.

Tata group aiming at net-zero emission by 2045

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Tata Steel Vice-Chairman Noel N Tata on Friday said the issue of climate change can no longer be ignored and Tata group was aiming at net-zero emission by 2045. Noel Tata was here to pay homage to Tata Steel founder and doyen of Indian industries Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, on his 184th birth anniversary. Tata Steel CEO and



Managing Director T V

Narendran and other senior officials of Tata group of companies also paid tribute. The theme of this year’s celebrations is “Geennovation-Make Tomorrow Green”. Addressing a gathering at Bistupur Postal Park, Noel N Tata said, “We have developed a project that covers the entire Tata Group-Aalingana (embrace) which aims net-zero emissions by 2045, pave the way for circular economy

through sharing, reusing and recycling; and preserve and restore nature and biodiversity”. Noel Tata visited Tata Workers Union office, besides Steelennium Hall where the exhibition on this year’s theme, Geennovation, was organised. The Tata Steel Vice-Chairman also visited iROC (Integrated Remote Operations Centre) and the technical exhibition at SNTI-Tech-Ex 2023.

PNB makes Positive Pay System mandatory for cheque payments worth ₹5 lakh, above

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to safeguard customers from fraudulent payment of cheques, state-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has made the Positive Pay System (PPS) compulsory for cheque payments worth Rs 5 lakh and above. This will come into effect from April 5, 2023, PNB said in

a statement.

Earlier, the mandatory submission of cheque details in PPS was set at ₹10 lakh and above. The PPS is a system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which requires customers to reconfirm essential details (account number, cheque number, cheque alpha code, issue



date, amount, and beneficiary name) when issuing cheques of a certain amount, it said. This adds an extra layer of security against any potential

risk while processing such cheques, it said. Customers can use the PPS facility by providing the cheque details through Branch office, Online Banking for individuals and businesses, Mobile Banking (PNB ONE), or SMS Banking, it said, adding, the details to be submitted one working day prior to cheque presentation/clearing date.

WPL: BEGINNING OF NEW DAWN FOR INDIA'S GEN-NEXT

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's women cricketers will not only get the much-needed exposure to take their game to the next level but also enjoy the perks of a cash-rich tournament when the Women's Premier League (WPL) ushers in a new dawn for the sport in the country.

The 21-match tournament will commence on Saturday with Gujarat Giants taking on India captain Harmanpreet Kaur-led Mumbai Indians in the tournament-opener.

The WPL will not just be about the creme-de-la-creme of world cricket with huge pay packets and reputations to play for but also for someone like Sneha Deepthi, who would like to prove that motherhood hasn't robbed her of the passion to play elite sport.

A certain hard-hitting Jasia Akhtar from Jammu and Kashmir will be eager to send the ball soaring into the stands and expect that people from her state will take her name alongside Umrani Malik.

For the Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues, and the Shafali Verma, the pressure and arclights of a high octane tournament will prepare them for those tight games in global tournaments, which they have been struggling to close in their favour.

The inaugural edition of the T20 league — some would argue was long overdue — will feature a total of five teams and 87 players, with girls as young as a little above 15 set to ply

their trade with and against some of the best in the world.

The competition consists of an overall 21 matches including two knockout games, and will be played across two venues in Mumbai, with the iconic Brabourne Stadium being the other.

WPL has created a compelling buzz in the world of cricket, with the five franchises being sold for a grand total of INR 4,669 crore, which includes Adani Group's purchase of the Gujarat franchise for a whopping INR 1,289 crore.

The player auction witnessed a total of INR 59.50 crore spent by the five franchises, not only providing the players with a further boost to their financial being, but also ensuring a promising road ahead to young girls whose

India's star batter Smriti Mandhana was the most expensive buy at the auction held in Mumbai — Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) bought her for INR 3.4 crore and expectedly named her the captain.

The franchise, which has always put its trust on big names of the cricket world but yet to win a title in the men's league, added Sophie Devine and Ellyse Perry to continue the tradition.

The second costliest team in the league at INR 912.99 crore, Mumbai Indians will embark on their WPL 2023 journey hoping to emulate the unprecedented heights and glory achieved by their men's



counterparts, who have won a record five IPL titles

The incumbent India captain Kaur has been bestowed with the responsibility of a star-studded MI team, which has a powerhouse squad comprising England's Nat Sciver-Brunt and pacer Issy Wong, New Zealand's Amelia Kerr, South Africa's T20 World Cup finalist Chloe Tryon, West Indies' captain Hayley Matthews and Australia's Heather Graham.

Kaur, the only player to feature in 150 T20Is, has captained India to knockouts round in the last three T20 World Cups which includes the final of the 2020 edition.

Kaur would hope that the competition will help India bridge the gap with Australia and England.

"I think this is a great platform for all Indian players because we have been missing this tournament for a long time," she had said during a virtual media interaction on Wednesday.

"Definitely for Australia and England the WBBL and Hundred have worked very well and after those tournaments they've got so much young talent.

"After the WPL we are also going to get some good talent and I'm sure the difference you're talking about (between India and Australia sides) we'd love to cut down. When you see good talent coming up, you're definitely going to make a good team after the WPL," she added.

Gujarat Giants, captained

by champion Australian batter Beth Mooney, consists of Indian stars Harleen Deol, Sneha Rana — also the team's vice-captain — and the experienced Sushma Verma.

They also have a healthy bank of overseas stars such as recent T20 World Cup winners from Australia, Ashleigh Gardner and Georgia Wareham, West Indies' Deandra Dottin and England's Sophia Dunkley, who will be key to their campaign in this WPL edition.

Former India captain Mithali Raj is also an indomitable figure in the Gujarat Giants' camp in capacity of the team's mentor and advisor. She expressed her happiness at the promise which WPL brings.

"I'm just happy that it has come to a point where women's cricket now is a sustainable sport on its own for young girls in India. Not just in India, even club cricketers abroad in two-three years' time, maybe even they would probably want to be a part of a set-up like this," Mithali said.

UP Warriorz grabbed Australia's aggressive wicket-keeper-batter Alyssa Healy in the auction and later announced her as captain, with India star Deepti Sharma — the second-most expensive Indian player at INR 2.6 crore — as her deputy.

With a strong squad, the UP Warriorz will hope to make a strong dent from their first game onwards.

Richa jumps 21 places in batter's rankings



PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh jumped 21 positions to move to 22nd spot in the latest ICC Women's T20I Rankings for batters released on Friday.

The 19-year-old from Siliguri had a fruitful stint in the recently-concluded T20 World Cup and was the only Indian to

be picked in the ICC's Most Valuable Team of the tournament.

With 136 runs at an average of 68, Richa was the second leading rungetter for India behind Smriti Mandhana (151). She played three unbeaten knocks - 31 (vs Pakistan), 44 (vs West Indies) and 47 not out (vs England). The biggest gainer in the rankings were Sri Lanka's Vishmi Gunaratne and England spinner Charlie Dean.

Gunaratne rose 95 places to jump to 169th. The 17-year-old entered the Women's T20 World Cup having played only nine T20Is for Sri Lanka, but impressed in the group stage against both of the eventual finalists.

She scored a 35 against South Africa and 24 against Australia. Off-spinner Charlie Dean rose 77 spots to 50th in the bowling rankings, while jumping 103 places to 77th in the all-rounder rankings.

AP ■ MADRID

Eder Militao's own goal handed a depleted Barcelona a surprise 1-0 away victory over Real Madrid in a stormy Copa del Rey semi-final first leg on Thursday. The Catalans arrived on the back of two consecutive defeats and without an injured trio of key players — top scorer Robert Lewandowski, key midfielder Pedri and explosive winger Ousmane Dembele.

After their Europa League elimination by Manchester United last week and a first ever loss against La Liga minnows Almeria, Madrid fans smelled blood, but left bitterly frustrated. Militao deflected a rebound into his own goal after 26 minutes to split the teams and hand Barcelona the edge ahead of the second leg on April 5 at Camp Nou.

The hosts had more of the ball but failed to muster a shot on target, while Barcelona defended well. "This was the game we wanted to play — not with this result, but it gives us



confidence for the second leg," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters.

"We did not let Barcelona do what they wanted, that's good for us, and we just have to repeat it

(at Camp Nou)."

Asked if Barcelona deserved to win or not, Ancelotti said it was clear his team deserved more. "No, that is obvious, we had chances, but I think that it

was one of Madrid's best games in terms of pressing high," added Ancelotti.

"It was a bit strange, their way of playing, but they have learned very well, it's a very solid

team defensively."

Barcelona lined up with Marcos Alonso out of position at centre-back, after Andreas Christensen was only deemed fit enough to start on the bench.

Sergio Busquets made his 46th Clasicos appearance, overtaking former Real Madrid and Barcelona greets Sergio Ramos and Lionel Messi to set a new record.

MANE IN FRAME FOR RETURN AGAINST PSG

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich forward Sadio Mane is in the frame for a return to the starting lineup in Wednesday's second leg with Paris Saint-Germain, after manager Julian Nagelsmann on Friday promised "more minutes" for the returning striker. Speaking ahead of Saturday's Bundesliga clash at Stuttgart, Nagelsmann said Mane will continue his return following three months on the sidelines after a leg injury ruled him out of the World Cup.

The Senegal forward made his first appearance since

November when he came off the bench for 25 minutes in Sunday's 3-0 win over fellow title-chasers Union Berlin.

Nagelsmann suggested that Mane would again feature off the bench against Stuttgart.

"He's making a good impression. We will try and give him more minutes," said Nagelsmann. "It was a serious injury but his fitness levels are good. Sadio is part of the usual competition for spots." Bayern hold a 1-0 advantage ahead of Wednesday's return Champions League fixture and sit equal on points with Borussia Dortmund in the league.

Dhoni said he really enjoys my commentary: DK

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Dinesh Karthik behind the mic is something that World Cup-winning former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni "really enjoys", the Royal Challengers Bangalore wicketkeeper-batter said, terming it "my biggest accolade".

Currently commentating on the India-Australia Test series, the 37-year-old Karthik will be next seen in action in the upcoming IPL.

He said a word of praise from Dhoni made the job of commentary special for him.

"I enjoyed commentary in the little stints that I did. I think I enjoyed speaking about the game, looking at it very analytically, at the same time trying to, you know, get something meaningful across to everybody who's watch-

ing this sport.

"So, you know, I always tried to make sense out of a situation in my own way and tried to articulate it in the way I thought it was," he said the RCB pod-cast.

Karthik added, "And my biggest accolade came from the person that I least expected from - MS Dhoni. He called me and said: 'I really enjoyed the commentary. Very, very good. Well done'.

"I was like, wow, thank you so much. So, that is big, you know, obviously, he watches a lot of this sport. And so to hear him say that was really good. And I was happy that you enjoyed my commentary."

Karthik had a fine season with RCB last time around, scoring 330 runs at a mind-boggling strike rate of 183 which earned him a place in the Indian team



as a finisher.

Speaking about Virat Kohli, Karthik said the Indian batting maestro's dominance for close to a decade is "unparalleled".

"What he has achieved as a person... He has literally carried the team for the last 10 years. His consistency and mastery over the game, I don't think anybody has achieved it in the world of cricket for a very, very long time, his dominance for about close to a decade is unparalleled.

"We have to understand that there are three different formats, and playing three different formats itself is difficult and then there he is averaging 50 in all of them, travelling abroad scoring as well," he said.

"I can speak about him a lot. He is very chill, very easy, with the bowlers, the young guys."

Hakimi charged with rape

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi, one of the stars of Morocco's historic charge to the semi-finals of the World Cup last year, was charged with rape on Friday.

Hakimi, 24, was charged after being questioned by prosecutors on Thursday about accusations made by a 24-year-old woman who cannot be identified. The Madrid-born player trained with his teammates on Friday.

A PSG spokesman said the club "gives its support" to Hakimi and "places its trust in the justice system".



Djokovic still waiting on US visa for Indian Wells

AP ■ DUBAI

Novak Djokovic says he will learn his fate about being granted entry into the United States before the draw is revealed at Indian Wells, adding that he remains focused on his campaign in Dubai in the meantime.

Djokovic, who continued his march towards a third title in as many tournaments this season with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in the Dubai quarter-finals on Thursday, is waiting to hear if the US government will allow him to enter the country without being vaccinated.

The Masters 1000 event in Indian Wells begins on March 8 and Djokovic said a decision will be made one way or the other before the draw for the ATP tournament is conducted on Monday at 15:00 local time.

"Whatever the decision is before the draw, if I'm not allowed, I'm going to pull out, of course, before the draw," assured Djokovic.

The world number one,

seeking a sixth career title in the northern emirate, improved to 5-0 against Hurkacz, 15-0 for the season, and has extended his overall winning streak to 20 consecutive matches, dating back to last November's ATP Finals.

"It was a challenging match as it always is against Hubert. One of the best guys on the tour definitely, fantastic personality, very lovable guy," said Djokovic, who now awaits the winner of the late clash between Daniil Medvedev and Borna Coric.

The 35-year-old faced zero break points on his own serve and was an impressive 12/13 at the net, needing just 71 minutes to close out the victory.

"I think he's got one of the best serves in the game," Djokovic said of the 11th-ranked Hurkacz.

"In the second set, until that 11th game, I didn't really have too many chances against his serve.

"Fortunately for me I also found the rhythm on my serve throughout the second set. I'm really glad with how I played under pressure."

SA's Fulton is new chief coach of Indian men's hockey team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday named South Africa's Craig Fulton as the new chief coach of the men's national hockey team that finished a disappointing ninth in the World Cup at home.

Fulton, who has nearly 25 years of coaching experience, replaces Australian Graham Reid, who quit after India's dismal show in the World Cup.

Not just Reid, the team's analytical coach Greg Clark and scientific advisor Mitchell Pemberton had also tendered their resignations.

Reid, though, had guided the Indian team to a historic bronze medal-winning show at the Tokyo Olympics.

Fulton said he would strive to take Indian hockey to the next level.

"It is an honour to be appointed in the role of chief coach for the Indian men's hockey team. India has a deep history and legacy of the sport and I look forward to taking this forward with the current team which has some very promising talent," Fulton said in a press release.

Fulton has shown exemplary results in his previous stints as coach. His rise to fame started with a stint with the Irish men's team as its head coach between 2014 to 2018 when the team qualified for the Rio Olympics in 2016.

That was the Irish team's first Olympic qualification in 100 years. The historic feat also won him the FIH Coach of the Year in 2015.

Fulton also worked as assistant coach with the reigning



Olympic champions Belgium en route to the gold medal in Tokyo. He was also part of the

Belgian coaching staff during their 2018 World Cup win in Bhubaneswar.

Fulton was named Belgium Coach of the Year this year.

In his illustrious career as a hockey player with the South African squad, Fulton played 195 international matches over a span of 10 years.

He was part of the South Africa team at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and 2004 Athens Olympics. He has also played at the World Cup and Commonwealth Games.

Speaking on Fulton's appointment, Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said, "I am very pleased to state that Hockey India has finalised Craig Fulton for the chief coach's role with the Indian men's hockey team. I have had the honour of playing against him and now I look forward to closely working with him in this new phase for the men's hockey team."

Oz crush India, qualify for WTC final

PTI ■ INDORE

There was no twist in the tale as Australia turned the tables on India with an emphatic nine-wicket win in the third Test on a track that offered wicked turn and variable bounce, confirming their place in the World Test Championship (WTC) final here Friday.

Travis Head (49 not out) and Marnus Labuschagne (28 not out) survived some anxious moments before taking Australia home in 18.5 overs as the match got over in little over two days.

Wins in India are rare for the visiting teams and it is no different for Australia, who recorded their first victory on Indian soil in six years.

For India, it was only their third defeat in the last 10 years and they will need to rework their plans ahead of the final Test, beginning in Ahmedabad from March 9.

The pitches in the series have also come under scathing criticism but, going by Rohit Sharma's views on the subject, one can expect a raging turner to be dished out at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

India's batters have been found wanting against the spinning ball and Rohit wants them to raise their game and find a way to score runs.



The hosts managed only 109 and 163 in their two innings here, with the top-order letting the team down again.

"On pitches like these, you have to find a way to score runs and you have to find your own

TRAVIS HEAD (49*) AND MARNUS LABUSCHAGNE (28*) SURVIVED SOME ANXIOUS MOMENTS BEFORE TAKING AUSTRALIA HOME IN 18.5 OVERS AS THE MATCH GOT OVER IN LITTLE OVER TWO DAYS

method. We were disappointing with the bat in both the innings," said Rohit after the loss.

Considering the way Australia had collapsed in second innings of Nagpur and

Delhi, "anything" was on the cards on Friday morning.

Chasing a meagre 76, Australia were favourites but R Ashwin raised hopes of a miracle by getting Usman Khawaja caught behind in the second ball of the day.

The ball turned sharply and took a faint tickle on way to the wicketkeeper. The wicket added to the nervousness in the Australian dressing room.

Labuschagne eased some of those nerves by square cutting Ravindra Jadeja for the first boundary of the day.

Both Labuschagne and Head, who is known for his attacking approach, were looking to defend in the first 10 overs, with Australia reaching 13 for one.

However, the momentum changed decisively in favour of Australia after the ball change following the 10th over.

Ashwin was not happy even after the change of ball and that reflected in his bowling. Head smashed the star Indian spinner for a four and six over mid-on in the 11th over as the premier spinner was guilty of bowling too full.

Head took the attack to Jadeja in the following over, hitting one straight over the bowler's head, and that also gave confidence to Labuschagne who went for the sweep in the same over to take the score to 35 for

one in 12 overs.

After that, there was no looking back for the Australian duo who had gained enough confidence to go for their shots.

Labuschagne hit the winning runs, a four over mid-wicket, to complete a memorable victory.

'WE WERE NOT BRAVE'

India skipper Rohit Sharma said his team was not brave and lacked application in the third Test against Australia but described the nine-wicket hammering as "one odd game".

"When you are playing on challenging pitches you have to bowl. We allowed their bowlers to bowl in one spot. Not to take any credit away from their bowlers, Nathan Lyon especially. We had to try and be brave, which I think we were not," Rohit said at the presentation ceremony.

Lyon returned excellent figures of 8/64 in India's second innings to pave the way for Australia's victory.

"One odd game can happen like that where things don't come together, but even then you need players to come together and chip in.

"We wanted a few guys to stand up but it didn't happen. We were slightly behind and we did not apply ourselves the way we would have liked to," he added.

ICC rates Indore track as 'poor', venue gets 3 demerit points

PTI ■ INDORE

The ICC on Friday rated the pitch used for the third Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test match at the Holkar Stadium as "poor" after Australia beat India by nine wickets in a little over two days.

The poor rating also earned Indore, three demerit points and will remain active for five years rolling period.

"ICC Match Referee Chris Broad submitted his report to the ICC expressing the concerns of the match officials and after consulting with captains of both teams. Following the assessment, the venue has received three demerit points," the release issued by the global body stated.

Broad said: "The pitch, which was very dry, did not provide a balance between bat and ball, favouring spinners from the start.

"The fifth ball of the match broke through the pitch surface and continued to occasionally break the surface providing little or no seam movement and there was excessive and uneven bounce throughout the match."



This is what little complacency & overconfidence can do: Shastri on Indore loss

PTI ■ INDORE

The Indian batters paid the price for "complacency and overconfidence" and were over-eager to dominate the Australian bowlers, on a wicket which offered sharp turn and uneven bounce from the first morning of the third Test here, said Ravi Shastri on Friday.

"This is what a little complacency, a little bit of overconfidence can do where you take things for granted, you drop guard and this game will bring you down," the former India head coach told Star Sports.

"I think it was a combination of all these things when you actually cast your mind back to the first innings, see some of the shots played, see some of the over-eagerness to try and dominate in these conditions. You reflect back, take a step back or two to analyse."

Former Australia opener Matthew Hayden too slammed the Indian batters, saying it looked they were playing to save their spots in the team.

"Change of team too. KL Rahul dropped. Some of those things can be a bit destabilising, players playing for their spots and their opportunities

can create a different mindset," he said.

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar also criticised the Indian batters for their below-par show in the third Test, saying the "pitch played on their minds".

Hayden, however, was full of praise for Australia opener Travis Head, who scored an unbeaten 49 to take visitors home.

"It's incredible what happens when you show that attitude and intent. That adjustment in the mindset and within two overs (there are) 20 runs (and) bang. This was really, really good batting," the 51-year-old said.

"This can be said about Travis Head. He was left out of the first Test but came out with a fire in the belly from the second Test, something Australians are known for. Punching above our weight, despite the conditions.

"What a good player Travis Head is. He is becoming one of the real forces in world cricket. A remarkable turnaround in momentum. Great fight and they have shown what they can do. Australia was knocked out in Delhi...Like Lazarus, now they've emerged."

We talk too much about pitches in India: Rohit

PTI ■ INDORE

Rohit Sharma has had enough of the incessant talk about the pitches in India. He maintains that turning tracks remain the team's strength and wants the struggling batters to find a way to score on them.

Speaking to media shortly after India's nine-wicket thrashing at the hands of Australia on a pitch that turned square from the first hour, Rohit strongly indicated that another turner awaits both teams in the final Test in Ahmedabad from March 9.

His logic to play on spinning wickets is simple. The team has won 15 straight series at home and remains favourites to win the ongoing one having already retained the Border-Gavaskar trophy.

"Before every series we usu-



ally decide what kind of pitches we would like to play on. It was our call to play on pitches like these. I don't think we are putting pressure on the batters. When we win all seems well. We are not asked about our batting. "It is talked about when we lose. We have decided to play on

pitches like these, and we know we can be challenged, but we are ready for that.

"Honestly the pitch talk is getting too much, every time we play in India focus is only on the pitch. We focus too much on the pitch in India. I don't think that is necessary," said the India

skipper.

The surfaces in Nagpur and Delhi too attracted attention but the one in Indore copped the most flak. The ball was turning viciously in the first half hour and uneven bounce made the task tougher for the batters.

Dilip Vengsarkar, Matthew Hayden and Mark Waugh were among the former cricketers who thought the pitch was not good for Test cricket. For the third straight time, the match ended inside three days.

"Former cricketers, I don't think they played on pitches like these. So I don't know honestly. Like I said, this is the kind of pitches we want to play on. This is our strength. So when you are playing at home, you always play to your strength and not worry about what people are talking about.

India need to win last game to qualify for WTC final

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Humbled in Indore, an outright victory in Ahmedabad will seal India's place in the World Test Championship final against Australia but if Rohit Sharma's team loses or plays a draw, its fate will depend on the outcome of the Sri Lanka-New Zealand series.

Australia by virtue of their nine-wicket win in Indore have already qualified for the grand finale at the Oval from June 7-11. Australia are sitting atop the WTC table with 68.52 percentage points (PCT).

Percentage points are calculated when points earned by a

team are divided by the points contested for.

A team earns 12 points for a win, four for a draw and six in case it's a tie.

As of today, Australia have 148 points by virtue of 11 wins and four draws from 18 matches. Playing for 216 points on offer, they have a PCT of 68.52.

Even if Australia lose the fourth and final Test against India, they would still remain on top with 64.91 PCT (148/228x100).

WHAT HAPPENS TO INDIA

India's PCT is 60.29 after earning 123 points in 17 Tests (10 wins and 2 draws) so far. India have lost a few points dur-



ing the course of this cycle due to slow over rate.

If India win the last Test, their PCT will go up to 62.5 with 135 points from a maximum of 216 on offer (18 Tests). They will then retain their second position and will qualify for final.

However, in case of a defeat, India's PCT will drop to 56.94 and then they will have to depend on the result of Sri Lanka's away-series against New Zealand.

In case of a draw, India's PCT will drop to 58.79 and even then they will have to wait for the result of the Sri Lanka-New Zealand series.

Ditto in case of a tie where India's PCT will be 59.72.

HOW CAN SL QUALIFY

Sri Lanka's only shot at the final qualification will depend on a 2-0 victory in New Zealand which is one of the toughest away assignment for sub-continental teams.

Sri Lanka's current PCT is 53.33 with 64 points from possible 120 (10 Tests).

If India happen to lose, draw or tie final Test and Sri Lanka win the series 2-0, their PCT will be 61.11 with 88 points from a maximum 144 points at stake. But if Sri Lanka draws even one game and win 1-0, their maximum PCT will be 55.55 which will be less than what India (56.94) will have even if they lose the final Test.

Captaining in India is like a game of chess: Smith

PTI ■ INDORE

Steve Smith loves captaining in India and likens it to a game of chess, pushing one to stay a step ahead of the match.

Smith, who filled in for full-time captain Pat Cummins while he was attending to his ailing mother back home, led Australia to a memorable nine-wicket win in the third Test against India here on Friday.

Australia's batting mainstay, who was their skipper in the previous tour back in 2017, also prefers playing on spin-friendly tracks rather than placid wickets that takes the game to full five days.

Reflecting on the win in the most challenging of circumstances, Smith said he could not be more proud of his team, which fought back after losing the first two Tests inside three days. "They are pretty hard to come by. For us to get on top in



this game particularly after losing the toss, it shows the talent in our group and the belief we have got in ourselves.

"We screwed it up in Delhi, letting that slip, but we had a

good break and good preparation coming here.

"It was about getting our mental state right. It was about trusting ourselves and our methods. It was about having faith

that we will succeed and taking the result out of play.

"We are pleased to have qualified for the final of the World Test Championship, which has obviously been on our

radar for a little while. To tick that off is worth celebrating for this team," said Smith after Australia won their first Test in India in six years.

Smith is among the

shrewdest thinkers of the game and that shows in his decision making on the field. In Cummins' absence, Smith said he has done his bit and relished the responsibility.

"No, my time is done. It's Paddy's (Pat Cummins) team now. I'm glad I'm able to stand in this week in the circumstances obviously with Paddy going home. Our thoughts are still

with him back home as well.

"Look, India is a part of the world I love captaining. It's a game of chess, every ball means something. It's good fun moving people and trying to make the batter think and something different and just playing games with them. It's probably my favourite place in the world to captain."

Captaining back home is much easier, he said. "You think back home in Australia, you generally play with a third slip or putting a square leg up or back or pulling a third slip to cover... There's not much that goes on, you sort of stick to the same game plan and trust what you are trying to do there. "In this part of the world, you have to be very proactive. Every ball is an event and that ball can dictate what happens the ball after. Something that I really love. I thought I did it well this week and it was good fun," he said.